

**Vasilii Rozanov and the Creation**

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### **Declaration**

I, Adam Alexander Ure, 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.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis will examine the Creation of the world as the referential event in Vasilii Rozanov's religious thought. The first chapter explores Rozanov's rejection of Orthodoxy's formal doctrines, in favour of a philosophy based on man's physical ties with God. Rozanov's God is bisexual, whose creation of the cosmos is a sexual event. Man is linked to God not through Christ (a created being), but biologically, and by his bodily activity which repeats the Creation. Rozanov subverts the eschatology of Orthodoxy, replacing it with an attachment to the material world. The subsequent chapters examine the implications of Rozanov's thought for his Christianity, and specifically the manner in which he tries to make ancient values relevant in contemporary Russian society. The second chapter investigates Rozanov's studies of ancient Egypt. Rozanov tries to restore Egyptian religious practices, in particular their reverence for the Creation. The third chapter turns to Rozanov's writings on the Jews. He believes that the Jews have preserved the rituals they learned from the Egyptians, and therefore can provide a connection between the Russians and pre-Christian civilizations. The final chapter looks at the role played by art, specifically literature, in the restoration of pre-Christian values for Rozanov, arguing that his aesthetics are ethical and based on his interpretation of the Creation. Writing re-enacts the Creation. This thesis argues that Rozanov's thought emerges from the traditions of Russian philosophy, and also from traditional Russian Orthodoxy; in many ways he is a typical Russian thinker, as well as a devout Orthodox believer. Having assumed these traditions, he proceeds to define his thought in opposition to them. This thesis will also illuminate the broader tendencies in the development of Russian thought at this time, and the way Russian thinkers engaged with the established religious teachings of the Church.

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## Introduction

### 1. The Creation and the Apocalypse

In September 1901, Vasilii Rozanov received a letter from one of his readers, identified only as ‘S. B-kh from St Petersburg’, thanking Rozanov for his philosophy of the family and his investigations of the spiritual crisis in Russia. ‘S. B-kh’ staunchly agreed with Rozanov in his criticism of the asceticism prevalent in Russian Orthodoxy, and then turned to the reasons for this.

Начало мира останется вечно тайной для человечества. Но человеку нужно жить, не решив так или иначе этих вопросов: надо же чем-нибудь успокоить свой тревожный ум. Создаются, поэтому, разные космогонические теории образования миров, у каждого по-своему (Моисей и Лаплас). Нам с вами нравится кн. Бытия, как сердечно говорящая о начале мира. Это личное наше дело – что нам больше может нравиться.<sup>1</sup>

Rozanov considered S. B-kh’s an exceptionally profound analysis, which he shared with ‘all his soul’. S. B-kh provides an important critique of Rozanov’s work, and touches on an issue ignored by the rest of Rozanov’s contemporaries, that his philosophy rests on his understanding of the Creation of the world.

This thesis will examine the implications of the Creation for Rozanov’s religious philosophy. It will argue that the Creation of the world by God is the referential event in his religion, and demonstrate that this forms the basis of his thought. It will show that Rozanov was a devoutly religious thinker, who maintained a deep love for the Russian people and their Church.<sup>2</sup> Yet he was deeply disturbed by Orthodox doctrine, its denial of the family, and its continual reference to schemes of salvation which lie outside earthly experience. Rozanov creates an opposition between the Creation and the Apocalypse. Whereas the Russian people should be united by their common biological ties and their relations to the Earth, their Church has imported an abstract, disembodied scheme of worship, which teaches that this world is separated from God, and that man can only be saved at the eschaton.

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<sup>1</sup> Published in V.V. Rozanov, ‘O strastnom v cheloveke nachale’, in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2004), pp. 162-68 (p. 165). This thesis follows the MHRA style guide, according to which all repeated references list the author’s name and page number; however, where there is danger of ambiguity the author’s name and a short title is used. For all Rozanov works, repeated references note the short title of that work. Any typographical errors in the works cited have been corrected in the quotations in this thesis. Where Rozanov deliberately uses archaic expressions and spellings, these variants are preserved the quotations.

<sup>2</sup> Rozanov understands the command to love one’s neighbour in a biological manner. George Louis Kline, *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago, 1968), p. 48.

Rozanov is one of the most interesting and original thinkers of his period. He also remains one of the most difficult to appraise. In many ways he is a very Russian thinker, and the way Rozanov defines himself in the context of the traditions of Russian thought permits a deeper investigation into the evolution of Russian philosophy. Rozanov was born to a devout Orthodox family in Kostroma, and was descended from a line of clergymen.<sup>3</sup> His uncle was archbishop of Yaroslavl. Rozanov spent his early years on the banks of the Volga, and was steeped in the rural traditions of the area. He maintained a deep affection for Russia's provinces, her rivers and forests, and the religious behaviour which emerged from the people's ties with the earth.<sup>4</sup> There is something definitely 'kondovyi' (a Russian word which is difficult to translate into English, but which denotes an old-fashioned provincial outlook, and also refers to an attachment to wood) in his attitude to Russian nature. He loved the Volga, calling it the 'Russian Nile', and he wrote frequently about plants, flowers and trees (his father was a woodsman who died after chasing illegal foresters). This elemental dimension pervades all of Rozanov's thought. Despite his love for the Russian countryside, Rozanov moved to St Petersburg in 1893, with a mixture of excitement and apprehension, and immersed himself in the most important philosophical, literary and cultural movements of the time. This move to the imperial capital was in many ways difficult for Rozanov, as he associated Petersburg with revolutionary ideas which he considered imported from the west. He engaged with new philosophical and literary movements whilst struggling to preserve what he perceived as native Russian culture. Therefore, in his life and thought, Rozanov reveals much about the conflict between the Russian and the non-Russian, tradition and modernity.

Rozanov's work is dominated by the utopianism and practical dimension which pervade the traditions of Russian philosophy, and by the conviction that human deeds should be directed towards realizing the ideal on Earth. He understands worship as continual activity ('douliia'), and sees the body as a microcosm through which the heavenly and earthly realms can be reunited. Yet he finds the proof that this utopia can be restored in a period of time already experienced by man and here on Earth. That paradise has already been witnessed, and lost, is presented by Rozanov as a given. He embarks on a constructive yet subversive mission, to reform the eschatology and conjecture in Russian philosophy, and to restore its links with the people. Therefore Rozanov's engagement with Russian Orthodoxy is complex. He emerges from its traditions and doctrines, and yet his revolt is determined by these same teachings. Rozanov would never consider himself a theologian or a Russian

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<sup>3</sup> The Rozanov surname was probably adopted by Vasilii's paternal grandfather, who conferred on his son (Rozanov's father) the name of one of his seminary teachers. V.G. Sukach, 'Detskie gody V.V. Rozanova', in *Chteniia, posviashchennye 80-letiiu pamiati V.V. Rozanova*, ed. by Iu.V. Lebedev (Kostroma: Kostromskoi filial Rossiiskogo fonda kul'tury, 1999), pp. 23-38 (p. 24).

<sup>4</sup> Nikoliukin has written on how the nature of the region was conducive to myth-making. Aleksandr Nikoliukin, *Golgofa Vasiliia Rozanova* (Moscow: Russkii put', 1998), p. 17.



philosopher (he defines himself as a 'publitsist'), but sets out to reform Russian religious practices and replace these with a new, or to his mind ancient, form of religious communion with God and the world.

Rozanov's idea of Russianness is inextricably linked with his concept of the Church as the body of the people; there should be no distinction between the two. Apart from an adolescent dabbling with nihilism, Rozanov maintained a powerful love for the Russian Church. He sees the Church as a biological-religious organization through which the nation is unified. All religion for Rozanov has a genetic basis, and each race develops its own relationship with the divine. To a large extent his thought can be contextualized in the racial theories of late nineteenth-century thinkers such as Jung, Weininger and Gilman.<sup>5</sup> On an individual basis, blood is the principal determinant in man's relationship with God, and a Russian person can only belong to the Russian Church. However, this does permit some degree of religious tolerance in Rozanov – he suggests that each nation should be allowed to pursue its own forms of religious behaviour. Rozanov displays a remarkable lack of concern towards the soteriology of other nations, which lie outside his own sphere of understanding. He is focused purely on the salvation of the Russian people. His studies of other religions, especially of ancient Egypt and Judaism, but also of other strands of Christianity, are not performed for their own sake, but exist in order to investigate the means of establishing a connection to the Creation, a connection which the Russians have lost. Despite the natural reverence for the Creation which should bind the Russians together, he believes that they have suffered by falling under the leadership of the Byzantine Church.<sup>6</sup> The Russians have adopted a foreign form of religion, and its abstract theology and doctrines have taught them that matter is completely separate from God. The Orthodox Church insists that salvation can only be found in the next world. Man, convinced that he is sinful, is left waiting his final redemption at the Apocalypse. Rozanov frequently stresses the fleshy nature of God, and rejects the Orthodox replacement of His phallus by His Logos. Having been convinced by an alien leadership that this world is evil, the Russians have abandoned all connections with the Earth and with God, and have sought death instead.

All Rozanov's thought is directed towards reforming the Russian Orthodox Church. His is an internal project, as he engages with the Church not as an outsider, but from within. The manner of this engagement in turn reveals much about the practices of Russian religious philosophers in their dealings with their Church. There is no sense in Rozanov that he is attempting to establish a new religion, or a 'New Church' along the lines of Merezhkovskii. Rozanov accords himself a privileged position as being uniquely able to solve the spiritual

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<sup>5</sup> Genrietta Mondri, 'Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia literatura', in Efim Kurganov and Genrietta Mondri, *Rozanov i evrei* (St Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000), pp. 155-267 (p. 159).

<sup>6</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Russkaia tserkov'', in *Religiia, filosofii, kul'tura*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1992), pp. 292-313 (p. 292).

crisis in Russia. He views his own writings not as a form of subversion or heresy, but as an innately Russian attempt to return the Russians to their roots. Many of Rozanov's contemporaries have remarked on Rozanov's closeness to the Church, despite his frequent attacks on doctrine. At the same time, Rozanov had a complex attitude towards Church rites, and was accused of not attending services. Certainly during his Petersburg period, Rozanov seemed to derive greater pleasure from the regular meetings of his fellow lay thinkers, his Sunday evening *jour-fixe* being a weekly highlight of the literary scene.<sup>7</sup> Gippius describes the simple, almost churchly, character of the Rozanovs' Petersburg home on Shpalernaia, where priests were frequent visitors.<sup>8</sup> Rozanov conducted his home almost along ecclesiastical lines, hosting his many friends among the priesthood and treating them with love and courtesy.<sup>9</sup> Tareev, one of his most astute critiques, notes Rozanov's complex attitude to Orthodoxy.

Служащий священник, облаченный в «иконостасные» ризы – его противник по необходимости, но тот же священник, как семьянин, неизбежно его друг.<sup>10</sup>

Rozanov also loves church buildings, which act in a similar manner to the human body in providing a place for the holy to be experienced on Earth.<sup>11</sup> Rozanov is fascinated with the movement of worshippers within and around church buildings. Churches have a special affinity for the sun, and are kept warm in winter even when the surrounding area is cold.<sup>12</sup> However, unlike in Leont'ev, there is nothing Greek in Rozanov's love for church buildings. Rozanov notes Leont'ev's particular love for the stone splendour of the Hagia Sophia, but instead much prefers the simple wooden churches of the Volga area where he grew up.<sup>13</sup>

Rozanov's message is for the upper echelons of the Russian Church, in that he wishes the Church to reform its hostile attitude towards the people. In addition, Rozanov wishes to encourage the Russian people that they should not be ashamed of their religious practices, but should in fact revel in these. As Volzhskii notes, matter to Rozanov is unconditionally holy.<sup>14</sup> Rozanov's investigation into Christianity revolves around the

<sup>7</sup> Prishvin recalls that Rozanov refused to take Communion, and only agreed to do so when he knew that he was dying. M.M. Prishvin, 'O V.V. Rozanove (Iz "Dnevnika")', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra. Lichnost' i tvorchestvo Vasiliia Rozanova v otsenke russkikh myslitelei i issledovatelei*, ed. by V.A. Fateev, 2 vols (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1995), I, pp. 103-31 (p. 117).

<sup>8</sup> Z.N. Gippius, 'Zadumchivyi strannik: O Rozanove', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 143-85 (p. 153).

<sup>9</sup> Maria Banerjee, 'Rozanov on Dostoevskiy', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 15 (1971), 411-24 (p. 412).

<sup>10</sup> M.M. Tareev, 'V.V. Rozanov', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 52-73 (p. 53).

<sup>11</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Golosa iz provintsii o missionerstve', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), pp. 107-14 (p. 108). He also writes that the heart of each temple is the praying person within. V.V. Rozanov, 'Gde bylo khorosho na Novyi god?', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 191-95 (p. 194).

<sup>12</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 7-9 (p. 7).

<sup>13</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Russkii Nil', in *Okolo narodnoi dushi: Stat'i 1906-1908 gg.*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2003), pp. 145-99 (p. 183).

<sup>14</sup> Volzhskii, 'Misticheskii panteizm V.V. Rozanova', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 418-55 (p. 444).

incompatibility of the Creation and the Resurrection. In presenting the Creation as the referential event in man's religious experience, Rozanov calls upon his fellow Russians to commemorate this event through their religious activity. He underlines the sanctity of religious behaviour which creates new content, especially childbirth. Such acts form a historical and direct link back to the beginning of time and to God. By producing children, man enters into a relationship with the Creation by re-establishing generational links with his origins.<sup>15</sup> He also counteracts the detrimental effects of history as a separation from our Edenic state. As an ironic consequence of his intense desire to dismantle the dogma of the Church, Rozanov does not so much liberate his countrymen, but in fact subjects them to a new set of doctrines which also set restrictions on their liberty. These restrictions emerge from the incompatibility of the Creation and the Apocalypse. Accordingly, this thesis will examine how Rozanov tries to reform specifically Russian Orthodoxy by re-directing its focus away from the eschaton and back to the Creation. Therefore, unless stated otherwise, the term 'Church' should be seen as referring specifically to the Russian Orthodox Church, and Christianity refers to the Russian Orthodox denomination.

Rozanov's attachment to the body of the Russian people is complex. In many respects, Rozanov emerges from the strand of nineteenth-century religious thought which stresses the importance of the Russian people's links and the native soil, however that might be understood. Rozanov was influenced by his first patron, Strakhov, who identified the soul of the Russian people with the Russian earth, the soul being 'the unexpressed ideas which were strongly felt and which dwelt unconsciously in the life of the people'.<sup>16</sup> Strakhov understood the soil as:

those basic and distinctive powers of a people which are the seeds of all its organic manifestations. Whatever the phenomenon is [...] be it a song, story, custom, or a private or civil form, all these are recognized as legitimate, as having real meaning, in so far as they are organically linked to the national essence.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> A comparison of the approaches taken by Rozanov and Fedorov to biological relations would reveal much about the development of Russian thought, and the peculiar manner in which ancient motifs were used at this time. This topic requires further academic study. The religious outlooks of Fedorov are based on ancestor cults. Both stress the importance of genealogical ties, and are concerned with overcoming death through resurrection within human history. Fedorov investigates the meaning of the term 'brotherhood' ('bratstvo'), but insists that man's common cause should be the resurrection through scientific advancements of past generations. See Nikolai Fedorov, *Filosofia obshchego dela*, 2 vols (Moscow: AST, 2003), I, pp. 282-87. Rozanov, who also believes in the veneration of ancestors, and who also seeks the means to provide one's forefathers with eternal life, insists however that this can only be achieved by the continuing production through sexual activity of new generations. Despite their veneration of man's history, both Rozanov and Fedorov are in their own ways curiously forward-looking, as they believe that man can only re-establish links with past generations through his future activity, either through the creation of new generations or scientific progress.

<sup>16</sup> Wayne Dowler, *Dostoevsky, Grigor'ev and Native Soil Conservatism* (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 78.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

Whereas in the native soil movement, the Earth was often understood as a metaphor, referring to native customs and principally rural traditions, Rozanov stresses the Russian people's literal links with the soil, wildlife and agriculture as the basis for their religiosity.

The opposition between foreign authority, and 'vol'nost'' as the natural expression of the people's will, is of course a well-established paradigm in the examination of Russian culture. However, Rozanov's nationalism is complex. He does insist that Russians are by their nature adogmatic and long for freedom of faith.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to view Rozanov as a spokesperson for the latter; he is far from the critics of Orthodoxy, such as Tareev, who wished to see a form of religious life liberated from all forms and symbols. The category of freedom, no matter how appealing it might seem to Rozanov, is largely absent or poorly-worked out in his thought. This thesis will conclude that Rozanov, instead of positing a religion free of form, in fact replaces the apocalyptic symbols of Russian culture with symbols which are guaranteed by the Creation. These symbols are just as regulative as the formal doctrines he wishes to subvert. The poet Borodaevskii, a fellow attendee at the Religious-Philosophical Meetings, astutely remarked that, although he talked of 'adogmatism', Rozanov wanted in fact to replace the dogmas of the Orthodox Church with his own doctrines.<sup>19</sup>

It is a commonly acknowledged fact that sex and childbirth lie at the very centre of Rozanov's worldview.<sup>20</sup> However, no studies have as yet examined the relationship between man's sexual activity and his own creation. For Rozanov, God creates the world sexually, and divine semen is the building block of the entire universe. It is this sexual activity of God and the subsequent birth of the cosmos which justifies the sanctity of matter, and upholds the relationship between God and the world, His offspring. Rozanov refers to Old Testament commandments in which the verse describing God's creation of man is immediately succeeded by the commandment to promulgate. Sex is the highest connection with God, even higher than that of the mind or conscience.<sup>21</sup> Each human is filled with the potential to enter into union with the cosmos. This potential is experienced in each individual as sexual desire and is for Rozanov a perfectly natural, and sacred, feeling. Rozanov even goes as far as to equate sex with the soul. Man is deified by repeating God's work, and therefore

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<sup>18</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nashi missionery i mariavitskoe dvizhenie', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia: Stat'i i ocherki 1909 g.*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2004), pp. 135-38 (p. 136).

<sup>19</sup> *Zapiski peterburgskikh Religiozno-filosofskikh sobranii (1901-1903 gg.)*, ed. by S.M. Polovinkin (Moscow: Respublika, 2005), p. 323.

<sup>20</sup> Berdiaev states that Rozanov was a thinker with only one theme, reproduction. Nikolai Berdiaev, *Russkaia ideia: Osnovyie problemy russkoi mysli XIX veka i nachala XX veka* (Paris: YMCA, 1971), pp. 226-27.

<sup>21</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Uedinennoe*, in *Religiia i kul'tura*, ed. by E.V. Vitkovskii and others (Moscow: Folio, 2000), pp. 161-248 (p. 203).

sex and childbirth become the supreme acts of *imitatio Dei*.<sup>22</sup> Rozanov stands in the tradition of Russian thinkers by being motivated by a strong utopian vision, but he locates this ideal state on Earth, at the beginning of time, and thereby bypasses what he considers the speculation in Christianity that this utopia will only come in the next life. Through childbirth, man finds a reconnection with the beginning of the world, and, living on in his child, overcomes original sin and achieves immortality. However, he believes that the Orthodox Church, regarding all flesh as evil, condemns sexual relations and, by ensuring an eschatological focus to man's religious activity, stands in the way of man's salvation.

It is a common aspect of almost all religious systems that the validity of worship is contingent on man's ability to unite the terrestrial and the spiritual realms, albeit even temporarily, through his religious activity.<sup>23</sup> There is also a temporal aspect to such activity, as these acts of devotion transform earthly time by returning man to a state of sacred time.<sup>24</sup> Each religion presents a central event, on which its teachings and practices are grounded. It is this key moment in each religion which its followers are obliged to commemorate in their worship. In traditional Christian thinking, this referential event leads to ambiguity, of which Rozanov is well aware, and which he exploits in his examinations of Christianity. The referential moment in Christian worship is the Resurrection of Christ, which redeems man to God and confirms our salvation at the end of time. This event is commemorated in the Eucharist. However, the Christian scheme of worship is problematic, as it promises a future salvation and leaves matter in a state of flux, awaiting its final transformation at the Second Coming. Man is redeemed through the Eucharist, but at the same time the Church states that this salvation is contingent on Christ's second coming at the end of history.

This lack of clarity is not satisfactory for Rozanov, and regardless of Orthodox doctrines which might in theory legitimize the physical realm, he states that the Church in practice always favours the next life over this. Rozanov replaces the eschaton with the Creation, but in doing so, he must find a means to imbue this single moment with permanent, and repeatable, significance. For Rozanov, human experience can only be sanctified if it is lived with reference to the Creation. Whereas Christian time is essentially eschatological, Rozanov wishes to see in each individual moment a connection with the beginning of time, thereby transforming history by imbuing it with some degree of a cyclical quality. However, the major problems arise in his thought through his

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<sup>22</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Slovo Bozhie v nashem uchen'ii', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 75-81 (p. 79).

<sup>23</sup> Modern scholarship, especially on comparative religion, generally concurs that religious practices are based on repeated reference to the major referential event within that system. Eliade terms this the 'repetition of the cosmogony'. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (London: Arkana, 1989), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> David E. Stern, 'Remembering and Redemption', in *Rediscovering the Eucharist: Ecumenical Conversations*, ed. by Roch A. Kereszty (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2003), pp. 1-15 (p. 1).

attempts to reconcile the religious value of the Creation with the demands of everyday life. Rozanov's thought is based on the need to carry forth the significance of the Creation into modernity, and to re-enact this on a continual basis. His philosophy is based on a highly complex interaction between the repeated and the new, which has profound implications for his reform of the Church and for Russian culture in general. He looks to pre-Christian myths and rituals in order to manage the relationship between the Creation and the everyday, often subverting forms of Orthodox worship, as well as the conventions of public discourse.

In his incessant search for the means to realize the divine will on Earth, Rozanov stands in the tradition of Russian thinkers who insist that philosophy must be relevant to human activity. As Berdiaev insists, 'the key idea of Russian philosophy is the idea of the concrete existent, of the underlying real existence which precedes rationalism'.<sup>25</sup> Rozanov was predominantly concerned with examining life, rather than existence as the dry subject matter of philosophical contemplation.<sup>26</sup> By seeing the human as an embodied and reproducing creature, Rozanov attempts a detailed philosophy of love which privileges feeling over thought, and practice over belief. Rozanov affirms the integrity of the human person as the unity of body and soul, as this underlines the identity of the heavenly and the material. Rozanov uses this unity of the person to attempt to convert the ideal into the physical through bodily activity, the cause of much misunderstanding by coevals and subsequent critics.

The desire to make the ideal an achievable target for human experience was a dominant trend of Rozanov's period, which witnessed the feverish searches by religious, and often materialist, thinkers for the hidden truths on Earth. (Indeed, owing to the focus of Russian thought at this time on the axiological content of matter, there is a close correspondence in many strands of idealist and materialist philosophies.) This focus on symbols has had wide-reaching implications for the development of Russian culture, which are visible in literary movements before and after the Revolution, as well as in the Russian brand of Marxism. Rozanov, who stands at the forefront of attempts to transplant the ideal realm onto the terrestrial, saw the new-born child as the ultimate symbol, which proved the reality of God's continuing activity down onto the Earth, and man's participation in the divine work. Diverging from traditional Orthodox thought, Rozanov sees sex as the fundamental means by which man becomes involved in the activity of God. Rozanov's focus on deeds rather than contemplation leads him to insist that man can only be deified through involvement in God's own work. By engaging in sexual activity, man becomes God.

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<sup>25</sup> Berdiaev notes the irony of the fact that many religious thinkers of his time, who were bent on realizing their religious beliefs on Earth, including Rozanov, were men of letters who lacked real practical knowledge. Berdiaev, *Russkaia ideia*, pp. 178, 267.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

Therefore the figure of Jesus Christ becomes a major problem for Rozanov in his critique of Orthodox eschatology. Berdiaev termed Rozanov an Orthodox without Christ.<sup>27</sup> In constituting the Church as the physical union of the Russian people which worships God through the Creation, Rozanov saw no problem in omitting Christ as the link between man and God. On the contrary, having removed the penis from religion, Rozanov believes that Christ has impeded man's communion with the divine.<sup>28</sup> Rozanov responds by claiming that man must overcome Christ in order to get back to the Father. As I hope to demonstrate, for Rozanov Christ is a false symbol, who distorts the relationship of the ideal and the physical, and impedes the movement of the divine onto Earth. Rozanov does not see Christ as the Second Person of the Trinity, but instead sees Christ as a creation of God. Christ and the world are therefore presented as rivals to each other, and incompatible. Rozanov dissents from Orthodoxy by seeking to identify the nature of God with the First Person. In similar fashion, he identifies man's person (hypostasis) with his nature or substance (ousia).

## 2. Rozanov's Work

Rozanov's output was immense, and his projected (though never realized) complete works would have comprised over 50 volumes.<sup>29</sup> He opposed the Revolution and Bolshevik power, and accordingly the Soviet authorities suppressed his work from the early 1920s. It was only in the late 1980s that the regime permitted the republication of his material. The end of the Soviet Union was followed by an explosion of interest in Rozanov's work (as well in the books of other formerly suppressed writers and thinkers), and since then there has been a concerted effort to republish all his works and letters. To date, a major proportion of his writing has been reprinted and published, principally with the funding of the Russian government, through the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences (INION RAN). However, the publication of a complete works, which would include Rozanov's correspondence, is in no way imminent. The difficulty of transcribing Rozanov's notoriously difficult handwriting and the limited number of scholars who

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<sup>27</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, 'O "vechno bab'em" v russkoi dushe', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 41-51 (p. 42).

<sup>28</sup> Rozanov writes in a 1917 letter to his friend Gollerbakh of Christ: 'Достаточно было ему или Ему а'фаллизировать религию, чтобы уничтожить вообще религию, самую суть ее, источник ее, Древо Жизни (= Фалл) [...] чтобы навечно победить Фалл, – и для этого, для одного этого – пришел'. Reprinted in V.V. Rozanov, *V nashei smute: Stat'i 1908 g. Pis'ma k E.F. Gollerbakh*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2004), p. 348.

<sup>29</sup> Nikoliukin has located in the Rozanov archives a draft plan Rozanov drew up in 1917 for a projected publication of his complete works. This one-page document has been reprinted as V.V. Rozanov, 'Plan Polnogo sobraniia sochinenii, sostavlennyi V.V. Rozanovym v 1917 godu', in *Religiia, filosofii, kul'tura*, p. 368. The fact that such a plan exists in the archives debunks the myth, most probably initiated by Siniavskii, that Rozanov did not want to release a complete works. See Andrei Siniavskii, "Opavshie list'ia" *V.V. Rozanova* (Paris: Sintaksis, 1982), p. 15.

can read his script, as well as the vast amount of his output, have slowed all attempts to republish him.<sup>30</sup> In addition, academics have also been confronted with the logistical problem of actually locating much material relating to Rozanov, especially his letters. It is scattered around various state and private archives, and new material is still being uncovered. Moreover, Rozanov often did not commit his thoughts to notebooks, but would scribble down his ideas on whatever material came to hand, even sometimes on the soles of his slippers.

Nevertheless, the republication of his major works means that modern-day scholars are able to appraise the development of his career.<sup>31</sup> His first work, written while still a schoolmaster in Briansk, was *O ponimanii* (1886), a systematic critique of positivist materialism designed as a protest against positivism. 600 copies were printed, at Rozanov's own cost, of which hardly any were sold. Although it was received warmly by a handful of minor religious thinkers, such as Sergei Sharapov, or Rozanov's friend, the theologian A.I. Uspenskii, it was widely ignored or dismissed. Some critics saw it as a low-rate regurgitation of Hegel, and his teacher colleagues suspected him of having copied it from somewhere.<sup>32</sup> During his time spent as a teacher in the provinces, Rozanov started to write journalistic articles. In 1890, he published his long essay 'Mesto khristianstva v istorii', and also collaborated with P.D. Pervov on a translation of the first five books of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. During this time, Rozanov met Strakhov, who became a close friend, confidant, and patron to the young teacher. Rozanov had first approached Strakhov for assistance with the publication of his own philosophical work, and quickly became emotionally dependent on him.<sup>33</sup> Their relationship started as a correspondence, in which Rozanov revealed his burgeoning ideas and intimate problems, to which Strakhov replied with fatherly advice and often stern reprimands. Rozanov even confessed to Strakhov his desire to commit suicide. Strakhov saw Rozanov as chaotic and impetuous, and believed that Rozanov stood too closely under the influence of Dostoevskii. Strakhov advised Rozanov to shake off this infatuation, and instead encouraged him to read more Tolstoi, a move which mirrored Strakhov's own beliefs at that time.<sup>34</sup> Rozanov later published their letters, along with his correspondence with Leont'ev, in the book *Literaturnye izgnanniki* (first edition 1913), which provides fascinating insight into the early development of Rozanov's thought.

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<sup>30</sup> Rozanov's oldest daughter Tat'iana notes the difficulty in deciphering her father's handwriting, and recalls that Suvorin had to employ a printer especially to read his work. Tat'iana Rozanova, *Bud'te svetly dukhom (Vospominaniia o V.V. Rozanove)*, ed. by A.N. Bogoslovskii (Moscow: Blue Apple, 1999), p. 104.

<sup>31</sup> Henrietta Mondry, 'Is the End of Censorship in the Former Soviet Union a Good Thing? The Case of Vasily Rozanov', *East European Jewish Affairs*, 32 (2002), 114-20 (p. 115).

<sup>32</sup> Valerii Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe: Zhizneopisanie Vasilii Rozanova* (Petersburg/Kostroma: Kostroma, 2001), p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> Linda Gerstein, *Nikolai Strakhov* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 206-07.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.



Rozanov first won widespread recognition with his 1891 book *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo*, published in *Russkii vestnik*. This book was the first major study of Dostoevskii as a religious writer, and established the eponymous passage in Dostoevskii's final work as a 'legend'. In his examination of Dostoevskii and Christianity, Rozanov sides with well-established Slavophile theories on the differences between Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Lutheranism and the various interpretations of individual freedom and religious authority. However, as several critics have noted, the *Legenda* is particularly striking in that Rozanov prioritizes the ethnic basis for each group's religious practices, rather than siding with traditional Slavophiles who argued that different Christian denominations shape national characteristics.<sup>35</sup>

In 1893, Rozanov wrote 'Sumerki prosviashcheniia' (re-published in a compilation of articles under the same name in 1899), an essay highly critical of the education system in Russia, a topic to which he devoted scores of articles throughout his life. In this work, Rozanov laid the foundation for his repeated critique of Russian schools, the dry impersonal nature of teaching, and the need to reconfigure the school as an extension of the family. The authorities reacted angrily to this work, as a result of which Rozanov was forced to leave the teaching profession. Having secured with the help of Strakhov and Filippov a post in the civil service as College Counsellor, he moved to St Petersburg. In these first years in the imperial capital, Rozanov struggled both financially and in terms of inspiration. This changed in 1899, when he was offered a permanent position on the staff of Suvorin's *Novoe Vremia*, which he held until 1917. This was the start of an intensely fruitful period, and in the almost 20 years Rozanov worked at *Novoe Vremia*, he produced on average three articles a week for this newspaper alone. In addition, Rozanov was also published, with Suvorin's reluctant approval, in several other periodicals, including *Novyi Put'*, *Russkoe slovo*, and even the *Torgovo-promyshlennaia gazeta*. He also integrated himself with the *Mir Iskusstva* group, and contributed essays on art to their magazine. In addition, he co-founded the Religious-Philosophical Meetings, where his lectures criticized the detachment and rigid doctrine of the Orthodox Church, and called for dialogue between clergy and society.

In his early Petersburg days, Rozanov's essays carried on from 'Mesto khristianstva v istorii', and tended to discuss universal philosophical schemes and questions of history, such as 'Pochemu my otkazyvaemsia ot "nasledstva 60 – 70-kh godov"?' (1891), or 'Krasota v prirode i ee smysl' (1895). However, by the turn of the century, he had started to investigate more personal issues, particularly the attitude of the Russian Church to marriage and the family. In 1901 he released *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo* (republished in 1904), which examined the philosophy of the family, and followed this with the 1903 book *Semeinyi vopros v*

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<sup>35</sup> This point is made in, among others, Frederick C. Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev* (Notre Dame: Search Press, 1986), p. 198.

*Rossii*, which looked at the practical implications of his theories. He started to examine in depth the Russian Orthodox Church, in books such as *Okolo tserkovnykh sten* (1905), or *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh* (1911). In this period he also turned his attention to pre-Christian religions, devoting scores of articles to Judaism and paganism, such as a series of essays ‘Iudaizm’, published in *Novyi Put’* in 1903. All these studies were undertaken from the same point of view, that is to discover how the Russians can re-establish their lost connections with the Creation. Therefore Rozanov instils a religious dimension into all his writing, ensuring that it has a metaphysical quality.<sup>36</sup> The way Rozanov’s ideas are expressed in his newspaper and magazine articles reveals much about the conflict of religious ideas and public discourse, and the development of Russian journalism at this time requires further investigation.<sup>37</sup>

Rozanov became more disillusioned with the Church’s hostility towards the family, a view which found full expression in his lecture ‘O Sladchaishem Iisuse i gor’kikh plodakh mira’, delivered to the Religious-Philosophical Society in 1907, in which he attacked Christ for diverting man’s attention away from this world, and also in his 1911 book *Liudi lunnogo sveta*, in which he was highly critical of Orthodox asceticism, depicting Christian monasticism as a form of sexual deviancy and relying on the contemporary scientific research of figures such as Richard von Krafft-Ebbing and Nikolai Pirogov to support his claims. Between 1910 and 1913, in the wake of the Beilis affair, Rozanov compiled a series of essays highly critical of the Jews and their supposed use of blood in rituals. *Oboniatel’noe i osiazatel’noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* (1914) was written with Florenskii’s assistance, but was so aggressive towards the Jews that even the conservative *Novoe Vremia* refused to publish it, and only the extremist *Zemshchina* would take it on.<sup>38</sup> As a consequence of this work, Rozanov was excluded from the Religious-Philosophical Society, and many of his erstwhile friends and supporters, most notably Merezhkovskii and Filosofov, turned away from him.

Around the same time, Rozanov turned to a strikingly subjective style of writing, relying on aphorisms, informal spontaneous musings, and short descriptions of family life. Many commentators have described this ‘Fallen Leaves’ genre, or the *Opavshelistika*, as Nietzschean in its influence, though it owes more to the work of Ivan Romanov (Rtsy), who similarly composed books of short passages about the home (as early as 1899 Rozanov had experimented with ‘Embriony’, a short work of aphorisms). The *Opavshelistika* dominated the last

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<sup>36</sup> V.A.Fateev, ‘Publitsist s dushoi metafizika i mistika’, in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 5-36 (p. 35).

<sup>37</sup> N.Iu. Kazakova, *Filosofia igry: V.V. Rozanov – Zhurnalist i literaturnyi kritik* (Moscow: Flinta/Nauka, 2001), p. 59.

<sup>38</sup> Edith W. Clowes, *Fiction’s Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 181. *Oboniatel’noe i osiazatel’noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* has been reprinted in V.V. Rozanov, *Sakharna*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1998), pp. 273-413.

section of his career, and includes his most famous works, such as *Uedinennoe* (published in 1912 but immediately confiscated by the censor), *Opavshie list'ia* (two bundles, 1913 and 1915), *Smertnoe* (1913), *Sakharna* (written from 1911 to 1913, but not published in full until 1998), *Mimoletnoe* (written in 1915 but not published until 1994), and *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni* (written in several parts between 1917 and 1918, but not published in full until 2000). In addition, towards the end of his life, Rozanov also started to compile essays on the ancient Egyptians and their reverence for the beginning of the world. His final Egyptian work is striking, as it was composed alongside what many consider Rozanov's masterpiece, his *Apokalipsis*, in which he evaluated the Revolution as a distinctly Russian disaster for which Christ is responsible. The coincidence of beginnings and eschatology, and the way these are managed through writing, will be very important in the third and fourth chapters of this thesis.

As I intend to examine the manner in which Rozanov attempts to reform the Russian Orthodox Church, it will rely predominantly on his works which engage with the Church, written generally between 1900 and 1910. The most important works have been republished by INION RAN and the Respublika publishing house since 1990, and, despite some controversy over Nikoliukin's editorship and his political position, discussed below, this thesis will use these republications. However, where appropriate it will also draw on books and periodicals contemporary to Rozanov, and archive sources.

Despite the difficulties in locating Rozanov's work, much scholarly effort is going into cataloguing his output. Belen'kii's bibliography covers material published in Russian from 1917. Only the final volume (1988-2002) contains any useful information on Rozanov.<sup>39</sup> An online bibliography of all Rozanov's work is currently under construction, and at present lists his publications up to 1903, as well as secondary literature by Russian and non-Russian scholars up to 1999; the site also details Rozanov's many pseudonyms and the locations in which he used these.<sup>40</sup> The compilation of articles on Rozanov in the *Pro et Contra* series also includes a bibliography of Rozanov's work, and of some secondary literature from 1886 to 1986.<sup>41</sup> The most recent, and so the far most informative, bibliography of Rozanov and scholarship on him was published by the Sergiev Posad Library in 2006.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> I.L. Belen'kii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii kontsa XIX – pervoi treti XX vv.: Issledovaniia i publikatsii 1988-2002 gg; katalog vystavki* (Moscow: INION RAN, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> See <[www.rozanov.lenin.ru](http://www.rozanov.lenin.ru)>, last accessed 15 April 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Published in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 535-62.

<sup>42</sup> V.V. Rozanov: *Zhizn', tvorcestvo, sud'ba*, ed. by T.N. Mishonova (Sergiev Posad: Sergievo-Posadskaia Tsentral'naia raionnaia biblioteka im. V.V. Rozanova, 2006).

### 3. Scholarship on Rozanov

The suppression of Rozanov's work in the Soviet period has had a significant impact on scholarship. Rozanov was one of the most influential cultural figures of his time, and had a profound effect on twentieth-century Russian literature, philosophy and culture. As Dimbleby writes, 'perhaps no other writer could claim so broad and varied an influence at this important transitional time'.<sup>43</sup> His influence was not just philosophical, but also political; he petitioned the government and church authorities on important family questions, and is credited with helping bring about reform in the divorce laws.<sup>44</sup> The post-Soviet reassessment of Rozanov's legacy has only relatively recently begun in Russia and in the west, and scholars have only recently started to apprehend his importance for the development of Russian culture during the Silver Age and beyond.<sup>45</sup> During his lifetime, Rozanov engaged and corresponded with all the major thinkers and writers of his time, and also enjoyed wide popularity among the Russian public. His letters to giants such as Vladimir Solov'ev, Tolstoi, or Gor'kii, are in themselves highly informative of the cultural developments at this time. Yet at the same time as engaging with and transforming high culture, Rozanov entered into an important dialogue with the Russian people. He received many letters from his readers across Russia, especially regarding marital problems, which he often reprinted and commented upon in his own books. He was often motivated by simple aspects of national culture, preferring the personal diaries and accounts of domestic life, over the writings of the established literary elite. His subversion of high culture in favour of common Russian life, but at the same time within the framework of high literary traditions, tells much about the nature of Rozanov's rebellion and broader trends in writing. The role of 'little people' in Rozanov's work is important, and requires much more study.

Rozanov's *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore* was the first attempt at a detailed examination of the religious aspect of Dostoevskii's work.<sup>46</sup> Rozanov interprets Dostoevskii as a metaphysician, 'the most profound analyst of the human soul'. In contrast, Tolstoi is interested in the fixed forms of life, and ignores the development of the human person, including his birth and death.<sup>47</sup> Rozanov's opposition of Dostoevskii and Tolstoi had a significant influence on his successors, especially Merezhkovskii, who sees Tolstoi as a writer of the static

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<sup>43</sup> Liza Lucasta Dimbleby, 'Rozanov and the Word' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1996), pp. 10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Tat'iana Rozanova, p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> Judith Deutsch Kornblatt and Richard F. Gustafson, 'Introduction', in *Russian Religious Thought*, ed. by Judith Deutsch Kornblatt and Richard F. Gustafson (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), pp. 3-24 (p. 5).

<sup>46</sup> Marina Kostalevsky, *Dostoevsky and Soloviev: The Art of Integral Vision* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 34.

<sup>47</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1996), p. 34.

forms of the flesh, and Dostoevskii as a writer of the dynamism of the spirit.<sup>48</sup> Rozanov's reading of Dostoevskii is still very important in more recent western scholarship, and has shaped contemporary Dostoevskii studies.<sup>49</sup>

One of the first major critics of Rozanov's work was Strakhov, Rozanov's literary godfather, who published an appraisal of *Legenda o velikom inkvizitore* in 1894. Strakhov admired the way Rozanov extracted the universal message from Dostoevskii's *Legenda*, and also how he probed the wider crisis of belief in Europe and the inadequacies of Catholicism and Lutheranism. Strakhov also admired the way Rozanov tried to re-instill Slavophile values into Russian journalism.<sup>50</sup> It is of particular interest that Strakhov mimics his protégé, by taking Rozanov's book as a starting point from which he expounds his own ideas more broadly on Slavophilism. Strakhov also discusses Dostoevskii's place in Russian culture.

Another early critic was Leont'ev. Rozanov never met Leont'ev, though they shared a warm correspondence during the last eighteen months of the latter's life. Rozanov was greatly influenced by Leont'ev's ideas, and the surviving correspondence clearly depicts a similar emotional dependence which Rozanov also showed towards Strakhov.<sup>51</sup> Rozanov was heavily influenced by Leont'ev's ideas on the organic nature of personal and cultural development, although Rozanov found this pessimistic and in need of amendment.<sup>52</sup> Leont'ev's early death meant that he was not able fully to appraise Rozanov's work, though he did read *O ponimanii* and the *Legenda*. He saw *O ponimanii* as an original development in epistemology, though acknowledging the difficulties in reading such a serious tome.<sup>53</sup> Like Strakhov, he criticizes Rozanov for being too strongly influenced by Dostoevskii, and also understands the importance of Rozanov's subjectivism. However, whereas Strakhov tried to encourage Rozanov to turn to the influence of Tolstoi, Leont'ev persuaded Rozanov to cultivate his own personality.<sup>54</sup> Rozanov has also shaped subsequent interpretations of Leont'ev's thought, such as those of Berdiaev, Merezhkovskii, and Sergii Bulgakov.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> D. Merezhkovskii, *L. Tolstoi i Dostoevskii: Vechnye sputniki* (Moscow: Respublika, 1995), pp. 70-71.

<sup>49</sup> See for example Michael Holquist, 'Dostoevskian Standard Time', *Diacritics*, 3 (1973), 10-13. More recently, a similar point is made in Harriet Murav, 'From *Skandalon* to Scandal: Ivan's Rebellion Reconsidered', *Slavic Review*, 63 (2004), 756-70.

<sup>50</sup> As I shall note in Chapter 4, Strakhov uses the verb 'slavianofil'stvovat'' to describe the processes by which Rozanov resurrects religious values in Russian literature. Rozanov does not tend to delineate in his commentaries the Slavophiles from the 'pochvenniki', but tends to terms all religious writers, including Strakhov, 'slavianofily'.

<sup>51</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Literaturnye izgnanniki. N.N. Strakhov, K.N. Leont'ev*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2001), p. 61.

<sup>52</sup> Sergei Nosov, *V.V. Rozanov: Estetika svobody* (St Petersburg: Logos, 1993), p. 45. Rozanov's reform of Leont'ev's philosophy will be discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 349.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 333.

<sup>55</sup> Dmitry Khanin, 'What Was Leont'ev to Rozanov?', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 41 (1999), 69-84 (pp. 73-74).

Rozanov's view of the person led him into polemics with the major thinkers of his time, including Solov'ev. Both Solov'ev and Rozanov, influenced by Orthodox thought and iconography, see man as the link between God and Earth. However, Solov'ev did not believe Rozanov capable of formulating a philosophy which provides an adequate relationship between the individual and society. Much of their polemics centre around views of religious freedom. Solov'ev criticizes Rozanov for the latter's highly subjective definition of the term. Solov'ev states that Rozanov is unable to transfer this intense subjectivism to the sphere of the objective and universal. For Solov'ev, Rozanov's personalism exists for itself, and Rozanov ignores the wider communion of the Church. As a result, Solov'ev concludes that Rozanov favours religious tolerance only for his own philosophy, and not for that of others.<sup>56</sup>

The complexities in Rozanov's attempts to synthesize the person with society intensified as he moved away from the neo-Slavophiles at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and closer to the group of symbolists around the Merezhkovskii. Merezhkovskii and Filosofov shared Solov'ev's contention that Rozanov could not synthesize his understanding of the person with that of the wider community.<sup>57</sup> Merezhkovskii denied the possibility of formulating a religious outlook that excluded the role of Christ, and therefore concluded that Rozanov has no conception of personality. Merezhkovskii writes that the person is a whole, the 'I' and the 'not-I', which are fulfilled through the interaction of the person with the Absolute. Merezhkovskii accuses Rozanov of ignoring the role of the 'not-I', and of focusing on sex instead as a means of fulfilling the self. For Merezhkovskii, sex leads to the dissolution of personality, and is therefore similar to death in its function.<sup>58</sup> Filosofov also believed that personality depends on a relationship with Christ, which Rozanov was unable to formulate, and therefore Rozanov ignores the social dimensions of thought in favour of the personal.<sup>59</sup> Filosofov underlines the oppositions in Rozanov's work which are ultimately irreconcilable, such as Rozanov's naivety and his genius, and the depth of his thought which jars against the coarseness of his writing. But most important to Filosofov is the opposition created by Rozanov between Christ and the world. Filosofov concludes that Rozanov has purchased his own freedom from sin, at the cost of forfeiting his eternal, immortal personality.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> V.S. Solov'ev, 'Porfirii Golovlev o svobode i vere', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 282-91 (pp. 286-88). Solov'ev touches on an important point which pervades Rozanov's thought, that is his constant attempts to make the subjective universal.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenthal provides a useful comparison of Merezhkovskii and Rozanov. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, *D.S. Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 72-73.

<sup>58</sup> D.S. Merezhkovskii, 'Rozanov', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 408-17 (pp. 415-16).

<sup>59</sup> D.V. Filosofov, 'V.V. Rozanov, "Okolo tserkovnykh sten"', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 5-15 (p. 8).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Although younger than Rozanov, Berdiaev discusses Rozanov in several of his works. In early articles, Berdiaev criticizes Rozanov's omission of Christ from his worldview, and like Filosofov believes that Rozanov foregoes eternal salvation through Christ for the sake of salvation on Earth. He terms this Rozanov's 'immanent pantheism'. Berdiaev believes that Rozanov rejects Christ's role as an icon, and in fact disrupts the connection between God and His creation.<sup>61</sup> Berdiaev notes that Rozanov does not understand the earthly aspects of Orthodoxy, and that he is wrong to associate Russian Christianity with asceticism. Berdiaev, like many subsequent critics, writes that Rozanov constructs a caricature of Orthodoxy.<sup>62</sup> Berdiaev agrees with Gippius that Rozanov thinks physiologically, not logically, and that he favours kinship over personality.<sup>63</sup> In his later discussion of Russian philosophy, Berdiaev links Rozanov to the tendency in Russian religion to view personal activity in terms of its cosmological consequences, and acknowledges Rozanov's service in reasserting the religious value of sex and family life.<sup>64</sup> In addition to the criticism by Russian thinkers, Rozanov was heavily attacked by formal Orthodox theologians and members of the Church, some of whom demanded his excommunication. Much of this centred on Rozanov's rejection of the formal aspects of Church doctrine. For example, he came under frequent criticism from one 'Mirianin', a Petersburg professor of theology, who rejected his sensual approach to marriage, and accused Rozanov of trying to define sexual activity as transcendental. Mirianin rejected the innate holiness of marriage and family life, and posited familial relations as having value only in teaching us about a higher spiritual form of love.<sup>65</sup>

When Rozanov started writing his *Opavshelistika*, many contemporaries evaluated this genre for its stylistic merits rather than for its religious content, a tendency which has persisted in much contemporary criticism. In his 1920 article 'V.V. Rozanov i Vladimir Maiakovskii', Khovin characterizes Maiakovskii as a chance offshoot of one of Rozanov's many ideas.<sup>66</sup> As Nosov notes, Khovin saw in the coincidence of Rozanov's and Maiakovskii's lives a common project, the 'slap in the face of public taste', and the desire to attack society's conventions.<sup>67</sup> Shklovskii also interpreted Rozanov's work as the foundation of a new genre, setting aside the religious content of Rozanov's writings, but exposing their form and the devices contained

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<sup>61</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, 'Khristos i mir', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 25-40 (p. 32).

<sup>62</sup> Tareev concurs. See Tareev, 'V.V. Rozanov', p. 68.

<sup>63</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, *Samopoznanie (Opyt filosofskoi avtobiografii)*, ed. by A.V. Vadimov (Moscow: Kniga, 1991), pp. 147-48.

<sup>64</sup> Berdiaev, *Ruskaia ideia*, pp. 226-27.

<sup>65</sup> See a letter from Mirianin to Rozanov, originally published by Rozanov in the journal *Russkii trud* in 1899, and subsequently reprinted as Mirianin, 'O vozzreniiakh g. Rozanova na supruzheskoe soedinenie', in V.V. Rozanov, *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1995), pp. 153-68 (pp. 156, 161).

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Nosov, pp. 119-20.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

within. Shklovskii concludes that Rozanov's work is a new type of 'novel'.<sup>68</sup> Remizov also played an important role in identifying Rozanov with the new Russian literature. Remizov pays tribute to Rozanov and his writing in *Kukkha* (1923), a collection of letters to Rozanov, and also letters purported to have been written by Rozanov. In her article on *Kukkha*, Crone argues that the only way to respond to the plotless and highly-personal nature of Rozanov's *Opavshelistika* is to reply in the same style. Crone refers to Barthes' theory of 'texts of bliss' to suggest that Remizov is not interested in depicting Rozanov the man, but in imitating his work.<sup>69</sup> Slobin sees Rozanov and Remizov as both reacting against stale forms of nineteenth-century prose, and working on the creation of a new type of subjective literature, though Rozanov is the bolder in pushing the boundaries.<sup>70</sup>

The Bolsheviks attempted to portray Rozanov as anti-revolutionary and pornographic. Trotskii saw the canonization of Rozanov as epitomizing the desolation and decay of the intelligentsia.<sup>71</sup> Trotskii attacks Khovin's interpretation of Rozanov's inconsistency as helping lay the grounds for futurism, but understands this inconsistency instead as Rozanov's cowardice.<sup>72</sup> Trotskii's view was dominant among official perspectives throughout most of the Soviet period, and it was not until the late 1980s that Rozanov again became a permissible topic for academic discussion.<sup>73</sup> After Rozanov's death, many tried to preserve the memory of his life by providing extensive biographical details. Gollerbakh founded a Rozanov study group in the early 1920s, and encouraged other writers to appraise Rozanov's legacy; his book provides useful insights into Rozanov's life and work.<sup>74</sup> Rozanov's eldest daughter Tat'iana left an account of Rozanov's life, which notes aspects of his domestic religious activity and the importance of ritual to him. Her work expresses the dynamism and scope of Rozanov's thought, and the difficulties in formulating a consistent appraisal of her father's work.<sup>75</sup> Siniavskii explains Rozanov's inconsistency as emerging from dynamic physiological processes, rather than being part of an ideological system.<sup>76</sup> In Siniavskii's interpretation of Rozanov, the investigation of phenomena from all sides leads to artistic truth. Siniavskii points out the contradictions in Rozanov's approach, in that Rozanov wrote compulsively while sensing the sinfulness of literary activity. Siniavskii locates Rozanov within the Russian

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<sup>68</sup> Viktor Shklovskii, *Rozanov* (Letchworth: Prideaux Press, 1974).

<sup>69</sup> Anna Lisa Crone, 'Remizov's "Kukkha": Rozanov's "Trousers" Revisited', *Russian Literary Triquarterly*, 19 (1986), 197-211 (pp. 198-99).

<sup>70</sup> Greta N. Slobin, *Remizov's Fictions 1900-1921* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> L. Trotskii, *Literatura i revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924), pp. 34-35.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 44.

<sup>73</sup> The question of Rozanov's informal influence on Soviet culture is an important question which requires much further exploration. One notable case is Pil'niak, who was influenced by Rozanov, and captured the explosive pagan force of Rozanov's sexual vision in his own work. Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 60-62.

<sup>74</sup> E.F. Gollerbakh, *V.V. Rozanov: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1976).

<sup>75</sup> Tat'iana Rozanova, p. 105.

<sup>76</sup> Siniavskii, p. 6.



cultural renaissance of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and plays down similarities between Rozanov and nineteenth-century literature; he identifies Rozanov with Sologub, Blok, and most clearly, Maiakovskii.<sup>77</sup> This identification of Rozanov with a 'new literature' was perpetuated by Soviet 'underground writers' such as Viktor Erofeev.<sup>78</sup>

Among émigrés, religious thinkers broadly divided into two groups, the 'neo-patristic' school, and the speculative thinkers. Nikolai Losskii devotes only three pages of his 500-page *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* to Rozanov. Losskii classifies Rozanov as a 'poet-symbolist', and although he acknowledges Rozanov's 'sparks of genius', points to Rozanov's 'pathological' personality and his 'unhealthy' interest in sex.<sup>79</sup> Florovskii is even less complimentary. He does not see any Christian component in Rozanov, and writes that Rozanov had no faith. He continues that Rozanov 'had no centre', and that his life was 'a chaos of fleeting moments, episodes and flashes'. Florovskii concludes that Rozanov was 'hypnotized by flesh', and incapable of formulating a unified view of the human person.<sup>80</sup> Zernov characterizes Rozanov as participating in the renaissance of Russian religious thought around the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He writes that Rozanov had a principally pagan outlook, denying that Rozanov's thought has an ethical dimension. He concludes that Rozanov's God was 'beyond good and evil'.<sup>81</sup> Zen'kovskii provides a more positive interpretation of Rozanov's thought, following in the traditions of the sophiologists. His view coincides with Berdiaev's, that for Rozanov sexual activity has cosmological implications. Zen'kovskii takes this interpretation one stage further, in that he sees Rozanov's work as providing a crucial link from the nineteenth-century abstract thought of Solov'ev to the personalism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He contends that Russian personalism must absorb the cosmological nature of Rozanov's thought if it is to avoid an excess of 'pure ethicism'.<sup>82</sup>

The demise of the Soviet Union has seen the expansion of the study of Rozanov in different directions in Russia. Sukach, who worked unofficially on Rozanov for many years during the Soviet period, has produced biographical information on Rozanov, as well as editing and republishing his work. Sukach portrays the unique aspects of Rozanov's thought, but also points out his wider connections within the framework of Russian culture, such as his preponderance for reverie and the cosmological aspect of his philosophy.<sup>83</sup> Fateev locates

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>78</sup> Clowes, p. 169.

<sup>79</sup> Nikolai Losskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* (Moscow: Vysshaia shkola, 1991), pp. 435-36.

<sup>80</sup> Georgii Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1937), pp. 461-63.

<sup>81</sup> Nicholas Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), pp. 179-82.

<sup>82</sup> V.V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*, 2 vols (Paris: YMCA Press, 1989), I, p. 468.

<sup>83</sup> V.G. Sukach, 'Zagadka lichnosti Rozanova', in V.V. Rozanov, *O sebe i zhizni svoei* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1990), pp. 7-30 (pp. 10, 12).

Rozanov within the development of Russian religious thought during the Silver Age, and traces the influence of Solov'ev, the symbolists and the neo-Slavophiles.<sup>84</sup> Fateev attempts a wide-ranging analysis of the Beilis case and Rozanov's response to this, although he is unable to reach a definite conclusion about Rozanov's motives. He denies that Rozanov was writing from a cynical hatred of Jews, but points out that Rozanov was not interested in Beilis, but in investigating Jewish rituals per se.<sup>85</sup> Rozanov's treatment of the Beilis case has provoked debate among other scholars. Katsis contextualizes Rozanov's discussions of Beilis within the broader development of Silver Age thought. Katsis points to several instances where this thirst for mystical knowledge was taken to extremes, and also cites the 'Imoslavtsy' controversy, involving the sect which believed that the Name of God contained His very Essence. Katsis argues that if Christians thought that closeness to God could be achieved through His Name, then it stands to reason that they would conclude that Jewish people would try to make God immanent through blood.<sup>86</sup>

Nikoliukin plays down the Jewish question in Rozanov, and looks to the antinomies in his thought. In a 470-page study, Nikoliukin devotes half of one page to the Beilis trial. He ignores any anti-Jewish reaction from Rozanov following Stolypin's assassination, and instead writes that Rozanov criticized the murder due to his democratic and parliamentary leanings.<sup>87</sup> Nikoliukin prefers to depict Rozanov as being interested in the family, not in sex as a religious activity.<sup>88</sup> Nosov also fails to discuss the cosmological implications of Rozanov's philosophy of sex in his discussion of Rozanov's aesthetics, but concentrates on the question of freedom. Nosov is unable to provide a satisfactory connection between the backward-looking nature of Rozanov's thought with the 'aesthetics of freedom' of his later writings. Nosov denies that Rozanov's conception of sexuality has anything to do with love, and writes that Rozanov 'never writes about love'.<sup>89</sup> He contends that Rozanov is a product of European modernism, who takes on certain ideas and then 'mummifies' them.<sup>90</sup> Bibikhin is interested in Rozanov's epistemology, and in particular Rozanov's first work on understanding. He highlights the phenomenological aspects of Rozanov's thought, and contends that he anticipates the work of Husserl and Heidegger.<sup>91</sup> The Pishuns bring a systematic and formal approach to Rozanov's philosophy, and investigate his

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<sup>84</sup> Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, p. 345.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 521-23.

<sup>86</sup> L.F. Katsis, "'Delo Beilisa" v kontekste "Serebrianogo veka"', in *Delo Beilisa: Tsarskaia Rossiia i delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager (Moscow: Garashim, 1995), pp. 412-34 (pp. 430-31).

<sup>87</sup> Nikoliukin, *Golgofa Vasiliia Rozanova*, pp. 410, 412.

<sup>88</sup> Aleksandr Nikoliukin, *Rozanov* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2001).

<sup>89</sup> Nosov, p. 76.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>91</sup> V.V. Bibikhin, *Iazyk filosofii* (Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2002), pp. 176-77.

cosmology and panssexualism.<sup>92</sup> Kazakova provides a study of Rozanov's career with *Novoe Vremia*, and provides a useful insight into the relationship between Rozanov and Suvorin, and Rozanov's broader view of journalism.<sup>93</sup>

In its appraisals of Russian culture, western academia, emerging from the tradition of viewing literature and philosophy as separate fields, has struggled to overcome the willingness of certain Russian figures to merge the boundaries between their works. Only relatively recently have western scholars provided more sophisticated analyses of the dynamic interrelationship between Russian philosophy and literature.<sup>94</sup> Western critics have often found it difficult to explain the inconsistency of Rozanov's thought. Copleston refuses to tackle the issue, and states that this is a question for psychologists, not philosophers.<sup>95</sup>

The first English writer of importance to devote attention to Rozanov was D.H. Lawrence, who first read Kotelianskii's translation of *Uedinennoe* in 1927.<sup>96</sup> Lawrence was struck by the power of Rozanov's work, and especially by his understanding of what it means to be 'alive in the flesh'. He saw Rozanov as a 'kindred spirit'.<sup>97</sup> Lawrence came to Rozanov at a period when he was turning away from his earlier love for Russian literature, especially Dostoevskii, and highlighted the differences between Rozanov and Dostoevskii. He depicts Rozanov's work, especially the *Apokalipsis*, as an attack on Russian Christian values.<sup>98</sup> Lawrence tried in vain to introduce Rozanov to his contemporaries, especially H.G. Wells and T.S. Eliot. In 1935 Lavrin provided an assessment of Lawrence and Rozanov from a literary perspective.<sup>99</sup> Poggioli in his 1957 book confirms the 'Russianness' of Rozanov's thought, and underlines the influence of Dostoevskii on Rozanov. He terms Rozanov 'typically Russian in his class psychology'; he says that as a thinker Rozanov is close to Merezhkovskii and Leont'ev, and as a writer close to Dostoevskii and Leskov.<sup>100</sup>

The majority of academic work on Rozanov in the west is still to be found as articles in journals, or as sections of books on wider aspects of Russian culture. Crone's first major publication on Rozanov was an examination of genre in *Opavshie list'ia*, in which she examines the various 'voices' at play in Rozanov's work.

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<sup>92</sup> V.K. Pishun, and S.V. Pishun, "*Religiia zhizni*" *V. Rozanova* (Vladivostok: Izdatel'stvo dal'nevostochnogo universiteta, 1994).

<sup>93</sup> See Kazakova, especially p. 59.

<sup>94</sup> See for example Kostalevsky's book. In addition, Russian writers and thinkers have never fully embraced the academic traditions of western philosophy, often finding it too abstract and detached from a real and living truth. See Clowes, pp. 7-10.

<sup>95</sup> Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 196.

<sup>96</sup> Heinrich A. Stammer, 'Apocalypse: V.V. Rozanov and D.H. Lawrence', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 16 (1974), 221-43 (p. 221).

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 221, 239.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>100</sup> Renato Poggioli, *Rozanov* (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1957), pp. 27, 49.

This work was designed to introduce a more structured literary approach to Rozanov in the west, and deliberately ignores elements of Rozanov's biography or the content of his religious philosophy.<sup>101</sup> In subsequent studies, Crone has investigated the correspondence of Rozanov's thought and Nietzsche's.<sup>102</sup> She has also studied Rozanov's influence on Mandel'shtam, especially the importance of the word.<sup>103</sup>

The value of the word in Russian culture forms the central part of Dimpleby's thesis, and her examination of the significance of the word in the context of the Silver Age. Dimpleby provides a sophisticated study of the interrelationship between readings of Rozanov and of Bakhtin regarding the word.<sup>104</sup> Rozanov combats the petrification of the word, and focuses on its irreplaceability.<sup>105</sup> Dimpleby stresses the connection between Rozanov and Bakhtin, and their mutual interest in new forms of life and communication. However, the idea of a close correspondence in the thought of Rozanov and Bakhtin is open to question.

Hutchings investigates the tension between the 'singularity required for *narrativity*' against 'the need for the repetition essential for *meaning*'.<sup>106</sup> His framework establishes an opposition between art as representation in the western tradition, and the use of the icon as transfigurative. Hutchings examines Rozanov's *Opavshie list'ia*, which he sees as an attempt to stress the primacy of the self over the general. But he does concede that the self is necessarily doomed to enter into a relationship with the universal: 'to extol the self as a universal value means to enter the territory inhabited by universal values: that of the anonymous other'.<sup>107</sup> Hutchings sees the key to Rozanov's work in 'the confrontation of languages, the circular process of self's alienation from, domestication of, surrender to, and realiation from the other'.<sup>108</sup> In contrast, Clowes denies that there can be any harmony between private and public discourse in Rozanov.<sup>109</sup> She argues that, in *Uedinennoe*, Rozanov is attempting to infiltrate and dismantle public forms of discourse, and to replace these with his own 'anti-discourse'; this marks a temporary victory for private over public speech.<sup>110</sup> Clowes argues that Rozanov's approach broke down when he crossed 'discursive boundaries from the elite to the public

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<sup>101</sup> Anna Lisa Crone, *Rozanov and the End of Literature: Polyphony and the Dissolution of Genre in Solitaria and Fallen Leaves* (Würzburg: Jal, 1978), pp. 22-34.

<sup>102</sup> Anna Lisa Crone, 'Nietzschean, All Too Nietzschean? Rozanov's Anti-Christian Critique', in *Nietzsche in Russia*, ed. by Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 95-112.

<sup>103</sup> Anna Lisa Crone, 'Mandelstam's Rozanov', in *Stoletie Mandel'shtama: materialy simpoziuma*, ed. by Robin Aizlewood and Diana Myers (Tenaflly: Ermitazh, 1994), pp. 56-71 (pp. 56-57).

<sup>104</sup> Dimpleby, pp. 15-16.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> Stephen C. Hutchings, *Russian Modernism: The Transfiguration of the Everyday* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 41. Emphasis in original.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>109</sup> Clowes, p. 180.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

domain' in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*. She concludes that Rozanov actually damaged the burgeoning forms of public philosophical debate by attacking them from the inside.<sup>111</sup>

Rozanov's handling of the Jewish question, and existing scholarship on this, is very important in Mondry's work, which attempts to 'modernize' Rozanov's thought.<sup>112</sup> In particular, she has criticized Nikoliukin for publishing *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* without providing a careful explanation of Rozanov's attitude towards the Jews. Mondry rejects Nikoliukin's 'clichéd' attempts to explain Rozanov's inconsistency towards the Jews by placing him within the antinomical traditions of Russian thought, and notes that anti-Jewish and pro-Jewish sentiment are often aspects of the same phenomenon.<sup>113</sup> Mondry locates Rozanov in the wider scientific theories of the modern period, such as those of Gilman, which posit the Jewish body as 'other' from the perspective of both race and gender.<sup>114</sup> Kurganov also uses this approach in a case study of Rozanov's appreciation of Pushkin and Lermontov, the latter being preferred as he demonstrates a sensual, as opposed to a classical, approach to the world.<sup>115</sup>

Historical studies have also taken note of Rozanov's wider contribution to Russian culture, especially Russia's sexual history. Naiman notes the profound influence of Weininger on early twentieth-century Russian thought, especially on Solov'ev, Tolstoi, Rozanov and Berdiaev.<sup>116</sup> One crucial link that Naiman misses is Rozanov's work on androgyny, and he does not attempt to formulate a connection between this aspect of Rozanov's thought and the attempt to create a new Soviet body. Engelstein charts the use of sex by anti-Semites as 'an instrument in the war for cultural and racial superiority'.<sup>117</sup> She emphasizes Rozanov's anti-Jewish works and his attempt to link the Iushchinskii murder with abnormal Jewish sexual practices. She contrasts Rozanov's fixation with sexual power, to Weininger's dislike of sex and reproduction. Whereas Rozanov viewed the Jewish body as essentially feminine and sexually passive, Weininger depicted Jewish people as masculine and sexually active.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>112</sup> Henrietta Mondry, 'Beyond the Boundary: Vasilii Rozanov and the Animal Body', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 4 (1999), 651-73 (p. 651).

<sup>113</sup> Mondry, 'Is the End of Censorship in the Former Soviet Union a Good Thing?', p. 115. I shall examine this point in Chapter 3.

<sup>114</sup> Mondri, 'Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i ruskaia literatura', pp. 165, 181.

<sup>115</sup> Efim Kurganov, 'Vasilii Rozanov, Mikhail Lermontov i Pesnia pesnei', *Scando-Slavica*, 46 (2000), 5-16.

<sup>116</sup> Naiman, pp. 30-35.

<sup>117</sup> Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 305.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 311.

#### **4. Structure of the Thesis**

Perhaps the most important aspect of Russian religious thought which Rozanov assumes from his predecessors is the manner in which they try to reform Russian Christianity. Rozanov considers himself a faithful Christian who understands the true meaning of religion, and who believes that the leadership of the Church has lost sight of its origins. Yet he would never be able to attempt his renewal of the Church if it was not for the acknowledged precedent set by Solov'ev and his project to reform Church doctrine. Despite the fact that Rozanov rejects Solov'ev's ideas, he acknowledges that the latter's revolt paved the way for him to challenge the leadership of the Church. Rozanov's route, however, is unique; he distinguishes himself by considering himself solely able to bring the Church back into contact with its pre-Christian foundations. Therefore the manner of Rozanov's engagement, acceptance, and rejection of, Church tenets and of Russian thought itself reveals much about the development of philosophical culture in Russia.

The first chapter begins with an extended examination of Russian Orthodoxy, and the tensions it posits between the Creation and the Resurrection as events which justify the sanctity of the world. The chapter then examines how Rozanov attempts to reform Russian Orthodoxy by replacing the Apocalypse with the Creation as the basis for Christianity. Rozanov insists that man's instinct is to look back to the manner in which the universe was created as the basis for his relationship with God. He creates an opposition between the Church as defined as the body of the people and the leadership of the Orthodox Church, which is alien to the Russian way of life. This is also an epistemological question, as Rozanov believes that knowledge emerges from the popular masses, and does not rest in the rational judgements of a detached elite. In his investigation of Orthodox asceticism, Rozanov finds the asexuality of Jesus particularly harmful. For Rozanov, Christ undoes God's work, and therefore Rozanov combats not just Orthodox doctrine, but the very person of Christ. Rozanov rejects the view that Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, but insists that He is a child of the Father, a creation like all other life. Here Rozanov sides with the Arian tendencies of Eastern Christianity, but places Jesus in opposition to the world. Christ's seedlessness disrupts the creative work of God, and it is this 'dephallization' of religion which Rozanov attacks. Some of his major polemics with contemporaries arise from the fact that Rozanov redefines Christianity independently of Christ, and this paradox makes study of his Orthodoxy particularly complex.

Rozanov focuses his attention on the origins of man's religious behaviour, which he locates in ancient Egypt, and his study of Egypt forms the basis of the second chapter. Rozanov's Egyptian work has been sorely neglected in scholarship, and this area requires much further investigation. Rozanov examines Egyptian myths and drawings, and sees their religion as being focused on the Creation and childbirth. Much of his work is

historically inaccurate, but in terms of his religious thought these mistakes are largely irrelevant. The manner in which Rozanov designs new truths from ancient myths demonstrates in itself the importance of creative activity. There is also a need to examine further Rozanov's view of cultural development, in which he depicts Russia as inheritor of the Egyptian, not the classical, tradition. For Rozanov, Egyptian myths contain their religion, whereas the western philosophical tradition is presented as a deviation from man's inherently physical relationship with God. So far, there has been no detailed discussion of the consequences of this vision of history. This chapter begins with an extended examination of mythology, and of the tension between mythology and philosophy. It also examines modern theories of God as embodied, and the implications for worshipping a God who has a procreating body. Hare has written an excellent account on the issue of a sexual God within Christianity.<sup>119</sup> Eilberg-Schwartz has gone into the tensions inherent in monotheism when worshipping a male, embodied God.<sup>120</sup>

For Rozanov, the body is a vital component of religion, which he feels Orthodox has forgotten, and he plays an important role in the rediscovery of the body in Russian and European culture. Recent history has seen an explosion in scholarship on the concept of the body.<sup>121</sup> Vernant argues that 'the body is no longer posited as a fact of nature, a constant and universal reality, but as an entirely problematic notion, a historical category, steeped in imagination, and one that must be deciphered within a particular culture by defining the functions it assumes and the forms it takes on within that culture'.<sup>122</sup> The force of this argument contends that there is no innate, natural view of the body, which now has a multitude of various meanings influenced by the social structures of the time.<sup>123</sup> One scholar writes that the issue is now so problematic that it is difficult to talk of the 'body' at all.<sup>124</sup> Turner argues for a more living, less abstract evaluation of our somatized status: he notes that whatever we are, we are embodied and this affects our understanding of ourselves and of the world. We not just *are* bodies, but we also *do* bodies.<sup>125</sup> This is a line of thought which was very important in the pragmatic philosophy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially to philosophers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. An important development is the presentation of the human body as a mediator between the person and the outside world. In

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<sup>119</sup> Tom Hare, *ReMembering Osiris: Number, Gender and the Word in Ancient Egyptian Representational Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>120</sup> Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus and Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Boston: Beacon, 1994).

<sup>121</sup> Patricia Cox Miller, 'Visceral Seeing: The Holy Body in Late Ancient Christianity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12 (2004), 391-411 (p. 393).

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Bryan S. Turner, 'The Body in Western Society: Social Theory and its Perspectives', in *Religion and the Body*, ed. by Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 15-41 (p. 17).

<sup>124</sup> Miller, p. 393.

<sup>125</sup> Turner, p. 19.

this way, the body has become more prominent as a tool in challenging the objective reason dominant in twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy. Foucault has argued that the (ab)use of the body represents the dynamics of society's interaction with the individual.<sup>126</sup> Douglas writes extensively on the interaction of social and personal interpretations of the body, and argues that 'the social body constrains that way the physical body is perceived', but continues that 'the physical experience of the body [...] sustains a particular view of society'.<sup>127</sup> Merleau-Ponty uses the body to demonstrate the unreliability of objective reason; he claims that the way we view the body is internal and direct, and yet affects external thought.<sup>128</sup>

Future scholarship on Rozanov must pay greater attention to the implications of what it means to be a body. Mondry has started work on this area, but there is still more work to be done. Rozanov's God is to a certain extent embodied, a contentious view which has far-reaching consequences for his thought. These implications have not yet been fully investigated. Particularly, future work on Rozanov must examine his philosophy in the light of recent studies which provide a more positive assessment of the use of the body in the history of Christian worship.<sup>129</sup> Rozanov played an important role in the critique of rationalism which developed in Russia and Europe towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, he is particularly concerned not so much with the ontology of the body, as with its activity. Rozanov evaluates the world in terms of activity rather than simply being, and it is important that scholarship takes into account Rozanov's focus on the role played by the body in man's deification.

Rozanov's examination of the way human activity reaffirms the links with the ancient world forms the basis of Chapter 3. This chapter will address a gap in existing scholarship by examining the role of ritual and repetition in Rozanov. Much scholarship has hitherto seen Rozanov as being fixated with unrepeatable forms of behaviour as a means of creating new forms of life. This has not accounted for his interest in ritual behaviour and ceremonies. Rozanov is close to traditions in Russian Orthodoxy which see truth as lying in the form of rituals. However, Rozanov also underlines activities which can bring about new life. This chapter will also take into account Rozanov's study of Jewish worship, arguing that Rozanov believes that he might locate in Jewish ceremonies a lost link to ancient Egypt. Rozanov initially formulated positive views about Jewish worship, especially rites which underline the importance of reproduction. Recent scholarship on ritual as a means of self-

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<sup>126</sup> See especially his investigations of social power relations and sexuality in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley, 3 vols (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), I, pp. 104-07.

<sup>127</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 69.

<sup>128</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), pp. 118-22.

<sup>129</sup> See for example Miller, or Georgia Frank, "'Taste and See": The Eucharist and the Eyes of Faith in the Fourth Century', *The American Society of Church History*, 70 (2001), 619-43. Current studies in the US are examining the use of smell in early Christianity, which will also be helpful for work on Rozanov.



understanding may provide new and interesting approaches to Rozanov's work: Smith states that ritual is a vital means of self-location in the world, which could have an impact on Rozanov's view of the home as a place of worship.<sup>130</sup> In their own way, thinkers such as Girard and Eliade have considered the social importance of repeated religious behaviour. Early in his career, Rozanov placed Judaism in opposition to Christianity. The former expressed a more valid religious truth as it upheld physical worship, which was absent in the latter. However, Rozanov was required to revise his interpretations in the wake of Iushchinskii's murder. His obsession with bodily practices led him down a path from which the only possible exit in the aftermath of the Beilis case was abruptly to reject Jewish forms of physical worship.

Rozanov's work is dominated by the struggle to reconcile the body and the mind, which he attempts to achieve through the act of writing. The final chapter looks at Rozanov's understanding of the writing process as a religious act. The starting point is Remizov's statement, with which Rozanov concurs, that to write is to pray.<sup>131</sup> There are also other theories in religious studies that liken praying to the act of writing.<sup>132</sup> This chapter examines how Rozanov formulates a relationship with God and with his reader, and how he understands the role of his writing – both writing as a process and the completed product, the book – in these relations. In this way it will attempt a closer understanding of the interrelationship between the backward-looking character of Rozanov's thought and the 'modernist' style of his writing. Rozanov considers writing a sexual act, and the planting of new ideas into the reader's mind is a form of insemination. Rozanov is intent on persuading his readers to procreate, and his works both encourage and justify sexual relations. His often deceptively simplistic discussions of his home life have a profound universal relevance, as for Rozanov they share similarities with the Creation, and also with childbirth. In Rozanov's idea of the microcosm, the act of writing, or the conception of a new child, affects the entire universe.

As Hutchings has noticed, studies of Rozanov can be divided into two groups. The former school, of which Stammler is representative, has concentrated on the content of Rozanov's religious thought, and has appraised the *Opavshelistika* genre as an offshoot of this; the second group has imposed a literary approach on his last books.<sup>133</sup> Chapter 4 is in part an attempt to reconcile trends in these two schools. Rozanov was fascinated with man's prehistory and his elemental approach to religion. Like Nietzsche and Lawrence, he found the mechanized and technological nature of modern society distasteful and harmful. Rozanov's focus is very

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<sup>130</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>131</sup> Aleksei Remizov, *Kukhka: Rozanovy pis'ma* (New York: Serebrianyi vek, 1978), p. 59.

<sup>132</sup> These are examined, for example, in Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Meaning of Prayer* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1949), p. 32.

<sup>133</sup> Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, p. 179.

much on mankind's past. Rozanov's ambition was to be a philosopher of history, he had never wanted to become a journalist or an author. Yet his writing style is often depicted as belonging to the modernist period of European literature. To these critics Rozanov is seen as forward-looking, a visionary whose style broke new ground in the development of the novel.<sup>134</sup> The 'modernist' aesthetics of Rozanov's *Opavshelistika* should be seen as emerging from the religious character of his thought. Rozanov was keen to posit the organic nature of man's development, and therefore it is inappropriate to assess the different stages of Rozanov's career as being completely isolated from one another. Pyman has laid some ground for this approach in a brief description of the development of Rozanov's work. She stresses that Rozanov viewed the word as a seed, and sees the entirety of Rozanov's career as an attempt to unlock its potential.<sup>135</sup> Rozanov's deepest concern is that in Russia the word has lost all connections with flesh, and his writing marks an attempt to bring these two together.<sup>136</sup>

Rozanov's rejection of philosophy presents difficulties for the analysis of his thought. He never considered himself a member of that strange school, initiated in his view by Solov'ev, of 'Russian philosophy', no matter how intensely he engaged with Russia's thinkers. 'Russian philosophy' is in a way for him un-Russian. Rozanov rejects the rational approach to the world, in favour of an intimate and homely understanding. He often uses domestic terms to help make sense of grand theological arguments, describing the Earth as God's house, and warning that a Russian revolution would result in 'much broken crockery'.<sup>137</sup> Yet, bizarrely for such a shy pacifist, and especially for someone so concerned with new beginnings and creation, Rozanov often has a strangely negative attitude towards Russian thought. Of course, every philosopher is in his own way apocalyptic, as he wishes to replace prior schemes of thought with new truths.<sup>138</sup> But Rozanov is particularly aggressive towards the ideas of his predecessors and contemporaries, and deliberately sets out to 'kill other people's thoughts'.<sup>139</sup> It is ironic, then, although quiet typical of philosophers in general, that his desire to present a new type of thinking which is based on creativity results in Rozanov's approach being in its own way destructive. Rozanov's ideas are not new, but are founded on man's ancient history. The manner in which he

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<sup>134</sup> The assessment of Rozanov as an important contributor to European modernist literature was investigated in western scholarship in the 1970s, and appears to be ingrained today. See, for example, Eugene Lampert, 'Modernism in Russia 1893-1917', in *Modernism 1890-1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976, 1991), pp. 134-50 (p. 138-39).

<sup>135</sup> Avril Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 138.

<sup>136</sup> Rozanov defines prophecy as the ability to make the Word of God flesh. V.V. Rozanov, 'Iz sedoi drevnosti', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipt*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), pp. 22-68 (p. 25).

<sup>137</sup> *Uedinennoe*, p. 197.

<sup>138</sup> Gerald L. Burns, *Tragic Thoughts at the End of Philosophy: Language, Literature, and Ethical Theory* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1999), p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 158.

presents these thoughts as constituting a new beginning helps Rozanov to affirm the reality of the Creation and the importance of man to respond with creativity.

This thesis aims to fill a gap in existing scholarship, by demonstrating that Rozanov seeks to achieve this reconciliation between pre-history and contemporary Russia primarily by focusing his attention on the activity of the Creation. This in turn upholds Rozanov's nationalism, ensuring that the Russian people are united through their common mystical-biological ties. The revolt against contemporary Christianity and the modern (to many people's minds decadent) values it represented was an important cultural movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rozanov's thought can be contextualized in the potent current of neo-paganism which swept through Europe and Russia at this time. Nietzsche was one of the most important and influential proponents of this trend, but the zealous investigation of pre-Christian motifs can also be found in thinkers and writers as diverse as Wagner, von List, Yeats, Joyce, and many others. Rozanov also shares in the 'Blut und Boden' ideas common to many cultural mythologies at this time, which, according to Lewisohn, climaxed with the traumatic events of the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, Rozanov does not oppose paganism with Christianity, but tries to reconcile the two, seeing Christianity as a modern form of man's ancient religion. Rozanov is not entirely successful in this project, to a large extent because he takes specific facts and then attempts to construct from them grand historical schemes.<sup>141</sup> Yet this myth-making, the construction of new universal truths from subjective knowledge, which is widespread in European modernism and the Russian Silver Age, in Rozanov's work is used in a novel way; Rozanov's creation of new truths always points back to the Creation as a reflection and continuation of God's creative activity. Rozanov's peculiar writing processes are designed to demonstrate the validity of his message, as these mirror the processes God employed to create man and the world.

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<sup>140</sup> Lewisohn discusses the use of pagan mythology in Nazi ideology in Ludwig Lewisohn, 'The Revolt Against Civilization', in *Essays in Context*, ed. by Sandra FehI Tropp and Ann Pierson D'Angelo (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 117-25.

<sup>141</sup> Tareev accused Rozanov of trying to find the universal mandates of Christianity in individual historic events, writing in a letter dated 30 December 1905 (O.S.): 'You want to turn the specific into the general, into the universal; you believe that what happened in Babylon or Palestine happens now in the Russian countryside'. NIOR RGB. F. 248. M 3823. Ed. khr. 14, p. 4.

## Chapter One

### **Rozanov and the Russian Orthodox Church: The Creation and Eschatology**

#### **1. Rozanov and the Creation**

The question of eschatology is the most important aspect of Rozanov's engagement with the Russian Orthodox Church. Rozanov believes that the Creation of the world by God, as described in the Old Testament, is the most important moment in human history. This marks the point where the ideal realm brings the material directly into being. Man was created in the image and likeness of God, and enjoyed an ideal existence in paradise, before succumbing to original sin and eating from the Tree of Knowledge. His punishment is death. Rozanov rejects the Christian view that salvation is guaranteed by Christ's Resurrection and will only come in a purported next life, when the world will be eventually transfigured into the Kingdom of God. Rozanov's thought is utopian, but he locates the evidence for this utopia here on Earth, at the beginning of time. Therefore Rozanov posits human history as potentially harmful, in that it can bring about man's separation from his prelapsarian innocence.

The Creation opens up many questions in the way Rozanov relates to his national Church. He believes that the Russian people have a natural reverence towards the Earth. Their religiosity is manifested in religious patterns which they perform unthinkingly. However, Rozanov believes that the Russian Church has suffered by falling under the leadership of the Byzantines, who have imposed a foreign theology. The Orthodox Church has diverted the Russians from their affinity to the world, and instead taught them that salvation lies only in the next life. Rozanov takes a bottom-up perspective to religiosity, which he believes should emerge spontaneously from the people's natural connection with the Earth. Rozanov believes that the eschatology imposed by Greek Orthodoxy has had disastrous consequences for the Russian people. Taught to favour an abstract afterlife over this life, the Russians have neglected their connections with the Earth, and in many cases have actively sought death.

The period from the late 1890s to around 1910 is very important, as during this time Rozanov formulated some of his most important ideas on Orthodox doctrine and the Church's role in society. Rozanov's articles on the Church from this time will form the major area of focus for this chapter. These articles were initially published in various periodicals, especially *Novoe Vremia*. The most important of these articles have been recently republished in Moscow in various compilations. The works predominantly used in this chapter are *Religiia, filosofiiia, kul'tura* (1992), *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh* (1994), and *Okolo tserkovnykh sten* (1999).

However it will also refer to other works by Rozanov on Orthodoxy where appropriate. As it is the contention of this thesis that Rozanov's ideas can be systematized around his theory of the Creation, the articles in this chapter will be treated synchronically rather than diachronically.

## 2. Eschatology in the Russian Orthodox Church

The central event in Christianity is the Resurrection of Christ, portrayed in all four gospels. This is re-enacted in Christian worship through the Eucharist, where man is required to eat Christ's body and drink His blood. Christ's sacrifice is portrayed as the renewal of the covenant between God and man, overcoming his separation from the divine which results from original sin. Participation in the Eucharist promises salvation, but only outside human time.<sup>1</sup>

Rozanov's focus on the Resurrection emerges from the contradiction in the way Christianity evaluates the material realm. Christianity teaches that the world is holy, as it was created by God. Yet at the same time, it argues that the physical world is in a state of flux. God and creation are viewed not statically, but in a state of constant movement (kinesis) towards the eschaton. Creation is necessarily defined by this movement, which consists in the fact that matter, and all created beings, are required to fulfil their divine purpose, or *logos*, i.e. transfiguration at the end of time.<sup>2</sup> Creation is marked by a seemingly contradictory double movement of God's manifestation. The descent of the divine to Earth, and God's manifestation in infinite multiplicity, takes place alongside the striving of each object on Earth upwards towards unity.<sup>3</sup> God's activity is seen as His continuing revelation on Earth in the economy of the Son through the Holy Spirit.

The true purpose of Creation is, therefore, not contemplation of divine essence (which is inaccessible), but communion in divine energy, transfiguration, and transparency to divine action in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Meyendorff writes that the very existence of creation is dependent on this dual activity of God and man.<sup>5</sup> Dynamism in the Orthodox tradition is therefore presented as the movement of each created entity towards its

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<sup>1</sup> Vassiliadis argues that the Eucharist is the 'sole expression of the church's identity'; but this should be considered a 'glimpse and manifestation of the eighth day'. Therefore in Orthodoxy, he writes, the central event of worship is 'exclusively *eschatological*'. See Petros Vassiliadis, *Eucharist and Witness: Orthodox Perspectives on the Unity and Mission of the Church* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), pp. 56-60. Emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (London/Oxford: Mowbrays, 1974), p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> C.E. Rolt, *Dionysius the Areopagite on the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology* (Montana: Kessinger, 1992), p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 133.

divinely-set purpose, alongside the simultaneous manifestation of God to the world. Worship in the Orthodox tradition is seen as placing ‘emphasis on God as motion – an energy to participate in, rather than a static entity to be figured’.<sup>6</sup> Such teachings permit a division between the concepts of divine time and human time, and human history and eschatology. The Church posits its earthly task in some way as essentially complete, therefore denying a soteriological meaning to earthly history; all teachings and dogma, including the Liturgy, have already been given through God and Christ, and do not require addition or alteration. At the same time, it insists that each moment in human time has meaning only in terms of the eschaton. Human experience only has religious significance by continued reference to the Resurrection. The cosmologic workings of Christ ensure that Orthodox time has a definitely eschatological content, and the tensions this causes between divine and human time are not easily reconciled. For example, Zizioulas writes that the Orthodox are ‘traditionalists’, but are also simultaneously ‘detached from the problems of history and preoccupied with the “triumphalism” of their liturgy’.<sup>7</sup>

In Russian Orthodoxy, the Resurrection has retained a special significance, which has permeated Russian cultural consciousness.<sup>8</sup> The Resurrection takes precedence over all other events in Christological activity, including the birth of Christ.<sup>9</sup> It is the Resurrection which allows man to participate in deification, or theosis, the cornerstone of Eastern Christianity. Deification has long been the central tenet of Orthodoxy, long neglected in the Western Church, upheld by Athanasius’ famous mantra that ‘God became man so that man can become God’. Deification has been defined by one scholar as ‘the acquisition of immortality, bliss and a superhuman fullness and intensity of life often coupled with a transfiguration of the natural cosmos itself’.<sup>10</sup> The implication of such a teaching is that man and the cosmos are imperfect, and in need of transfiguration.

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<sup>5</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Zizioulas writes that the concepts of history and eschatology in Orthodox teaching can only be synthesized with extreme difficulty, through the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a tradition, but at the same time also acts as remembrance of future salvation. He also concedes that the fact that Orthodox theology has often neglected the role of the Eucharist in mediating between history and the eschaton has meant that it has often been difficult to reconcile the two, leading to an emphasis on eschatology. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985), pp. 171-88.

<sup>8</sup> Rancour-Laferriere discusses the ‘Russian fascination with resurrection’. Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, *The Slave Soul of Russia: Moral Masochism and the Cult of Suffering* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> A.V. Kartashev, *Tserkov’, Istoriia, Rossiia: Stat’i i vystupleniia* (Moscow: Probel, 1996), p. 167. As Vassiliadis notes, the birth of Christ is itself an eschatological event, as this marks the moment where the eschaton enters human history; Christ’s coming only has value in terms of his future suffering and Resurrection. Vassiliadis, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> Richard F. Gustafson, ‘Soloviev’s Doctrine of Salvation’, in *Russian Religious Thought*, ed. by Judith Deutsch Kornblatt and Richard F. Gustafson, pp. 31-48 (p. 38).

By making deification contingent on the death and Resurrection of Christ, the Orthodox Church teaches that salvation can only be achieved after our own deaths. Death becomes a necessity in achieving deification. Therefore the concept of death gains great importance in Orthodox worship, and also by extension within Russian culture. Nil Sorskii, one of the most revered Russian saints, warns us that we must all think of death when we pray, avoiding hubris and the temptation of carnal passion.

And so, meditate on the brevity of our earthly life. Let us be concerned with the hour of our death by not giving ourselves over to the worries of this world and to unprofitable cares. ‘Every person crumbles to dust,’ says Holy Scripture. In spite of the fact that we and the whole world seemingly are in charge of ourselves, nevertheless, let us abide in the grave, taking nothing there of this world, neither beauty nor glory nor power; no honors nor any other temporal good creature. Let us look into the grave and what do we see? We see our created beauty, now without form, without glory, nothing good remaining. Seeing our bones, do we know to whom they belonged? Was he a king, a beggar, honorable or without honor? All that the world considers beautiful, powerful, turns again into nothingness as a beautiful flower fades and dies, as a shadow passes by. Thus all mankind must pass away. Feel this instability and call out to your soul, ‘Oh, how strange, why does this remain ever for us a mystery? How were we brought into bodily existence? Why do we return to dust in death?’ Truly, this is the will of God, for so it was written, after Adam’s fall, he fell under sickness, subject to every woe. Death entered creation and it overcame us too. But the foreseen death of the Lord and his ineffable wisdom teach us that, by his coming, he overcame the serpent and gave us resurrection, transferring his slaves and servants into life everlasting.

Thus we should keep in mind the thought of our Lord’s Second Coming and our resurrection and the Last Judgement, recalling that our Lord taught about these future events found in his Gospel.<sup>11</sup>

Nil Sorskii teaches that the Orthodox must constantly focus on the image of his own grave, rejecting the passions and directing his attention to the Resurrection. Physical suffering takes on significance in ascetic thought, as it demonstrates the denial of the body and the temptations of Satan. Kartashev warns that before we achieve resurrection we must undergo the torment of life and then our own Golgotha.<sup>12</sup> This desire to suffer

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<sup>11</sup> Nil Sorsky, *The Complete Writings*, ed. and trans. by George A. Maloney (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), pp. 93-94.

<sup>12</sup> Kartashev, p. 167. Importantly for Rozanov, who had a most positive attitude towards money, the Orthodox Church makes an ideal out of the concept of poverty, following Christ’s example, and teaching the dangers of wealth. For example, Rozanov’s peer Ioann Kronshtadtskii writes, ‘Богатство надмевает и ожесточает сердце человека, неблагоприятно и неблагодарно пользующегося им. Он презирает соестественного себе человека, во всем подобного ему, не узнает в нем своего брата, считает его едва не хуже животных, потому что животных он ласкает и кормит, а человеком бедным гнушается и отказывает ему даже в своих крохах.’ Quoted in Mitropolit Veniamin, *Otets Ioann Kronshtadtskii* (St Petersburg/Kronshtadt:

physically for the sake of salvation has become an ideal in Russian Orthodoxy, with a broader resonance in Russian culture. In her seminal work, Gorodetskaia argues that the desire for humility, based on Christ's kenosis, has become a national ideal.<sup>13</sup> Rancour-Laferriere talks of the 'moral masochism' which lies at the heart of Orthodox piety.<sup>14</sup>

The Orthodox are set the model of Christ's sacrifice, which reaffirms the truth of the Resurrection and the life to come. By eating the flesh of Christ, worshippers are drawn into the body of the Church, also understood as the body of Christ, and thereby engage in communal salvation.<sup>15</sup> The Eucharist is the ultimate sign that life can be identified with being. This life is understood corporately; taking the Host must be performed as a communal event.

The life of the eucharist is the life of God Himself, but [...] it is the life of *communion* with God, such as exists within the Trinity and is actualized within the members of the eucharistic community. Knowledge and communion are identical.<sup>16</sup>

To the Orthodox, communal worship is seen as a liberation from the biological, genealogical and national categories which keep men apart. The gift of the Eucharist means that humans are united on a horizontal, spiritual basis. The advent of Christianity therefore marks a fundamental shift from the religions which preceded it, especially ancient Egyptian religion and Judaism; these pre-Christian systems tend to place greater significance on the vertical connections between men, underlining the vitality of the family, reproduction and generational ties.

In Christianity, the Eucharist is initially presented precisely as bread and wine, which our bodily senses perceive as existing as such in this world. During the liturgical process, however, the offerings are transmuted into the body and blood of Christ. However, we are unable to sense with our body the Eucharist as the body of Christ – the sacrifice becomes Christ's body only on a metaphysical level. In fact, if the sacrifice does literally

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Voskresenie, 2000), p. 644. I shall return to the question of Rozanov and the Orthodox ideal of poverty in Chapter 4.

<sup>13</sup> See Nadejda Gorodetzky, *The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought* (London: SPCK, 1938), pp. 25-26.

<sup>14</sup> Rancour-Laferriere argues, following arguments by Byron and Nietzsche, that Christ's humiliation was 'deemed purposeful only by guilty Christian believers after the event'. Therefore the voluntary sufferings of martyrs are not designed to achieve salvation, but are masochistic. He continues to argue that 'among Orthodox believers to this day a sense of guilt is pervasive, and Christ's masochism lies at the heart of this'. Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, 'The Moral Masochism at the Heart of Christianity: Evidence from Russian Orthodox Iconography and Icon Veneration', *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, 8 (2003), 12-22 (p. 14).

<sup>15</sup> Vassiliadis, p. 52.

<sup>16</sup> Zizioulas, p. 81.



turn into flesh and blood, we are required to put the Eucharist aside until it reconverts to bread and wine.<sup>17</sup> The way the Orthodox approaches the Eucharist, therefore, exemplifies the division between the physical and the metaphysical. This division corresponds to the gulf between the earthly and the heavenly, underlining the suggestion that the body relates to the Earth, and therefore cannot be saved. As theories of the Eucharist were advanced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, theologians encouraged believers to develop their ‘spiritual senses’, which existed alongside, but which were superior to, their five physical senses. Although we see and touch the bread and wine, our spiritual senses are required by an act of faith to understand the Eucharist as Christ’s body. As Frank explains, these theories were first put forward by the heretic Origen, but were developed by Orthodox teachers, such as Cyril of Jerusalem and Bishop Ambrose of Milan.<sup>18</sup> Such teachings further emphasized the privileging of the soul over the body in Orthodox worship. Frank writes that ‘true contemplation [...] meant shutting down the eyes of the body in order to see with the eyes of the soul’. No wonder, then, that Origen could insist ‘we have no need of a body to know God’, since the ‘mind alone with the spiritual sense would suffice’.<sup>19</sup>

The apparent rejection of this world in Orthodoxy and the prioritization of the spirit over matter is demonstrated through teachings on apophatic theology. Influential in this respect are the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, believed to originate around the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Dionysius differentiated between positive (cataphatic) and negative (apophatic) theology. The former involves assertions about the nature of God, which provides only an imperfect knowledge of the divine. The latter involves the negation of all that is not God in order to permit our ascent to Him.

All knowledge has as an object that which is. Now God is beyond all that exists. In order to approach Him it is necessary to deny all that is inferior to Him, that is to say, all which is.<sup>20</sup>

Dionysius’s mysticism presents the ascent to God as involving three stages: purification, illumination, and finally perfection, or theology. This process is intrinsically linked with the movement ‘beyond perceptible symbols to their meanings, and then beyond these conceptual meanings to unknowing’.<sup>21</sup> There is nothing on Earth which can help the worshipper achieve knowledge of God. Everything perceived and understood should

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<sup>17</sup> Although Sergii Bulgakov is more rightly seen as someone who favoured the development of religious philosophy, he provides an excellent description of ‘traditional’ Orthodox theology regarding the approach to the Eucharist. Sergius Bulgakov, *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist*, trans. and ed. by Boris Jakim (New York: Lindisfarne, 1997), pp. 65-67.

<sup>18</sup> Frank, “‘Taste and See’”, p. 636.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 627.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God*, trans. by Asheleigh Moorhouse (London: Faith Press, 1963), p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 191.

be left behind.<sup>22</sup> In the initial stages of the ascent to God, it is possible to make affirmative comments, such as likening Him to a 'lion,' a 'bear', or the 'sun of righteousness'. However, this cataphatic theology can only apply to the economy of God, that is to His manifestation on Earth. Any assertions about God must be increasingly denied, until the believer eventually moves beyond speech, concepts and reason.

Apophatic theology suggests a denial of our body's role in salvation. Dionysius demands a gradual foregoing of all sensible objects, which have no role in communion with God.<sup>23</sup> He uses as an example Moses, who left behind his people to climb Mount Sinai, to be immersed in the blinding cloud of God's presence where nothing was open to sensible perception. Although Dionysius maintains that some degree of relationship between man and the Godhead is possible, as God is the creator of mankind and creatorship implies some degree of relativity, the Orthodox believer is nevertheless confronted by the fact that this relationship cannot involve the true Essence of God. Any direct communion with God's Essence would imply His presence within an earthly object, which is tantamount to pantheism.

Dionysius's works have been subject to serious debate over the centuries. Much of this debate has centred on the degree to which he was influenced by Platonism. Later Orthodox thinkers have attempted to demonstrate that Dionysius was not a Platonist, but was in fact using platonic ideas in his explanation of Christianity in order to make his ideas more attractive to Christianity's opponents, themselves steeped in Greek philosophy.<sup>24</sup> Despite these conflicts, Dionysius was proclaimed 'most Orthodox' by the Lateran Council of 649, and his theories have laid the basis for the Eastern Church's mystical theology.<sup>25</sup> He had a large influence on theologians such as Maxim the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, and also the later thinkers of the Russian spiritual revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Tensions between soul and body, apparent in Dionysius, were also explored by the Patricians. The desert fathers were concerned that the soul could be laden down by bodily worries, and hence they emphasized the denial of physical desires in order to purify the soul. In discussing the development of patristic thought, Zizioulas explains that, prior to the desert fathers, the Graeco-Roman world had not endowed the individual person with any ontological value. The ancient world tended to view the individual only in terms of his broader function within society. In order to give each human an individual worthiness before God, the Greek fathers

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<sup>22</sup> T. Timothy, *Dionysius' Mysticism: A Modern Version of the Middle English Translation* (York: 1<sup>st</sup> Resource, 1990), pp. 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Lossky, *The Vision of God*, p. 100.

<sup>25</sup> Rorem, pp. 3-4.

made an identification of the concept of the person with the idea of the hypostasis. However, they could only achieve this by separating the notion of the hypostasis from that of the substance (*ousia*).<sup>26</sup>

The basic ontological position of the theology of the Greek Fathers might be set out briefly as follows. No substance or nature exists without person or hypostasis or mode of existence. No person exists without substance or nature, *but* the ontological “principle” or “cause” of being – i.e. that which makes a thing to exist – is not the substance or nature but the *person* or hypostasis. Therefore being is traced back not to substance but to person.<sup>27</sup>

The priority of hypostasis over substance is reflected in Orthodox teaching on the Trinity. This doctrine has far-reaching consequences for the way the body itself is constituted as apocalyptic. Orthodoxy places the personae of the Trinity, and not their substance, as the ‘ontological principle’ of God.

Among the Greek Fathers the unity of God, the one God, and the ontological ‘principle’ or ‘cause’ of the being and life of God does not consist in the one substance of God but in the *hypostasis*, that is, *the person of the father*. The one God is not the one substance but the Father, who is the ‘cause’ both of the generation of the Son and of the procession of the Spirit. Consequently, the ontological ‘principle’ of God is traced back, once again, to the person.<sup>28</sup>

Although Zizioulas is discussing the theology of the Greek Fathers, his arguments have been perpetuated in the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. By divorcing what it means to have a person from being itself, Orthodoxy is suggesting that a human’s person is not regarded as equivalent to their material existence. Zizioulas considers this a liberation of the hypostasis from biology, and this is also a factor in the Orthodox Church’s argument that the soul is separate from the body. By separating the person from matter, Orthodox theology enables us to disregard the body’s role in soteriology. This anthropology mirrors the Trinitarian doctrine of the Church: God’s nature is distinct from, and superior to, His will.<sup>29</sup> The Patricians attempted to underline God’s ontological freedom from what He does, and this belief has persisted in Russian Orthodoxy. Meyendorff writes that ‘in God the order of nature precedes the order of volitive action’. From this, it follows that God’s nature is necessarily separated from the nature of creation.<sup>30</sup> This means that communion with God, according to the Orthodox tradition, can only entail a hypostatic union, as demonstrated by the example of Jesus

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<sup>26</sup> Zizioulas, pp. 38-39.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42. Emphasis in original.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. Emphasis in original.

<sup>29</sup> D. Bathrellos, ‘Person, Nature and Will in Ancient Christology with Special Reference to Saint Maximus the Confessor’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, King’s College London, 2000), p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 130.

Christ. The Orthodox Church insists that although we can worship God, there can be no union of substance with Him.<sup>31</sup>

Orthodox doctrines over the separateness of body and soul are reflected in the practice of hesychasm, a form of spiritual prayer common in the early ages of Eastern Christianity, which was developed in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which became more widespread in Russian culture in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This return to a passive, contemplative form of spirituality in Russia was encouraged predominantly by the publication in 1793 of the *Dobrotoliubie*, the Slavonic translation of the *Philokalia* produced by Paisii Velichkovskii, a starets from Mount Athos. The *Philokalia* was a collection of Greek spiritualist writings, composed by the Desert Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Its publication in Russia brought the broader Russian public into contact with a tradition of prayer which had hitherto only really existed in monasteries, and which was to play a dominant role in Russian religious life up to the Revolution and beyond.<sup>32</sup>

Hesychasm rests on the belief that, although God is beyond our world, man can enter into communion with Him through His energies. These kerygma are likened to the Taboric Light which Moses encountered. They are begotten and not created, and penetrate all created matter.<sup>33</sup> Hesychasm involves attaining a complex ontological state, in which the whole body is transfigured through the enhypostatic light.<sup>34</sup> Hesychasts advocate permanent prayer through which the mind, soul and body are transformed on Earth. The mind should be placed in the heart, thereby ensuring that the worshipper is not distracted by anything earthly, but contemplates exclusively God.<sup>35</sup>

Interest in hesychasm was given further impetus in Russia by the appearance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century of the anonymous *Otkrovennye rasskazy strannika dukhovnomu svoemu ottsu*. This narrates the trials of a young man who is unable to pray, until he is taught hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. The pilgrim is told by his starets to incorporate the recital of the short prayer ('Iisus Khristos, pomilui menia, greshnika') into all aspects of his life. Eventually, the prayer becomes the central aspect of the pilgrim's life, and he is able to banish all other thoughts from his mind.

I became so accustomed to the prayer that when I stopped praying, even for a brief time, I felt as though something were missing, as if I had lost something. When I began

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<sup>31</sup> Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, p. 130.

<sup>32</sup> Sergei Hackel, 'Trail and Victory: The Spiritualist Tradition of Modern Russia', in *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. by Louis Dupré and Don E. Salies in collaboration with J. Meyendorff (London: SCM, 1990), pp. 458-69 (pp. 458-59).

<sup>33</sup> Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, trans. by Nicholas Gendle, ed. by John Meyendorff (London: SPCK, 1983), pp. 74, 78.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

to pray again, I was immediately filled with an inner lightness and joy. If I happened to meet people, I no longer felt any desire to speak with them; I only longed for solitude, to be alone with my prayer.<sup>36</sup>

It is hard to underestimate the reverence held for the *Philokalia* and the importance it took in Orthodox spirituality. For its adherents, the *Philokalia* was the only way to understand Orthodox mysticism. It unlocked the mystical meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and was considered the ‘necessary viewing lens’ through which to see the sun of the Bible.<sup>37</sup> Critics of the hesychast tradition argued that it necessarily leads to a negation of the body and of the world. However, Palamas argued that it does not involve the disincarnation of the mind, as the entire human person, including the body, is transfigured through the Taboric Light, as demonstrated by the Transfiguration of Christ. He argued that the flesh cannot be excluded from prayer, as the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the role of the sacraments proved that the body had a vital role to play in worship.<sup>38</sup>

In summary, the teachings of the Orthodox Church reveal serious ambiguities in the value of this world, and the way man should relate to matter. Official Orthodox doctrine clearly states that the world is sanctified, by the fact that it is God’s creation. The Incarnation of God as Jesus Christ reinforces this teaching, and explains elements of Orthodox worship which are intensely physical (in very many cases more so than other Christian denominations), such as rituals, vocal prayer, incense, and icons. However, at the same time, Orthodoxy also presents the world as matter-in-waiting, which will only be fully redeemed at the eschaton. In other words, in terms of the reality of the Kingdom of God, we are confronted with the ‘already’, and yet at the same time, the ‘not yet’.<sup>39</sup> As noted above, it is only through a highly sophisticated explanation of the Eucharist that these competing architectonics of worship can be resolved.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, in Christianity more broadly, and in Orthodoxy specifically, salvation is essentially eschatological.<sup>41</sup> Our salvation relies exclusively on the death and Resurrection of Christ, and can only take place after our own deaths. All biblical and historical events point towards the final resurrection of mankind at the end of time, and the eschaton takes priority over the creation of the world, as well as the Incarnation of

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<sup>36</sup> *The Way of a Pilgrim*, trans. by Olga Savin (Boston/London: Shambhala, 1996), pp. 15-16.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Palamas, p. 88. Rozanov specifically rejects the belief that the *Philokalia* has any physical aspect at all, and it cannot make incarnate the Word of God. Rozanov sees attempts to revive the *Philokalia* in contemporary Russia as part of the Byzantine restoration within Russian thought, which can only be harmful. See V.V. Rozanov, ‘Perstye temy’, in *V nashei smute*, pp. 107-61 (pp. 132-33).

<sup>39</sup> Vassiliadis, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> Zizioulas writes that participation in the Eucharist must be an ‘epicletic’ event, in which history itself does not guarantee salvation; in other words, the Church ‘asks to receive from God what she has already received historically in Christ as if she had not received it all’. Zizioulas, p. 182.

<sup>41</sup> Vassiliadis, p. 99.

Christ. It follows that the focus in Orthodoxy on the material only lends an increased apocalyptic fervour to earthly experience. For the Orthodox, paradoxically, the reality of salvation after this life was clearly marked in their own body: the practice of hesychasm demonstrates the real possibility of the transfiguration of this world, and the end of human history.<sup>42</sup>

It is these ambiguities over the Orthodox evaluation of the world, and the significance of the Creation, which Rozanov exploits in his engagement with the Russian Church. Rozanov believes that the Church only understands the ‘omega’ of Christianity, but not the ‘alpha’ of Christianity. He calls for a clear re-evaluation of the Church’s attitude towards the material world. Moreover, even where the Church’s teachings on the value of matter are clear, Rozanov claims that such teachings are not put into practice by the clergy, who display a hostile attitude towards the Russian people, the family and childbirth.

### 3. The Creation as the Referential Moment in Religion

The opposition between the natural affinity the Russians hold towards the Creation, and the eschatology imposed by the Church, is a constant theme in Rozanov’s career. Rozanov insists that the Church should not shun the world, as its sanctity arises from the fact it was created by God. This parental relationship between God and the world informs all of Rozanov’s religion.

Rozanov shunned the abstract in favour of examining God’s relationship to this world. His very first work, *O ponimanii*, examined the way in which man’s knowledge is limited by the fact that he is a part of the material creation, and therefore unable to think abstractly.<sup>43</sup> His very final – and ironically uncompleted – work, *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*, is a final admission that the religious connections between God and man have been dismantled by the appearance of Christ. Inevitably, Rozanov is drawn to the Old Testament, and especially

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<sup>42</sup> Writing about the belief among the Eastern Christians in their unique role to bring about the ‘final, heavenly kingdom’, Billington notes, ‘hesychast mysticism encouraged the Orthodox to believe that such a transformation was an imminent possibility through a spiritual intensification of their own lives – and ultimately of the entire Christian *imperium*’. James Hadley Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1966), pp. 55-56. This means that to many the body itself is viewed apocalyptically, a view which will be revisited in Chapter 3.

<sup>43</sup> In this work, Rozanov discusses the manner in which ideas cannot remain abstract, but must be realized on Earth; every idea is an icon (‘obraz’) which longs to be expressed in matter. Rozanov defines human spirit as man’s creative force which participates in the processes by which ideas are realized, perpetuating being on this world. V.V. Rozanov, *O ponimanii: Opyt issledovaniia prirody, granits, i vnutrennego stroeniia nauki kak tsel'nogo znaniia*, ed. by V.G. Sukach (Moscow: Taniias, 1996), pp. 305, 310. Although Rozanov in his later years retained a fondness for his debut work, he later pointed out that *O ponimanii* (although it considered how man understands this world) could not answer the question as to why men lived. Rozanov would later understand that each person’s telos lies within him: ‘Цели, и такие общие, как «цель жизни», – не вне нас, а внутри нас. И эти «цели» зреют, прорастают, бывают в маковое зернышко, в картофелину, в голову величиною, в гору (цель *всей* жизни). «Цели» растут буквально, как органы, и именно *из* нас.’ V.V. Rozanov, “‘Bez tseli i smysla...’ (O samoubiistvakh)”, in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii: Stat'i i ocherki 1910 g.*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2005), pp. 86-89 (pp. 88-89). Emphasis in original.

to the start of Genesis, in his formulation of his own religious precepts. The narration of the Creation is the key text in Rozanov's exegesis, and Rozanov repeatedly quotes passages from Genesis to emphasize this. Rozanov insists that God did not just create the spiritual world, but also the physical world. The fact that these two dimensions came into being together justifies the sanctity of matter.<sup>44</sup>

Бог сотворил мир невидимый и *видимый*, сотворил бесплотных духов, но и сотворил *тело* Солнца, *тело* растений и животных; и сотворил человека с душой и *телом*. И потому человек создал и церковь душевную и *телесную*. У нас это выразилось в «человеке Божиим» и в обрядах. И «осанна» обоим.<sup>45</sup>

This forms the cornerstone of Rozanov's religion, and yet it presents two key problems which define his philosophical struggles. The first is the possibility that the Creation might lead to disunion. Rozanov presents the Creation as the holiest moment in our history, where matter is in unity with the divine by virtue of God's fecundity. However, this is the moment from which matter can fall into disharmony, as it marks the point where the physical world can become separated from God. Although Rozanov is concerned with unity, he extols the virtues of difference, which is a prerequisite for the processes of divinization. Rozanov's focus is on activity rather than being. God creates difference as a gift to the Earth, as each thing contains the potential to reunite with other objects. Rozanov usually understands this difference in terms of the duality of masculine and feminine elements, which are naturally drawn together. The will to rejoin mirrors the creative union of the two aspects of the divine. Difference is problematic, but it is a gift from God, as it enables us to imitate Him. Rozanov rejects platonic theories which depict sexual difference as a punishment for our hubris. Unlike Solov'ev, Rozanov sees God as bisexual, rather than asexual.<sup>46</sup> Instead, the division of humans into men and women is a bonus: by splitting us in this way, God has bestowed upon us the potential to become divine, as we unleash this through sexual union.<sup>47</sup>

Когда мир был сотворен, то он, конечно, был цел, «закончен»: но он был *матовый*. Бог (боги) сказал: «Дадим ему *сверкание!*» И сотворили боги – *лицо*.

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<sup>44</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nebesnoe i zemnoe', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 156-71 (p. 159).

<sup>45</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Novaia kniga o khristianstve', in *Staraia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 9-17 (p. 17). Emphasis in original.

<sup>46</sup> Naiman notes that androgyny became the ideal for some of the important religious thinkers of the time, particularly Vladimir Solov'ev and Berdiaev, in their desire to redesign the human. In such thinkers, one witnesses the lasting influence of the Orthodox understanding of sexual difference as punishment and a result of the Fall. Rozanov is a notable exception to these, as he highlights sexual differences between men and women, and praises the way these are brought together in the act of procreation. The ideal of androgyny also had wide-ranging consequences in the post-revolutionary years for thinkers who wished to create a new Soviet person. See Naiman, *Sex in Public*, especially pp. 34-35, 44-45. This question will be returned to in the next chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Elena Vladimirovna Piliugina, 'Religiia, iskusstvo, politika v filosofskoi antropologii V.V. Rozanova' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Kurskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2003), p. 12.

Я все сбиваюсь говорить по-старому «Бог», когда давно надо говорить *Боги*; ибо ведь их *два*, Эло-гим, а не Эло-ах (ед. число). Пора оставлять эту навеянную нам богословским недомыслием ошибку. Два Бога – мужская сторона Его, и сторона – женская. Эта последняя есть та «Вечная Женственность», мировая женственность, о которой начали теперь говорить повсюду. «По образу и подобию Богов (Элогим) сотворенное», все и стало или «мужем», или «женой», «самкой» или «самцом», от яблони и до человека. «Девочки» – конечно, в Отца Небесного, а мальчики – в Матерь Вселенной! Как у людей: дочери – в отца, сыновья – в мать.<sup>48</sup>

Rozanov understands that this creative potential is experienced by all life as a sexual urge. Humans are no different, and share this desire for reintegration into the universe. Therefore for Rozanov, sexual desire is the most natural expression of man's desire for union with God, and not something to be condemned. Humans are obliged to recognize the obligations placed upon them by God. Matter is characterized by this continual longing of all things for reunion, or sexual desire.

И вот «невидимое совокупление», ради которого существует все «видимое». Странно. Но – и истинно. Вся природа, конечно, и есть «совокупление вещей», «совокупность вещей».<sup>49</sup>

This point reveals one of the most serious complexities in Rozanov's relationship to Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is an intensely physical religion: its doctrines highlight the holiness of matter and the body. Such a strong devotion to material objects is rarely witnessed in other Christian denominations, and is completely absent, even condemned as idolatry, in certain strands of Protestantism. Rozanov is steeped in the doctrines and teachings of Orthodoxy, and writes from within the Church, not as an outsider. He draws on the corporeality of Russian Orthodoxy, and yet, having accepted the principles of this physicality, subsequently disregards their Christological justification. Rozanov shares with the Church a fascination with the body, rituals, temples, smells, and yet for him, the justification of matter can be traced back to the creative work of the Father, not to the economy of Jesus Christ.

Rozanov reinterprets platonic ideas over the origins of the world, and in particular their Christian variant which teaches that matter is innately evil. For Christian Platonists, matter exists prior to and separately from the Logos. It is only partly redeemed by the descent and ordering of divine reason. Christians have

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<sup>48</sup> Vasilii Rozanov, *Liudi lunnogo sveta: Metafizika khristianstva* (St Petersburg: Prodolzhenie zhizni, 2003), p. 58. Emphasis in original.

<sup>49</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Poslednie list'ia*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2000), pp. 55-56.



disentangled the history of the Earth from their schemata of soteriology, and therefore have rejected the innate holiness of this world. While Rozanov maintains that man can be saved through engagement with the world, Christian doctrine has invented abstract notions of sin.

В средних веках, гораздо ближе к нам и поэтому гораздо ярче для нашего ума, развилась и укрепилась идея искупительной жертвы, идея *зараженности* мира грехом. Эта идея стала чрезвычайно народной [...] Поднялась жгучая и острая идея *вины, греха, страдания*. Мир разделился и противоположился. «Небо» по-прежнему создано Богом; но «земля», земное, неизменное, обыкновенное, если и не прямо, то косвенно, стало признаваться тварью дьявола. Люди разделились на святых и грешных, очищаемых и очищающих, прощаемых и прощающих.<sup>50</sup>

Rozanov posits a relationship of identity between the physical and the metaphysical, and therefore is able to accept all aspects of the created world, and not just the areas selected by the Church. He does not delineate the holy from the profane.

«И сотворил Бог небо и землю», то понимаю это не только в планетном смысле, но и вижу здесь другую мысль, быть может, еще глубочайшую и чрезвычайно для человека дорогую, милую: что не только небесное сотворил Бог, ангелоподобное, чистое, святое, нет; но что Он и малое все сотворил, мелкое, мизерное.<sup>51</sup>

Having established the Creation as the focal point in his religion, Rozanov examines tensions between the Church as the body of the Russian people, and the teachings of its leaders. Rozanov believes that the Russian Orthodox Church should be identified with the Russian people, and that their religious practices should emerge naturally from their engagement with the world. The Church is the people, and Russians are bound by their common ethnicity. A Russian person is automatically a member of the Church, just as a non-Russian cannot be accepted into the Church. For example, Rozanov criticizes the Synod for the excommunication of Tolstoi, an unholy, administrative act, which does not take into account Tolstoi's Russianness.<sup>52</sup> Rozanov insists that the Russian Church is a 'folkish' organization (he frequently turns to the phrase 'narodnaia tserkov'), which should

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<sup>50</sup> 'Nebesnoe i zemnoe', pp. 159-60. Emphasis in original.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>52</sup> Rozanov calls the Synod an 'algebraic institution' ('algebraicheskoe uchrezhdenie'), which cannot be called 'most holy', as it has no sense of man's personal relationship with God. Rozanov also accuses the Church of acting against Tolstoi in a cold and mechanical manner. See V.V. Rozanov, 'Ob otluchenii gr. L. Tolstogo ot tserkvi', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 478-79.

be built on traditional Russian principles.<sup>53</sup> He draws on Russian traditions of universality, which permeate Russian religious thought, but explains these in national terms; Rozanov is concerned for the unity of the Russian people.

Man's reverence for the act of Creation is manifested in a love for the material world. Rozanov's work is full of descriptions of nature, its sights, sounds and smells. Like Strakhov and thinkers close to him, Rozanov was worried that the Russian intelligentsia was detached from the people.<sup>54</sup> Rozanov goes further in stressing the Russians' link with the world as an essential component of their attachment to the Creation. As individual nations develop their own form of Christianity on their own ethnic characteristics, Rozanov does not see ecumenicalism as a practical project; rather than the unity of the Churches, mankind should strive towards an

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<sup>53</sup> Whenever Rozanov attends church, he often appears to devote his energies to observing others worship, rather than paying attention to the priest or the service itself. It is this focus on observation, a childlike wonder at examining the world through embodied experience, which Mondry characterizes as an essential component of Rozanov's phenomenology. Rozanov's philosophy is based 'not on *a priori* judgement, but on the phenomenon of life itself, on seeing or observing, and "curiosity" or "surprise" [...] Rozanov observed "life" through the life of a (human) body, which was for him both a "phenomenon" and a "transcendental" "noumenon"'. Mondry, 'Beyond the Boundary', p. 651. Many of Rozanov's discussions of the experience of being in church focus on his secret examinations of the manner in which other Russians pray. However, for Rozanov, the religious experience is constituted to some degree by corporate acts of worship, rather than tending to the specific demands of the Church liturgy. He writes, 'Вообще, при некотором особенном угле зрения, как начинают нравиться разные «небрежности», «недоделки», «неряшливости», казалось бы, в «таком великом деле»: но, ведь, оттого оно и «велико», что оно – народно, что церковь *слита* со всем народным: а если она «во всем» в нем слита, то не могла не отрицать в себе и его, между прочим, «неряшливости»...'. V.V. Rozanov, 'O veshchakh beskonechnykh i konechnykh (Po povodu nesostoiavshegosia "otlucheniia ot tserkvi" pisatelei)', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 365-69 (p. 366).

<sup>54</sup> This is also a frequent theme in Dostoevskii, where the native soil becomes a symbol for the Russian people. One scholar goes further, and describes Dostoevskii's vision in the following terms: 'for Dostoevsky "native soil" and "God" are synonymous'. Richard G. Avramenko, 'Bedeviled by Boredom: A Voegelinian Reading of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*', in *Humanitas*, 17 (2004), accessed at <<http://www.nhinet.org/avramenko17-1&2.pdf>>, last accessed 11 September 2007. The vision of God as intimately linked to the Russian people is made in many places throughout Dostoevskii's works. Shatov, the character with which Rozanov most closely identified, in *Besy* elucidates his ideas to Stavrogin in the following terms: 'Цель всего движения народного, во всяком народе и во всяком периоде его бытия, есть единственно лишь искание Бога, Бога своего, непременно собственно, и вера в него как в единого истинного. Бог есть синтетическая личность всего народа.' In response to Stavrogin's accusation that he is defining God purely in national terms, Shatov continues, 'Низвожу Бога до атрибута народности? [...] Напротив, народ возношу до Бога. Да, и было ли когда-нибудь иначе? Народ – это тело Божие.' F.M. Dostoevskii, *Besy*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tradtsati tomakh*, 30 vols (Leningrad: Nauka, 1970), X, p. 199. In one of the most famous and powerful episodes in Russian literature, Sonia tells Raskol'nikov what must be done, in order for him to end his isolation from God and the Russian people. 'Поди сейчас, сию же минуту, стань на перекрестке, поклонись, поцелуй сначала землю, которую ты осквернил, а потом поклонись всему свету, на все четыре стороны, и скажи всем, «Я убил!»' Raskol'nikov's crime is understood as much as a sin against the Earth as against God or the people. Dostoevskii, *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*, VI, p. 322. Rozanov frequently complains that the Russian intelligentsia is detached from the people. See for example V.V. Rozanov, 'Dva S'ezda', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo: Stat'i 1906-1907 gg.*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2003), pp. 399-402 (p. 401). In this way, Rozanov stands within the tradition of the native soil thinkers, who criticized their opponents of 'rootlessness' ('bespochvennost'). See Temira Pachmuss, 'Dostoevsky in the Criticism of the Russian Radical Intelligentsia', *Russian Review* (1962), 59-74 (p. 62).

end to hostility (characterized by his term 'primirenie') between the different denominations.<sup>55</sup> Rozanov does not identify a global messianic role for the Russian Church, and does not offer religious advice to non-Russian peoples; pragmatically, he appears to realize that foreign soteriologies lie beyond his sphere of understanding. Similarly, neither does he consider the leadership of the Russian church as necessarily being able to select the correct path for the Russian Church to take. He dissents from Slavophiles who see Russian Orthodoxy as having an elevated position in worldwide Christianity.

Rozanov argues that from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Church as a whole assumed a dogmatic character, where issues of doctrine became more important than the living essence of Christianity.<sup>56</sup> Dogma represents for Rozanov the 'multiplication table of religious truths', abstract issues which are devoid of true religious content. Rozanov identifies Byzantium as the arena where this abstraction developed. He states that Byzantine stallholders would indulge in speculation over how to express the nature of God. This Greek 'street banter' was then taken into the Byzantine courts, where it was made into rigid dogma.<sup>57</sup> From here spread a lack of faith in God and a lack of love for fellow men; rather than cultivating a personal relationship with God, people were more concerned with doctrine. Having lost its links with the Earth, humankind then extinguished the gift of prophecy. Instead, people should look to the true meaning of religion which emerges naturally from the people; Rozanov terms this approach adogmatism ('adogmatizm').<sup>58</sup>

Rozanov rues the fact that Russia adopted the Byzantine version of Christianity. He often expresses a deep admiration for western forms of Christianity, as they permit a greater attachment to earthly affairs. Rozanov's work does not present an outright rejection of the achievements of western culture, and he goes further than many Russian thinkers in his admiration of European civilizations. His essays are filled with positive assessments of Francis of Assisi, Raphael, and Beethoven, among others. He has a special admiration for English philosophy. Although he finds English people dull (though not as boring as the Germans), he believes that nowhere in Europe is the concept of the family better preserved than in England.<sup>59</sup> Asceticism is a universal problem, which has destroyed the heritage of figures such as Goethe and Pushkin.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Rozanov believes that it is the task of each Church to assist its people in the embodiment of their natural religion; however, the dogma of their leaders is forcing the different Churches even further apart. He compares the Western and Eastern Churches to two neighbours, who previously enjoyed drinking tea together, but between whom now has been erected a barbed-wire fence. V.V. Rozanov, 'O "sobornom" nachale v tserkve i o primirenii tserkvei', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 366-81 (pp. 367-68).

<sup>56</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ob adogmatizme v khristianstve', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 479-88 (p. 479).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 482.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 482-83.

<sup>59</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Obshchestvo okhraneniia zhenskikh prav', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 118-25 (p. 123). Rozanov had a fondness for English thought, believing it was concerned with 'natural and moral' issues, rather than the academic abstraction of the German philosophical tradition. V.V. Rozanov, 'Posmertnyi trud

The dogmatism inherited from the Byzantines has persisted into the mindset and structures of the present-day Russian Church. Rozanov draws up a list of questions which the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church should answer. The most important of these questions was why the Church rejected the Creation and the joys of the Old Testament in favour of the ‘tearful pietism’ and apocalyptic fervour of the New Testament.<sup>61</sup> He calls upon the clergy to clarify its relationship to the Old Testament, and to explain discrepancies between its own teachings on the Gospel and the first book of the Bible, which commands us to multiply.

Бог *сотворил* мир («Бытие», «Genesis», «Бара Элогим...») и человека в нем, как венец всего, возлюбленную тварь Свою; и заключил с человеком этим союз; и человек стоял, миром очарованный, и в нем начавший сам творить, созидать, «украшать», беспечально и беспечно.<sup>62</sup>

In Genesis, the verse stating that God created the world is immediately followed by God’s command that we too should procreate and fill the Earth. Therefore Rozanov makes explicit the links between Creation and the obligation placed on man to go forth and multiply; yet the Church has prevented man from fulfilling this command, and has instead glorified the grave.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. Rozanov and Christ

In Rozanov’s investigation of eschatology, it is impossible to ignore his complex treatment of the role of Christ. Rozanov’s omission of Christ from Orthodoxy does have important consequences for the way he approaches his religion.<sup>64</sup> And yet this seems an impossible statement to come to terms with: Christ is the central event in Christianity, and His Incarnation, death and Resurrection are understood as bringing redemption. Christ, being both divine and human, restores mankind’s divinity. The basis of this is the formula agreed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

One and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ [...] truly God and truly man [...] one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the

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Genri Drummonda’, in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 199-200 (p. 199). Rozanov confesses throughout his career his admiration for many English thinkers, in particular J.S. Mill and Bentham.

<sup>60</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Isporchennyi chelovek (Vozrazhenie N.A. Engel’gardtu)’, in *Poslednie list’ia*, pp. 311-14 (p. 314).

<sup>61</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Tablitsa voprosov religiozno-filosofskikh’, in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 489-95 (p. 489).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 494. Emphasis in original. The word ‘ukrashat’ appears again and again in Rozanov’s work. He deliberately refers to the etymology of the word ‘cosmos’, deriving from the ancient Greek for ‘to make beautiful’. He understands the cosmos as the result of God’s creative energy, to which man is called up on to respond with his own creative forces.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See Berdiaev’s comment in the Introduction, n. 27.

difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>65</sup>

Rozanov was prepared to exclude Christ (particularly in His adult manifestation) from his scheme of worship, seeing the Second Person as a cold, ghost-like figure who displayed animosity towards mankind. Rozanov was not unique among Silver Age thinkers in questioning the importance of Christ's activity. Many of his peers saw Jesus as an unreliable guarantor of the communion between the divine and human. Long-standing doubts in Eastern Christianity over the effectiveness of Christ's economy help explain why many Russian philosophers modified their Christology, one important aspect of this being the development of sophiology.<sup>66</sup>

The history of Eastern Christianity has been dominated by debates and schisms over the nature of Christ and His place within the Trinity. Orthodoxy distinguishes itself from Western Christianity by arguing that Christ alone cannot save man. In the Western Church, believers tend to formulate a much more personal relationship with Jesus, however in Orthodoxy Christ's function is only assured through the Holy Spirit. Christ could not incarnate and resurrect Himself; pneumatology takes precedence over Christology.<sup>67</sup> The Second Person alone is not responsible for man's salvation. This wariness of an over-reliance on Christ has been the cause of the most serious polemics within Eastern Christianity. The Arian controversy arose from the contention that Jesus was not God, but a created being. One of the principal (though by no means the only) causes for the schism between the Western and Eastern Churches was the filioque controversy, the Roman Church's unilateral proclamation that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son. One of the first religious uprisings in Russia occurred during the reign of Ivan III over the teachings of the renegade Skharia,

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<sup>65</sup> Taken from *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. by Erwin Fahlbusch and others (Michigan/Cambridge: Grand Rapids, 2001), p. 399. Although the focus in this quote is on the Incarnation, rather than death, of Christ as the basis for the relationship between God and the world, it is important to note that in the Eastern tradition this same Incarnation points to the end of time. 'The West focuses more on the humanity of Christ, on the earthly life and death of Jesus, whereas the East views the mystery of the incarnation as a theophany and hence sees it in the light of the resurrection, which is the basis of salvation'. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, pp. 467-68.

<sup>66</sup> Berdiaev noted that the God-Seekers had a poor relationship with the Second Person of the Trinity. *Russkaia ideia*, p. 268. Berdiaev is not alone: the accusation that Rozanov and his peers lacked a developed Christology emerges frequently within Russian thought. Florovskii, a critic of many speculative Russian thinkers, insisted that Rozanov was not a true Christian. See Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia*, pp. 460-61. In similar fashion, Florovskii also attacks Florenskii for bypassing the Incarnation and omitting Christology from *Stolp i utverzhdanie istiny*. Florovskii, p. 493.

<sup>67</sup> Douglas Davis, 'Christianity', in *Worship*, ed. by Jean Holm with John Bowker (London: Pinter, 1994), pp. 35-62 (p. 36).

who rejected the divinity of Christ.<sup>68</sup> Rozanov can be contextualized within the Eastern Christian traditions of subordinationism. His critics accused him of Arianism.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, it is important for Rozanov to maintain that Christ is created from God, and not consubstantial. The Incarnation of Christ, as promoted by the opponents of Arius and incorporated into official Orthodox doctrine, implies the rejection of the Earth, and places an obligation upon men to suffer. This is shown in Victorinus' treatise *Against Arius*.

For this is a great mystery: that God 'emptied Himself when he was in the form of God,' then that he suffered, first by being in the flesh and sharing in the lot of human birth and being raised upon the Cross. These things, however, would not be marvellous if he had come only from man or from nothing, or from God by creation. For what would 'he emptied himself' mean if he did not exist before he was in the flesh? And what was he? He said, 'equal to God.' But if he were created from nothing, how is he equal?<sup>70</sup>

Rozanov exploits the ambiguity in Christianity, and argues that, regardless of official teachings which legitimize this world, the Church in practice considers the material realm godless. Rozanov identifies the incompatibility in Orthodox teaching between the birth of Christ and His Resurrection, arguing that the Church has rejected the former in favour of the latter.<sup>71</sup> Rozanov displays affection for the birth of Christ. However, this is no more important than any other birth, as all new life renews our bonds with Heaven. The birth of Christ has significance only when understood as a repetition of the Creation. It is an 'In-carnation' ('Vo-ploshchenie'), but Rozanov refers to the human nature of this birth, and underlines all in the Nativity that is fleshy. He is fascinated by the intimate physical details of the birth, such as the way Jesus was born from Mary's body and breastfed, and the fact that animals were present. In this way, Rozanov engages with Mariology, and adapts the particular relationship the Russian Church has with the Mother of God. Rozanov's approach is intimate and physical. He believes that Joseph, Mary and the Baby Jesus provide one of the greatest examples of the family, the mysticism

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<sup>68</sup> Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, trans. by Richard Howard, 4 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), I, p. 276.

<sup>69</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Spor ob apokrifakh', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 271-84 (p. 284).

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Mary T. Clark, 'The Trinity in Latin Christianity', in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff in collaboration with Jean Leclercq (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 276-90 (p. 281).

<sup>71</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Religiia unizheniia i torzhestva', in *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma: Stat'i i ocherki 1911 g.*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2005), pp. 74-79 (p. 76).

of blood and flesh embodied on Earth.<sup>72</sup> The Madonna's love for her son demonstrates the eternal miracle of motherhood.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, he insists that Mary and Joseph had a loving sexual relationship with each other.

Rozanov complains that the Christian Logos has replaced the Divine Phallus. The sanctity of flesh is marked through the penis, as this part of the human body corresponds most closely to the creative powers of God. In the words of his contemporary, the publicist Iosif Kolyshko, Rozanov believes that in order to worship the image ('obraz') of God, man must worship sex.<sup>74</sup> Those who consider sex evil, and especially those who go so far as to practise castration, destroy the image and likeness of God.<sup>75</sup> The role of Christ becomes problematic, as it offers a rival scheme of worship to Rozanov's focus on the Creation. Christ disrupts the identity between thing and idea, and injects into human religiosity an alternative system of representation to that offered by the Creation. Christ, in traditional Christian thought, is both God and human, but for Rozanov these two aspects are not unified, and the divinity always takes precedence over the earthly. As Gippius writes, Rozanov wanted to know Christ as a person, and not the abstract Second Person of the Trinity.<sup>76</sup> Rozanov has a distinct lack of interest in the adult Jesus. (Rozanov frequently pointed out that he did not like adults in general, much preferring young children and very old people.)

Rozanov examines the relationship of Christ to the world in a lecture to the Religious-Philosophical Society, entitled 'O Sladchaishem Iisuse i gor'kikh plodakh mira' (1907).<sup>77</sup> Rozanov takes issue with a recurrent theme in Merezhkovskii, that the Gospels can be reconciled with contemporary civilization. Merezhkovskii was intent on developing a new religion from a synthesis of paganism and Christianity. Rozanov takes issue with Merezhkovskii's claim that the Gospel is cultural, that clergy and writers could 'sit harmoniously around the same table, conduct pleasant conversations and drink the same, tasty, tea'. Instead, Rozanov writes that it is impossible to insert a piece of Gogol' into any of the Gospels or Epistles of the New Testament.<sup>78</sup> Those who engage in cultural activities cannot find a place in the church, and the clergy refuse to engage with contemporary civilization, such as visiting the theatre or reading literary works. Rozanov uses the transformation of Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul to explain further the relationship between the ancient world and Orthodoxy. There

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<sup>72</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Tema nashogo vremeni', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), p. 171.

<sup>73</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Lev III i katolichestvo', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 345-56 (p. 352).

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in V.V. Rozanov, 'Polemicheskie materialy', in *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, pp. 82-139 (p. 82).

<sup>75</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Psikhologiiia russkogo raskola', in *Religiia i kul'tura*, pp. 37-74 (p. 60).

<sup>76</sup> Gippius, p. 161.

<sup>77</sup> Rozanov was a poor public speaker who was nervous when addressing large groups. He refused to deliver lectures himself, instead relying on others to read them out for him. *Zapiski peterburgskikh Religiozno-filosofskikh sobranii*, p. 518.

<sup>78</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O Sladchaishem Iisuse i gor'kikh plodakh mira', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin, pp. 417-26 (p. 418).

is no gradual, organic transition from one to the other, but a sudden and violent change which does not allow for harmony. As soon as Saul became Paul, he stopped going to the theatre. Paul never suggested that the Athenians continue to visit the Olympic Games; instead of Merezhkovskii's supposed harmony, Saul and Paul 'devour each other's "self"'.<sup>79</sup>

For Rozanov, the New Testament is not an 'earthly book', and Christ is devoid of the joys of this world. Rozanov points out that Christ never smiles, a question which has occupied generations of theologians. Rozanov believes that religious activity must be enjoyable; the joys of this world are found in reference to earthly pleasures.<sup>80</sup> It is worth comparing Rozanov to Solov'ev's description of the human as a 'laughing animal'.<sup>81</sup> Rozanov's joy is physical; he sees Orthodoxy as having rejected the natural processes of this world, and condemning earthly joys as sinful. Here Rozanov's focus is not so much on the institution of the Church, but on the Gospel itself.

Ни смеха, ни влюбленности нет в Евангелии, и одна капля того или другого испепеляет все страницы чудной книги, «раздирает завесы» христианства.<sup>82</sup>

The Church's refusal to accept contemporary culture has widened the division between man and God. The Gospels contain joys unrelated to this world, which exist only at an 'unmeasurable height above the Earth and humanity'.<sup>83</sup> If one focuses exclusively on the spiritual side of religion, this results in the removal of all spiritual aspects from physical reality. Rozanov believes that Saint Paul's teachings leave all matter dead, detached from the divine. Christ's 'sweetness' is a sign of his overpowering spiritual beauty, which is incompatible with this world, and which has made the fruits of the Earth bitter by comparison.<sup>84</sup> Rozanov calls upon the Church to re-spiritualize matter, by acknowledging its origin in the First Person of the Trinity.

Мир – святой во плоти, но святой – не во плоти Сына, но по исхождению из плоти Отца.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-19.

<sup>80</sup> Nosov comments that, far from realizing a unity of Heaven and Earth within himself, Rozanov's person was disrupted by his over-bearing attraction to the world. See Nosov, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> In Kostalevsky's definition, Solov'ev associates laughter with man's ability to elevate himself above the world and 'regard it critically'. Kostalevsky, p. 59. In a similar vein, Averintsev sees Bakhtin's use of laughter as an act of liberation from affairs of this world. Sergei Averintsev, 'Bakhtin, Laughter and Christian Culture', in *Bakhtin and Religion: A Feeling for Faith*, ed. by Susan M. Felch and Paul J. Contino (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), pp. 79-96 (p. 80).

<sup>82</sup> 'O Sladchaishem Iisuse', p. 419.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 425.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 422.



Both Christ and the world are children of God. Yet they cannot be reconciled: Christ rejects the reproductive obligations placed on all creation, and has disrupted the horizontal ties between man and God. The Church has exacerbated the situation by lapsing into crude anthropomorphism, depicting God as an old man.<sup>86</sup> Rozanov concludes that Christ has conquered the world, and adds that, as Christ represents the next world, His victory marks the victory of death over creation. Like the violent relationship between Saul and Paul, Orthodoxy has made this world and the next incompatible, leaving the Orthodox unable to participate in the dynamics of God. 'From an Orthodox point of view activity is impossible'.<sup>87</sup> Christ turns people away from earthly joys, and destroys the cultural value of literature, as demonstrated by the fact that priests are not allowed to read Gogol'. Christ disrupts the meaning of the family, by encouraging men to leave their kin and to follow him.

«Кто не оставит отца своего и мать свою ради меня» – этот глагол, позвавший Никанора и Филарета к их аскетическому обету, «ребеночка» Нехлюдова и Катерины толкнул к судьбе, рассказанной в «Воскресенье». Всякий зов, всякий идеал есть в то же время отталкивание, расторжение, разделение; и зов к детству есть отторжение от семьи, есть расторжение семьи: «в три дня разрушу храм сей», «истинно, истинно: камня на камне не останется от стен сих».<sup>88</sup>

The main issue for Rozanov concerning Christ is that Rozanov is focused firmly on God's creative activity. Christ, who for Rozanov is seedless and asexual, disrupts the divine activity onto Earth by refusing to perpetuate this divine creativity. Rozanov concludes that, whereas God is creative, Christ acts in opposition to His work.<sup>89</sup>

## 5. Participation, Activity and the Icon

Despite Rozanov's objections to Orthodox doctrine, he draws very heavily on the belief that God should be understood in terms of His activity. Here Orthodoxy in turn has drawn heavily on Aristotle. Rozanov likewise sees God and the world in terms of activity rather than being. This has important implications; his relationship with God and the world is built on participation and involvement, rather than disengagement and contemplation. Sexual activity becomes a vital method for Rozanov to participate in God.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 423.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>88</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ob "otrechennykh", ili apokroficheskikh detiakh', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 33-52 (p. 48). Emphasis in original. In the final chapter, I shall return to the implications of Orthodox asceticism for Russian literature, with particular emphasis on Nekhliudov and Katiusha's relationship.

<sup>89</sup> Rozanov writes: 'И Христос именно «АНТИ-творил мир», а не «СО-творил мир». «Борьба с Богом» и здесь проходит'. V.V. Rozanov, *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2000), p. 325.

Iconography helps explain the basis of Rozanov's thought, though he subverts its ideological basis. The use of Orthodox icons is based on the Incarnation. Icons, like Christ, contain the divine and the material. The term derives from the Greek word for image (εἰκών), and refers to the belief that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Orthodox prayers are directed towards the icon, the window into Heaven through which we participate in the life of Christ.<sup>90</sup> The veneration of icons has been a major area of theological discord between the Eastern and Western Churches, and has occupied the central point of several Ecumenical Councils, heresies, and schisms. The Eighth Ecumenical Council of 869-70 confirmed that icons should have the same status as Scripture, that is they should be considered a 'Bible for the unlettered'.<sup>91</sup>

The key justification behind the philosophy of the icon is that Incarnation provides a model for man to worship the human form of God. God's appearance as Jesus on Earth overrides Moses' Second Commandment on worshipping idols. The practice of venerating icons might go back to the lifetime of Christ Himself. During his passion, Christ was supposedly given a cloth to wipe His face, which was marked with the image of His countenance. Uspenskii and Losskii suggest that icons of Christ could have existed during His own lifetime. There is evidence that the women with a haemorrhage, whom Jesus healed (Matthew 9. 20-23), erected a statue to him. Christianity is not only the revelation of the Word of God, but the revelation of His image.<sup>92</sup> The notions of activity and participation stand at the centre of Orthodox worship, and the icon stands at the point where the activity of God and the activity of man are brought together. Hutchings makes the point that, unlike the English word 'image', which implies a static representation, the icon contains the concept of dynamism.<sup>93</sup> Worshipping an icon is not contemplation, but involves our deification through participation in divine activity.

*Seeing* (recognition) is inseparable from *action* (becoming) [...] Man does not *see* his likeness in the life of Christ, he *enacts* that likeness by resurrecting himself as man-become-God. This version of likeness and its concept of vision thus hinges on a dynamic interpretation of the phrase 'in Christ', preparing the way for the full integration of aesthetics (vision, likeness, image) and ethics (participation).<sup>94</sup>

Participation in divine activity has an ethical dimension which is revealed through Rozanov's writings on the Eucharist, and in particular in his debates with Ivan Romanov (here writing under the pseudonym Gatchinskii

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<sup>90</sup> Myroslaw Tataryn, *How to Pray With Icons: An Introduction* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1998), pp. 5-6.

<sup>91</sup> Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, trans. by Anthony Gythiel, 2 vols (New York: St Vladimir's, 1992), II, p. 213.

<sup>92</sup> Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, ed. by Urs Graf-Verlag (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, 1952), pp. 27, 49.

<sup>93</sup> Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, p. 29.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. Italics in original.

Otshel'nik). Romanov argues that the intestine is an empty vessel through which the Eucharist bread passes; the body becomes merely the container to accept the Holy Gifts, and there is no unison of the Eucharist with the body.<sup>95</sup> Rozanov argues that Romanov's theories imply the separateness of man and God. If one sees the way the body holds the Bread in a similar way as to how a purse contains gold, as Romanov does, then Rozanov argues that once the money is removed, one is left with an empty and valueless purse.

Ведь *кишка* лежит *около* принятого в евхаристии существа Бога, несет *в себе* Бога, она заместила собою чашу, в которой лежали до принятия св. Дары, и есть теперь *чаша* Бога. Т.е. отнюдь не составляя «центра дела» [...] «Тело» и «дух» – это как бы мешок и золото: отделимые, разграничимые; «совершенная смерть» в одну сторону и «совершенная жизнь» – в другую.<sup>96</sup>

Rozanov concedes that the Liturgy and the Eucharist perform an important function in shaping religious feeling.<sup>97</sup> But this has to be physical; Rozanov insists that the intestines act on the Eucharist bread in the same way that sexual organs come into contact with each other.<sup>98</sup> His desire to unite the substance of the human being with his hypostasis means that man's 'ontological principle', to use Zizioulas' term, is located firmly within his nature. The ontological principle is supposed to mirror that of God, which Rozanov believes is the principle to reproduce. God's creative ability is presented in sexual terms, and our ontology is based on our ability to mirror this creative principle through our own sexual production. According to Orthodox teaching, the Eucharist liberates the individual from genealogical links with his relatives by drawing a distinction between the concepts of hypostasis and substance (*ousia*). Orthodox faith holds that when the human is seen in terms of his biology, what Zizioulas terms his 'biological hypostasis', this can only reaffirm his mortality. If man bases his existence purely on the sexual act which led to his own conception and birth, then his ontological nature 'precedes the person and dictates its laws'. Hence Orthodox thinkers link the biological urge with death, as it places the ontological necessity of the person above his ontological freedom.<sup>99</sup> Zizioulas, in line with traditional Orthodox thought, insists that man must be freed from the body. Otherwise, Zizoulas writes, the individual will prioritize his familial relations over his spiritual commitments.

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<sup>95</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nechto iz tumana "obrazov" i "podobii" (Po povodu "Bessmertnykh voprosov" Gatchinskogo Otshel'nika)', in *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, pp. 287-317 (p. 287).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 287, 289.

<sup>97</sup> 'Nechto o prekrasnoi prirode', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 331-35 (p. 334).

<sup>98</sup> 'Nechto iz tumana "obrazov" i "podobii"', p. 289.

<sup>99</sup> It is worth noting that Fedorov also linked the sexual act with death. Fedorov believed that man could only become immortal when he ceased producing future generations of humans. Hence he links the birth of a new generation with death, where Rozanov associates this with immortality. Fedorov, I, p. 121.

When a man loves a biological hypostasis, he inevitably excludes others: the family has priority over ‘strangers’, the husband lays exclusive claim to the love of his wife – facts altogether understandable and ‘natural’ for the biological hypostasis. For a man to love someone who is not a member of his family *more* than his own relations constitutes a transcendence of the exclusiveness which is present in the biological hypostasis.<sup>100</sup>

Rozanov does not see in the Eucharist the liberation of the person from its nature, and instead of seeing the Eucharist as vital in the establishment of an Orthodox community, reinterprets this as a proof of the physical relationship with God.

## 6. The Creation and the Human Body

Christian theology implies the division of spirit and body. The flesh is considered the locus where the soul is held in torment until the next life. In seeing this world as the battlefield between the divine and the demonic, Christianity identifies the tension in the human person as a microcosm of that struggle. These platonic trends in Christianity were developed by St Paul, who sees the affairs of the flesh as inherently sinful, and the soul as the medium for human soteriology (Romans 5. 7).<sup>101</sup> Paul states that the body is merely a temporary shelter for the soul, and that ‘when we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord’ (II Corinthians 10. 1).<sup>102</sup>

For Rozanov, life is the preservation of the unity of flesh and spirit. The soul is the life principle of the person, the person’s ‘transcendent side’, or the ‘transcendent noumen of the body’ (‘potustoronni nomen tela’).<sup>103</sup> These parts of the person must work in harmony for religious activity to have a wider cosmological implication for the unity of Heaven and Earth.<sup>104</sup> In terms of the Orthodox theology discussed by Zizioulas, Rozanov is attempting to reunite the concepts of person and substance, and reaffirm the human being as a whole. Vladimir Losskii points out that the Greek Fathers distinguished between hypostasis and substance in the same way that they distinguished the particular from the universal. ‘The genius of the Fathers made use of the two common synonyms to distinguish in God that which is common – ousia, substance or essence – from that

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<sup>100</sup> Zizioulas, p. 57. Italics in original.

<sup>101</sup> *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 296.

<sup>102</sup> Frank Bottomley, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom* (London: Lepus, 1979), p. 36.

<sup>103</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Po povodu odnogo stikhotvoreniia Lermontova’, in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 313-21 (p. 320).

<sup>104</sup> ‘Nechto iz tumana “obrazov” i “podobii”’, p. 302.

which is particular – *ὑπόστασις* or person.<sup>105</sup> In striving to reunite the person with its nature, Rozanov uses the body to affirm the physical connection between the individual and the absolute.

Rozanov attacks abstract concepts of the soul. The soul is tangible, and has an aroma.<sup>106</sup> Each individual is a constituent part of creation, and our minds are unable to affect the division of self and object which would allow the consideration of unworldly events or phenomena. Rozanov cannot consider the soul as separable from the body, or even as being immortal. Rozanov is unable to believe in the afterlife; he concedes that there might be life after the grave, but is unable to contemplate it. Despite some affinity with the neo-Kantians, Rozanov does not find recourse to Kant's assertion in the intellectual necessity of heavenly existence. Rozanov focuses firmly on our terrestrial existence, and opposes Church thinkers who preach that this life is worthless.

The soul, like the body, is intimately linked with the Creation. Rozanov's concept of the soul as the living, vital element associated with life and blood, is close to the Hebrew concept of 'nepash'. He also understands the soul in similar terms to Aristotle, the soul being not only the life principle, but also the particular organizing feature of the body.<sup>107</sup> For this reason, Kurganov terms Rozanov's a 'monist' theory of the body.<sup>108</sup> In opposition to abstract notions of the Greek 'psyche', Rozanov presents an artistic description of the soul which is poetic, and intimately linked with the functions of the body. Rozanov even likened the soul to music, a source of amusement to his contemporaries.

Все воображают, что душа есть существо. Но почему она не есть музыка? И ищут ее «свойства» («свойства предмета»). Но почему она не имеет только строй? [...]

Без телесной приятности нет и духовной дружбы. Тело есть начало духа. Корень духа. А дух есть запах тела.<sup>109</sup>

Any divorce ('rastorzhenie') of the soul from the body is seen as an illness.<sup>110</sup> Feeling is the primary source of religious experience, and therefore one must reject Volzhskii's contention that Rozanov is relying on a mystical

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<sup>105</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. by the Fellowship of St Albans and St Sergius (James Clarke & Co.: Cambridge, 1991), p. 51.

<sup>106</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ogni sviashchennye', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 235-40 (p. 238).

<sup>107</sup> Stuart F. Spicker, 'Introduction', in *The Philosophy of the Body: Rejections of Cartesian Dualism*, ed. by Stuart F. Spicker (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), pp. 3-23 (pp. 4-6).

<sup>108</sup> Efim Kurganov, 'Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia religioznaia filosofia', in Efim Kurganov and Genrietta Mondri, *Rozanov i evrei*, pp. 5-143 (p. 56).

<sup>109</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Opavshie list'ia: Korob pervyi*, in *Religiia i kul'tura*, pp. 249-403 (pp. 351, 374). Emphasis in original.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, p. 464.

‘sixth sense’ to experience the divine.<sup>111</sup> Instead, Rozanov uses all the five bodily senses (primarily those usually considered baser senses, touch and smell) to relate to the holiness of the world. He rejects Orthodox teaching which states that man enters into communion with God through the mind and spirit.

Dionysius had written that the intellect (νοῦς) is initially involved in the movement to God; even the act of negating the initial positive assertions about God is cognitive.<sup>112</sup> It is only at the final stage of perfection that the mind goes beyond concepts to unite with ‘Him who is beyond understanding’.<sup>113</sup> In apophatic theology, the symbols of this world, especially the body, are denied in order to reach a form of religious ecstasy (the word itself derives from the ancient Greek ‘ekstas’, meaning to stand outside oneself).<sup>114</sup> In contrast, Rozanov believes that man can only know God through the body, and the manner in which the body re-enacts the Creation. He attacks the ‘cult of the spirit’ fostered by the Church, and insists that the Russians should instead cultivate a ‘cult of the body’.<sup>115</sup>

Rozanov describes himself as a realist, as Dostoevskii had done a generation previously. Rozanov’s writings are filled with descriptions of physical relationships between people and animals. Two people in love with each other feel each other’s soul.<sup>116</sup> Animals should be stroked and caressed. The beauty of nature and life inspires him to pray, and a worshipper must possess this religious feeling before he can worship.<sup>117</sup> For this reason Bernice Rosenthal terms Rozanov a ‘biological mystic’.<sup>118</sup> The physical nature of his own writings is designed to inspire in the reader not an intellectual response, but encourages a loving relationship to creation; this aesthetic and ethical aspect of his work will be examined more closely in Chapter 4. But there is a deeper theological reason for the positive descriptions of God and the world in his writings; the physical aspects of Rozanov’s philosophy help draw God to Earth. There are parallels in Orthodox theology; Maxim the Confessor wrote that apophatic theology affirms God as spirit, and cataphatic theology affirms God as flesh.

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<sup>111</sup> Volzhskii, ‘Misticheskii panteizm Rozanova’, p. 444.

<sup>112</sup> Rorem, pp. 239-40.

<sup>113</sup> Timothy, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> Rozanov was not the only thinker to fear that the apophatic tendency of Orthodoxy could easily lead to atheism. It is only a short step from recognizing the impossibility of knowing God, to the belief that God does not exist at all. Berdiaev warned in his *Vekhi* article that the Russian populace would turn its back on God if the Church did not engage with the world. See N.A. Berdiaev, ‘Filosofskaia istina i intelligentskaia pravda,’ in *Vekhi: Sbornik statei o russkoi intelligentsii*, ed. by A.V. Danilov (Sverdlovsk: Izdatel’stvo Ural’skogo universiteta, 1991), pp. 6-25 (pp. 12-13). In a similar fashion, Epstein saw the origins of Soviet atheism as lying in the Russian apophatic tradition. See Mikhail Epstein and others, *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*, trans. and ed. by Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover (Oxford: Berghahn, 1999), pp. 345-93 (p. 351).

<sup>115</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘S.F. Sharapovu, napomnivshemu slova: “Mogii vmestiti – da vmestit”’, in *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, pp. 280-83 (p. 282).

<sup>116</sup> ‘Psikhologiiia russkogo raskola’, p. 52.

<sup>117</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘V chem raznitsa drevnego i novogo mirov’, in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 231-36 (p. 236).

<sup>118</sup> Rosenthal, *D.S. Merezhkovsky and the Silver Age*, p. 73.

If you theologize in an affirmative or cataphatic manner, starting from positive statements about God, you make the Word flesh, for you have no other means of knowing God as cause except from what is visible and tangible. If you theologize in a negative or apophatic manner, through stripping away of positive attributes, you make the Word spirit as being in the beginning God and with God.<sup>119</sup>

Rozanov's work contains many affirmative comments about God. Rozanov calls God a scarab beetle, or a spider. The world is God's home, His apartment. Through this use of cataphatic theology, often couched in domestic terminology, Rozanov ensures that the communion between man and God is embodied. This justifies the accusations of pantheism in Rozanov's thought, which he was proud to accept.

Rozanov's thought engages with a fundamental difference in the Eastern and Western Churches. Orthodoxy does not teach that there is a difference between nature and grace, unlike in the Western Church as handed down by Augustine. According to Orthodoxy, all matter is penetrated by the energies of God, which are separate from His Essence. As Losskii states, these energies are the equivalent to Divine Grace. Hence Orthodoxy in theory tells us that all matter is essentially good, as it has been created by God. However, the Orthodox Church insists that matter itself cannot be worshipped, as this would suggest that God was contained within that object. Creation itself in Orthodox teaching promotes the division between God and His world, a view which Rozanov rejects.

Я не делю Бога и солнце: Солнце – как правый глаз Божий [...] Значит, если Небо сушит бугорок своего возлюбленного места – это Бог его сушит. Ведь земля – дитя Солнца?<sup>120</sup>

For Rozanov, the sun is clear evidence of the links between man and God's energies, as his appreciation of it is sensual. Heat is associated with holiness. Rozanov associated the bitter cold of his last days at Sergiev Posad with the conquest of Russia by the Antichrist. He was obsessed with fire from an early age, and this attraction persisted into his adult life (this fascination was shared by Remizov and other Silver Age figures).<sup>121</sup> His thought can be traced back to aspects of ancient Greek thinkers who saw heat as one of the four basic elements – Aristotle saw heat as the force which holds together the potentially disparate parts of all living things. In relating the use of fire in worship, Rozanov highlights the primeval aspects of worship which should be preserved within Orthodoxy.

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<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 53.

<sup>120</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> Slobin, p. 9.

The light emitted from fire, as opposed to electric light, has been a vital component of Christian worship from its origins. Christ described Himself as the light of the world (John 8. 12). Early churches were aligned to the movement of the sun, a tradition which still exists today.<sup>122</sup> Candles are also essential, and it is not uncommon among Russian religious thinkers to find a rejection of artificial light as demonic.<sup>123</sup> Just like the Russians, pagans worshipped fire, which Rozanov suggests was the very first image of God.<sup>124</sup> Rozanov extends this to other divine symbols: the stars have souls and are alive, they burn just like all other bodies. Rozanov believes that souls burn with their own fire, and he draws parallels between the human soul and the stars. This reaffirms the correspondence in his thought between the terrestrial and the heavenly.

И ведь посмотрите, какая таинственная связь души с огнем [...] Войдете в храм днем, не во время службы, без свеч и лампад – и вы увидите только архитектуру и живопись, вы не будете в нем молиться, вы не сумеете в нем молиться.<sup>125</sup>

Like fire, water has an innate sanctity which is affirmed when it is used in religious acts. For Rozanov such activity is present in the Orthodox Church; despite the clergy's focus on the spiritual, Orthodox worship is intensely physical. However, Rozanov insists that the meaning of such physical acts has been lost in Christianity, and Russians only perform such deeds without feeling. Rozanov reminds the Russians of the true meanings of our relationship with matter. Water is used to cleanse the body at the most important stages in its life, during illness and at death. He especially cherishes the rite of baptism, because of its links with childbirth.

Младенец, в купель погружаемый, не молится; даже – ничего не сознает. Но его красное тельце, барахтающееся, крошечное, как бы *ныряющее* в воду, и затем нежная простынка, накидываемая на спинку, и эти *весело* горящие свечи, и обрадованные лица кругом всех своих домашних лиц, и около священник в облачении, и еще – немного бы фимиама ароматистых курений, но самых легких чтобы только уничтожить тяжелый воздух – во всем этом какая *утучненная* материальность и вместе – *святая!*<sup>126</sup>

Rozanov terms baptism a physiological-elemental process ('protsess fiziologicheskii-stikhiinyi'), which ensures the body becomes a temple to God.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Tatiana Grdzeldze, 'The Concept of Place/Space in the Writings of Maximus the Confessor: Liturgical Space According to the *Mystagogia*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1998), p. 22.

<sup>123</sup> Losev insists that sunlight has a 'defined mythology'; conversely, the light of electric lamps is 'dead and mechanic'. A.F. Losev, *Dialektika mifa*, in *Mif, chislo, sushchnost'* (Moscow: Mysl', 1994), pp. 5-219 (p. 53).

<sup>124</sup> 'Ogni sviashchennye', p. 238.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>126</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Taina stikhii', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 264-67 (p. 265). Emphasis in original.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.



Rozanov demonstrates the manner in which Orthodox doctrine has created a skewed feeling and a type of religious fanaticism. As soul and body should work in tandem, Rozanov considers perverse the Orthodox teaching that physical suffering promotes spiritual wellbeing. Yet the Church's proclamation that the battle against evil cannot be won on this Earth has had massive consequences for the Russian people. The Russians have been told to overcome their bodies. As an example, Rozanov cites the case of one Avksentii Babenko, a 51-year-old from Ekaterinoslav, who threw himself alive onto a fire in order to seek redemption.<sup>128</sup> Rozanov also discusses the story of a young boy who burnt out his eyes with a candle, because he believed this would please Jesus.<sup>129</sup> For Rozanov, these are not individual cases, but symptomatic of the Church's hatred for the world.<sup>130</sup> Whole villages have committed mass suicide out of a 'strange Orthodox fanaticism', a false religious feeling; instead the Church should encourage a 'fruitful' faith and true love between people.<sup>131</sup>

## 7. Monasticism and Education

For Rozanov, the Orthodox's hatred for the world is further reflected in the predominance of monasticism. Rozanov does not believe that the monastic ideal is unique to the Russian Church; he believes it originated in ancient Roman cults before spreading to the rest of Europe.<sup>132</sup> However, the Orthodox Church has taken this way of life and made it its ideal. Like Leont'ev, Rozanov interprets monasticism as the purest form of Orthodoxy, though their appraisals of asceticism differ greatly.<sup>133</sup> As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Rozanov's inability to dissociate Orthodoxy from asceticism was a common criticism made by others.<sup>134</sup>

The Church Fathers teach that the path towards spiritual union with God lies through the 'via purgativa', the 'via illuminativa' and the 'via contemplativa'. This necessarily demands a detachment from this world and a separation of the person from the body.

Only by a holy abstinence can a man rise clear of the entanglements of matter into a purer existence where he can contemplate and hold communion with the absolute. As Origen bluntly puts it: 'All evil which reigns in the body is due to the five senses'. The

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<sup>128</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Sluchai v derevne', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, pp. 143-55 (p. 143). Rozanov wrote this article in 1900, though it is unclear when the incident in question took place.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> During Rozanov's lifetime, cases of religious fundamentalism were widespread across Russia and Europe, involving Christians, sectarians, and Jews, among others. In such an environment, where it was common for religious activity to result in mutilation, castration, murder and suicide, Rozanov's interpretation of the Beilis case is perhaps not so surprising. See Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank) 1894-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991), p. 185. I shall examine Rozanov's approach to the Beilis case in greater detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>131</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Samosozhzhenie', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, p. 190.

<sup>132</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'V voennom lagere rimlian', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 285-91 (p. 290).

<sup>133</sup> Copleston, *Philosophy in Russia*, p. 194.

<sup>134</sup> Tareev, 'V.V. Rozanov', p. 68.

gospel of Neoplatonism was the gospel of salvation from a world of the senses. Thus in Monasticism as in Neoplatonism the individual finds himself by escaping from himself. This is, in fact, the only outcome of self-knowledge except despair. None the less it is a form of individualism. When we lose ourselves [...] we alone find ourselves.<sup>135</sup>

Contrary to Leont'ev, for Rozanov there is nothing aesthetic in the monastic ideal. In a time where Russians were suffering from poverty, hunger and religious fanaticism, Rozanov advocated an active, as opposed to passive, Christianity. Monks are 'people of the moonlight', who do not understand sex, but still prohibit others from indulging.<sup>136</sup> The Church should undertake what Rozanov terms practical prayer, practical assistance within society, and do everything possible to improve the welfare of the poor, including the provision of food, education and spiritual guidance. The monastic desire to lock oneself away from the world contravenes Rozanov's demand that the Church should be socially committed.

The question of spiritual education has been an important component of Christianity, especially within Orthodoxy. In the Western Church, there have been tensions over the role of individual teachers and the desire to preserve the esoteric nature of Christianity. In the west, the Church has taught that Christ alone can provide spiritual guidance; the role of spiritual counsellor has generally been formalized, impersonal, and closely linked to the sacraments. However, in the traditions of the Eastern Church, the teacher-disciple transmission of spiritual development was strong, and the tradition of the starets was revived following Velichkovskii's example.<sup>137</sup>

Education figures very highly in Rozanov's thought, and in his many essays on the subject he advocates the reform of the school around the principle of the family. Rozanov started his professional career as a teacher, and wrote widely on education in Russia. Rozanov was intensely concerned about the development of children. Like Dostoevskii, he stressed the importance of their upbringing, as at this time they learn the most important moral lessons which mould them for the rest of their lives.<sup>138</sup> Rozanov wants to combine the functions of the school and the church, in order that the child's entire social and religious needs may be satisfied. This goes beyond feeding, clothing and housing children (although these are certainly roles which the Church should also perform).

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<sup>135</sup> Herbert R. Workman, *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal: From the Earliest Times Down to the Coming of the Friars* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1913), p. 29.

<sup>136</sup> *Liudi lunnogo sveta*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>137</sup> Donald Corcoran, 'Spiritual Guidance', in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, pp. 444-52 (pp. 444-45).

<sup>138</sup> See Gary Saul Morson, 'Introductory Study', in Fyodor Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, trans. and annotated by Kenneth Lantz, 2 vols (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), II, pp. 1-117 (p. 17).

Religious education requires that children are taught to understand that the worship of God should be based on vibrant and loving familial relations, as demonstrated in the Old Testament, and not on abstract doctrine. At school, Rozanov had had no exposure to the living Word of God. Instead, he had been forced to learn by rote the Catechism, the order of service and the history of the Russian Church. The dry, systematic learning imposed by the authorities had no value for him at all. He believes that rote-learning does not encourage a natural, spontaneous relationship with God.<sup>139</sup> Consequently, Russian schoolchildren are kept ignorant of the true meaning of worship, which the Church and the authorities are unable to teach. At school, Rozanov had lost all 'taste' for prayer, owing to the unfeeling manner in which it was taught. The adolescent Rozanov had been a 'nihilist', who often argued with his patriotic older brother over religion and literature (the young Vasilii favouring Nekrasov over Nikolai's Katkov).<sup>140</sup> It was only during his first year at university that he learned the true message of God.<sup>141</sup>

Rozanov's attempt to draw familial principles into education places obligations on monks to engage with people. The figure of the starets became an important part of Russian culture following the rediscovery of hesychasm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He was a central figure in the *Otkrovennye rasskazy strannika*, but perhaps more importantly captured the public consciousness through the many thinkers and writers who had made the pilgrimage to the monastery at Optina. These included Gogol', Tolstoi, Leont'ev, Vladimir Solov'ev, and perhaps most famously Dostoevskii, who took the inspiration from the starets Amvrosii for the character of Father Zosima. Stanton associates Optina with the nineteenth-century Russian philosophers, especially the 'pochvenniki', and their examination of the religious value of the Russian land as the basis for a 'Russian idea'.<sup>142</sup>

The starets played a vital role in individual religious experience. The worshipper was expected to open all his thoughts entirely to the father, known as 'exagoreusis', or the manifestation of thoughts.<sup>143</sup> Consequently, he was required to accept the starets' advice without question. Inevitably, this led to tensions between the starets' duty to administer to his flock, and his desire to seclude himself in order to pray.<sup>144</sup> Feofan Zatvornik, for example, saw only two or three people after he retired to Optina, and in the last two decades of his life had

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<sup>139</sup> 'Slovo Bozhie v nashem uchen'i', p. 81.

<sup>140</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Otvety na ankety Nizhegorodskoi gubernskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 37-42 (p. 38).

<sup>141</sup> 'Slovo Bozhie v nashem uchen'i', pp. 80-81.

<sup>142</sup> Leonard J. Stanton, *The Optina Pustyn Monastery in the Russian Literary Imagination: Iconic Vision in Works by Dostoevsky, Gogol, Tolstoy and Others* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 79.

<sup>143</sup> Corcoran, p. 448.

<sup>144</sup> Sergei Chetverikov, *Pravda khristianstva* (Moscow: Krutitskoe Patriarshee Podvor'e: Obshchestvo liubiteli tserkovnoi istorii, 1998), p. 90.

no real contact with the world at all.<sup>145</sup> Elders did not rely on doctrine or formula in their work (although they did later begin to compile spiritual teachings and prayers), but responded to each individual case on its own merits. The ideal for this was ‘fatherhood in the spirit’, the transmission of the Holy Ghost to bring others into the spiritual life of the Church.<sup>146</sup> In return for the disciple’s ‘exagoreusis’, the teacher was expected to respond with ‘diakrisis’, or discernment, the ability to ascertain the spiritual state of others and respond accordingly.<sup>147</sup>

Rozanov takes the ideal of the starets, but develops it along familial lines. He believes that priests should act as a father towards their parishioners. This transcends spiritual relationships and requires biological ties; Rozanov is close to the Jewish form of spiritual teaching which is akin to reproduction.<sup>148</sup> Rozanov criticizes Orthodox priests who do not attempt to comprehend the needs of their parishioners, but who only highlight others’ sins in order to express their own egoism.<sup>149</sup> Such is the example of Matvei Rzhnevskii, who persuaded Gogol’ to renounce his love for earthly affairs, such as ancient Greek, Pushkin, and his own writing.<sup>150</sup> Matvei preached that man could achieve salvation exclusively through the Church, but in doing so expressed himself as the sole source of God’s grace, replacing God as the object of worship.<sup>151</sup>

Despite his rejection of monasticism, Rozanov makes exceptions for those monks who engage with the world. Rozanov describes Amvrosii as a loving figure who did not seclude himself, but opened his cell to the thousands of worshippers who travelled to see him. Amvrosii was an intelligent and sensitive man, who was able to understand instinctively the needs of the supplicant, and relate to them accordingly.<sup>152</sup> Rozanov also had a great fondness for Ioann Kronshtadtskii, and played an important role in establishing the monk’s position in

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<sup>145</sup> Hackel, p. 459.

<sup>146</sup> Corcoran, pp. 446-47.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>148</sup> Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, ‘The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book’, in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*, ed. by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 17-46 (p. 19).

<sup>149</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Optina pustyn’’, in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 285-302 (p. 285).

<sup>150</sup> ‘Nebesnoe i zemnoe’, p. 167.

<sup>151</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Liudi i knigi okolo steny tserkovnoi’, in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 128-55 (p. 152).

<sup>152</sup> ‘Optina pustyn’’, p. 289.

the national consciousness.<sup>153</sup> Rozanov considered Kronshtadtskii a saint, an ‘angel in the flesh’ who worked tirelessly with the public and was able to make manifest the heavenly on Earth.<sup>154</sup>

## 8. The Organization of the Church as an Institution

Rozanov’s focus on the material world has implications for his theories on the structure of the Church. He believes that Russian religiosity should emerge naturally from the Russians, and should be composed of the body of the people.<sup>155</sup> Similarly, the clergy should not be elevated above the people. Rozanov admires the religious organization of pagan societies, particularly ancient Egypt, where the priesthood retains intimate links with the masses.

However, Rozanov contends that the Russian Church is detached from the people and hostile to ‘byt’. His reasons for taking this view expose the tensions between tradition and modernity in Rozanov’s wider view of culture. The Church leadership is dominated by a Byzantine mindset, which is more concerned with preserving the archaic forms of religion inherited from the Greeks, than in tending its flock.

Ибо теперешнее чиновначалие или чиновничество в церкви есть вторжение в церковь *чужой* ей организации, а не есть развитие организации самую церковью, из ее собственных начал и по ее внутреннему закону и духу, из ее собственных соков.<sup>156</sup>

Rozanov is looking for a particular kind of ‘sobornost’, which can overcome the divisions in Russian society.<sup>157</sup>

But by maintaining an outdated clerical structure, the Church ensures that talented people do not enter the clergy, and even the most skilled priests within the Church are unable to fulfil their potential in administering to the people.

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<sup>153</sup> Nadieszda Kizenko, *A Prodigal Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 161. Ironically, this admiration for Kronshtadtskii did not appear to be reciprocated; Kronshtadtskii did not like Rozanov. The monk had a deep distrust of all the Russian intelligentsia, and despite common concerns over the national question, Kronshtadtskii could not reconcile his strict asceticism with Rozanov’s blatant propagation of sexuality. For a discussion of Kronshtadtskii’s opinion towards progressive religious thinkers, see Nadieszda Kizenko, ‘Ioann of Kronstadt and the Reception of Sanctity’, *Russian Review*, 57 (1998), 325-44 (p. 343). For all his fervent attacks on Russia’s philosophers, Ioann Kronshtadtskii directed most of his anger towards Tolstoi; for an outline of his critique of the writer’s ideas, see Veniamin, pp. 907-20.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in Kizenko, p. 161.

<sup>155</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘O veshchakh beskonechnykh i konechnykh (Po povodu nesostoiavshegosia “otlucheniia ot tserkvi” pisatelei)’, in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 365-69 (p. 366).

<sup>156</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Pravoslavnaia tserkov’ v 1908 g.’, in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 8-9 (p. 9).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. In this thesis I argue that the main focus of Rozanov’s thought is Russia, and not a subjective examination of himself.

Все несчастье духовенства заключалось в том, что за целое столетие и даже за два века, с Петра Великого, оно не выдвинуло ни одной великой *нравственной личности* из себя, вот с этими же, как у Толстого, тревогами совести, с мукой души о *грехе своем*, о долге *своем*, – именно *своем*, а не чужом, ибо о «чужом долге» духовенство до «преизбыточества» говорило: и никто из него не взволновал душу общества, не изъявил сердца человеческого, как Толстой вечным своим «покаянием», самообличением и самобичиванием.<sup>158</sup>

The relationship between the Church and the people cannot be healthy, as the relationship between the Church hierarchy and its own priests has broken down. Rozanov cites the clergy's poor training. Seminaries are run harshly, along military lines, and this discipline hardens the young priests' characters and makes them insensitive to the needs of the people.<sup>159</sup> In seminaries the focus is not on love, but on dogma. No attention is placed on 'byt', and there is no development of the trainees' soft character. Priests should love their flock, and be a 'friend of the soul and of life'.<sup>160</sup> Instead, the Church's emphasis on the 'algebra', the formal rules, of Christianity means that individual priests are ill-equipped to use their initiative in their parishes. They cannot display a spontaneous and paternal love to their children, adding to the despair of the people.

Глубокая тоска Русской земли заключается в сознании и очевидности, что «церковь» есть, а «осуществления на земле правды Божией» нет; что некуда пойти, некуда паломничать.<sup>161</sup>

Rozanov sympathizes with the rural clergy, who are poorly paid and treated badly by the Church authorities.<sup>162</sup> Their work is further impaired by the Church's indifference to their poor living conditions. Bishops are hostile to real Russian life, they refuse to leave their offices and visit the villages under their care.<sup>163</sup> The clergy's impoverishment deflects its attention from the people's spiritual needs. As a result, Russian villages are filled with priests who do not love their work or the people, but who undertake their tasks mechanically and without feeling. Even the most enthusiastic of priests are hampered by the Church's hostility to their wellbeing, and Rozanov does not foresee any possibility of remedying this situation.

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<sup>158</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Chego nedostaet Tolstomu?', in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 344-55 (p. 354). Emphasis in original.

<sup>159</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'K pravitel'stvennomu soobshcheniiu', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 147-48 (p. 148).

<sup>160</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Eshche o stile veshchei', in *Staraia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 395-98 (p. 398).

<sup>161</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Tserkov' esteticheskaja i tserkov' sovestlivaia', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 134-38 (p. 136).

<sup>162</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Sud'ba el'skogo sviashchennika', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 184-88 (p. 188).

<sup>163</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nuzhda very i form ee', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 15-19 (p. 16).

Печальное теперешнее *перейдет в вечность*. Что теперь очень печально положение вещей в духовном сословии, что священство как-то упало, огрубело, потеряло разум, стало безвольно и безмолвно и заботится только о материальном обеспечении себя, о «хлебе едином», – это общеизвестно, и все ждали, что этому наступит же конец.<sup>164</sup>

Despite this harsh conclusion, Rozanov does concede that there are able priests within the Russian Church, but these tend to be exceptional individuals, deeply loved by the people but shunned by the Church, such as Ioann Kronshtadtskii and Nikon, Exarch of Georgia. Their deaths represent a serious loss for Russian religious life, and their treatment by the Church hierarchy has further damaged relations between the Russians and their Church.

Потеря эта потому особенно ударила по сердцам, что русские давно смотрят с безнадежностью на организационные силы церкви и, не видя света в ее канцелярских учреждениях, сосредоточили давно всю свою любовь и все свое внимание на единичных праведных личностях, на единичных праведниках и деятелях.<sup>165</sup>

In traditional Christianity, the Church is presented as the body of Christ. The Church teaches that salvation can be achieved exclusively through its mediation; there is no scope for individual religious behaviour outside the communion of the official Church. However, instead of acting for the good of mankind, Rozanov believes that the Church impedes our relationship with the divine. Rozanov accepts the Bible as the Word of God, written directly through His inspiration. However, the Church has elevated its own teachings to the level of the divine; it is in fact trying to replace God, and make itself the object of the Russian people's worship. The Church has established itself as a false idol, which demands our exclusive obedience.<sup>166</sup> The Church has become, in Rozanov's eyes, a self-obsessed organization which will not permit us to accept the simple pleasures of this life. Herein lies a fundamental problem, and another prong to Rozanov's attack on the Church. He argues that the clergy has taught the Russians to worship the afterlife and therefore neglect this world. Ironically, however, Rozanov points out that the Church as an institution has pernicious material concerns, and is concerned with exercising secular authority over the Russian people. This view also emerges in Rozanov's examination of the Church's handling of marriage ceremonies, which will be studied in Chapter 3.

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<sup>164</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Chrezvychainyi sobor russkoi tserkvi i ee budushchnost', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 453-56 (p. 455).

<sup>165</sup> 'Pravoslavnaia tserkov' v 1908 g.', p. 9.

<sup>166</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O rasstroistve trudovogo goda', in *Staraia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 125-28 (p. 126).

Rozanov feels that the Church is unable to manage the harmony of Russian religious and secular affairs. His depressing conclusion is that the Russian people need protection from the Church.<sup>167</sup> This can only be achieved by seeing the state as the best expression of the people's will, and ensuring that the state has full guardianship over the Church. Only in this way can the divide between the Church and the people be overcome; the state's failure to reign in the Church will only result in further distance between the ecclesiastical body and the body of the people. Rozanov is very close to other Russian religious thinkers in advocating what he feels should be the communal nature of the Russian Church, where the priests are not accorded a privileged position in a hierarchy above the people. This is supposed to be a characteristic of the Russian Orthodox Church.

As one mark of consequence of this collective communion, the church recognized no mark of rank. Everybody was equal. There was no superior place for the priest, (as in the Roman Catholic tradition) or for the political chieftain, (as Pobedonostsev discovered in the protestant and Islamic traditions). A member of this body might be a local merchant or tsar of all the Russias, but at prayer they were both connected and integrated parts of one Russian Orthodox Christianity.<sup>168</sup>

Rozanov engages with long-running questions over the competing authority of the Tsar and Patriarch in Russia, which had gained increasing importance in the pre-revolutionary period.<sup>169</sup> Whereas in his adolescence he had wished for the restoration of the Patriarchate, Rozanov concludes that the wounds in Russian society can only be healed through the increased power of the Tsar over the Church through the Ober-Procurator and the Synod.<sup>170</sup>

## **9. Rozanov in the Context of Russian Religious Philosophy's Engagement with Orthodoxy**

This chapter has examined Rozanov's engagement with the eschatology of the Orthodox Church, its fundamental teachings, and with its contemporary organization. Yet it is worth concluding with a brief examination of Rozanov's engagement with parallel traditions in Russian religious philosophy. Rozanov never

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> John D. Basil, 'Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev: An Argument for a Russian State Church', *Church History*, 64 (1995), 44-61 (p. 47).

<sup>169</sup> The struggles for authority between Tsar and Patriarch are too complex to be discussed at great length in this thesis, but form an important part of Russian history. These polemics demonstrate different perceptions on the mutual relationship between ecclesiastical and secular authorities in Russia. Billington explores the issue in depth, and notes that until around the 1650s patriarchs were often considered 'virtual rulers' of Russia. See Billington, especially pp. 130-33. Rozanov tended to idealize the concept of the Old Testament king (which had been the ideal of the first Russian tsars), especially David and Solomon, as the God-chosen ruler of the people who acted in the best interests of the people. He saw the Tsar as the father of the people who could best embody the people's will (the pronouncement of such views became more desperate from 1917 onwards). In comparison, Rozanov believed that the Patriarch would act only in the interests of the Orthodox Church against the interests of the people.

<sup>170</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Beznadezhnoe i beznadezhnye', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 14-18 (p. 14).



considered himself a philosopher or a historian, despite his adolescent aspirations to succeed in these fields. The resounding failure of his first work, his systematic exploration of understanding, forced him to seek an income in other areas. Once established in Petersburg, Rozanov referred to himself as a ‘publitsist’. However, it is important to note that many thinkers in Russia at this time, who all had widely disparate views, believed that there were fundamental problems in the relationship between the Russian people and their Church. Many of Rozanov’s predecessors and peers engaged with the Church in an attempt to investigate how this relationship could be improved. These thinkers sought various justifications for their ideas, sometimes citing a return to what they saw as the Church’s true pre-Petrine, or even Greek Orthodox, roots. Rozanov likewise emerges from this desire to challenge the authority of the Church leadership, and yet at the same time considers himself a true Russian Orthodox believer.

Rozanov tended to view systematic Russian religious philosophy as being opposed to the natural religion of the people. The body-mind dichotomy he establishes in his engagement with Orthodoxy is repeated in the rift he sees between the Russian intellectual tradition and the body of the Russian people. Rozanov insists that he stands outside the abstract and speculative nature of Russian philosophy, but that he belongs to the Russian people and their soil. He defines himself in opposition to Russian philosophy, but paradoxically many of his ideas emerge from the traditions of Russian religious thought. In Rozanov one notes the influence – directly or indirectly – of Khomiakov, the Aksakovs, Grigor’ev, Strakhov, Vladimir Solov’ev, and Leont’ev. Rozanov is their successor, and they all engage in their own specific manner with the traditional teachings of the Church, while insisting on their own Christianity. Rozanov would never consider himself a direct successor to any of these thinkers, or an integral member of any particular school or group (despite his influence in the Religious-Philosophical Meetings, he always preferred to remain on the periphery of the gatherings, and sometimes did not even attend meetings when his works and ideas were being discussed). Rozanov even fiercely attacked the ideas of those he admired most, especially what he considered the pessimism of Dostoevskii and Leont’ev. Yet his thought comes from, and is inspired by, the manner in which Russian thinkers and writers themselves engage with Orthodoxy. Rozanov considers himself a devout Orthodox who has a privileged position in unlocking the truths of the Church, and returning the Church to its pre-Christian origins; yet he would not be able to engage with Orthodox teaching in this way, unless he exploited the precedents set by others who engaged with Orthodoxy.

His involvement with Russian philosophers, but particularly with Solov'ev, convinced him that they were an isolated and self-absorbed group without an understanding of what it meant to be Russian.<sup>171</sup> Rozanov saw his mission as lying firmly within the body of the Russian Church. Nevertheless, the fact that Rozanov attempts to set himself apart from the inheritance of Russian philosophy raises many important points on how he construes the relationship between Russian thought and Russian history.<sup>172</sup> In many ways, the manner in which Rozanov 'thinks' informs the very content of that thought, and vice versa. It is not important for Rozanov whether his own ideas are original or derivative. The vital aspect for him is that his thought is presented to the reader as something entirely new, whether or not these ideas previously existed, either in Rozanov or previous thinkers. The critic Izmailov notes that in over 800 pages, *O ponimanii* does not contain a single reference to other people's works.<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, Izmailov recalls that he once questioned an unnamed contact, a 'specialist in philosophy, an academic and friend of Solov'ev', as to the real value of *O ponimanii*. The contact replied that Rozanov arrived at the same conclusions as Hegel, despite the fact that he had never read Hegel in his life. The academic concluded that it would have been of more benefit if Rozanov had simply learned to read German instead.<sup>174</sup> Yet, as Fediakin astutely notes, the question of prior investigation is irrelevant for Rozanov – what is more important is that he 'reinvents the bicycle' each time himself.<sup>175</sup> Rozanov's desire to repeatedly view the

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<sup>171</sup> Rozanov traces his excitement about moving to Petersburg (despite his fear of the imperial capital as the home of Russian radicalism and the revolutionary movement), where he could finally associate with the true heirs of Aksakov, Khomiakov, Giliarov-Platonov and Leont'ev, and his gradual disillusionment with the new Slavophiles over their isolation from society and literature. V.V. Rozanov, 'Sredi liudi "chisto russkogo napravleniia"', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 195-202 (p. 197).

<sup>172</sup> This point itself raises the question of the extent to which one can talk of a unifying trend in Russian idealist thought, an issue too vast for this thesis to examine in any depth. Certainly many religious thinkers, especially some of the key figures in the Religious-Philosophical Society, attempted to define themselves as a united group. Filosofov argued that the Society was a social organisation with a face, and that its members should be united around its cause. See "'Sud" nad Rozanovym. Zapiski S.-Peterburgskogo Religiozno-filosofskogo obshchestva', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 184-215 (p. 185). In addition, various sub-groups of Russian philosophers tended to revolve around joint publications, such as *Mir Iskusstva* or *Novyi Put'*, and hence it was the journal which formed the core of their activity. Rozanov was loosely involved in many of these groups, while never being fully integrated in any of them.

<sup>173</sup> A.A. Izmailov, 'Vifleem ili Gulgofa? (V.V. Rozanov i "neudavsheesia khristianstvo")', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, II, pp. 81-90 (p. 83).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85. Many critics have noted the closeness of Rozanov's ideas in *O ponimanii* to those of Hegel. For example, Florovskii indicates the Hegelian influence on Rozanov's first book. See Florovskii, p. 460. Ivask discusses the scholarship on Hegel's influence on Rozanov. George Ivask, 'Rozanov', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 5 (1961), 110-22 (p. 112). Strakhov had pointed out to the young Rozanov that his ideas on potential already existed in the German idealists, and he accordingly advised his young protégé to learn German. See Strakhov's letter to Rozanov, dated 18 March 1888 (O.S.), reprinted in *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 11.

<sup>175</sup> Fediakin writes, 'Если попытаться проследить путь Розанова к «Уединенному», то он, собственно, начинается с первой же его книги «О понимании», где он выступает как своего рода «робинсон» в философии, все перпетии сложнейших проблем проходит заново, минуя опыт большинства философов прошлого и настоящего (потому-что так бросается в глаза отсутствие ссылок на авторитеты, выводы которых могли бы помочь философу в разрешении того или иного вопроса, Розанов все время старается «изобрести велосипед», т.е. сам пройти путь, уже пройденный мировой философией). Он как бы берет то или иное понятие – и начинает мысленно «разглядывать» его (как и вообще любил разглядывать

world for the first time is informed by his desire to understand the world in its original, pre-Fall form, and this means that Rozanov is constantly searching to present existing ideas and entities as new beginnings. This leads him to reject other thinkers' philosophies: Rozanov even admits that he is filled with a longing to 'kill' other people's ideas.<sup>176</sup> This manner of thinking takes hold of the processes and content of Rozanov's writing, and will be further examined in the study of Rozanov's literature in Chapter 4.

Despite the desire of Rozanov's peers to challenge the hegemony of the Orthodox Church, their thought was derived from the eschatology of Russian culture, and shared with the Church a hope in the future transfiguration of the world. Many saw the proof of this future paradise in the form of symbols, which were essentially forward-orientated. This can be observed in Solov'ev, who argues that 'the unconditional moral significance of human personality demands the completion or fullness of life'. For Solov'ev, the essence of Christianity depends on the promise already given within creation of its future perfection.

Оно [Christianity] дает и обещает человечеству нечто действительно новое. Оно дает живой образ личности, совершенной не отрицательным только совершенством безволия и не мысленным только совершенством идеального созерцания, а совершенством безусловным и всецелым, идущим до конца и потому побеждающим смерть. Христианство *открывает* человечеству безусловно-совершенную и потому *телесно* воскресающую личность; оно обещает человечеству сообразное этому личному началу совершенное общество, а так как именно это общество не может быть создано внешним и насильственным образом (тогда оно было бы несовершенным), то *обещание* его заключает в себе *задачу* для человечества и для каждого человека содействовать открывшейся миру совершенной личной силе в деле преобразования всей мирной среды для собирательного воплощения в ней Царства Божия.<sup>177</sup>

In this work, Solov'ev investigates human history as the development from a tribal, primeval religious outlook, to the eventual transfiguration of the world which can only be achieved through Christ. Here he clearly emerges from the traditions of Christian teaching: creation for Solov'ev is incomplete without theosophy eventually to bring about the Kingdom of God. However, Solov'ev also opens up a tension between the historical and the eschatological, by insisting that matter takes on a higher religious and ethical value with the nearing of the end of time. Past human achievements, including the religious practices of pre-Christian societies, only have value

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монеты, письма, мелочи жизни, почему он воскликнул в «Опавших листьях»: «Я пришел в мир, чтобы видеть, а не совершить».)' S.R. Fediakin, 'Zhanr, odkryti V.V. Rozanovym', in V.V. Rozanov, *Kogda nachal'stvo ushlo...*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2005), pp. 597-602 (p. 598). Emphasis in original.

<sup>176</sup> *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 159.

<sup>177</sup> V.S. Solov'ev, *Opravdanie dobra* (Moscow: Respublika, 1996), p. 236. Emphasis in original.

in the way in which they point to the establishment of the ideal Christian society. History itself for Solov'ev is essentially apocalyptic.

Roza'nov turns repeatedly to Solov'ev and his thought. Roza'nov appreciated Solov'ev's poetry, but was critical of his ideas, despite paradoxically acknowledging Solov'ev's role in Russian philosophy's engagement with Orthodoxy.<sup>178</sup> Soon after their acquaintance, the two men argued over the nature of religious freedom, and this correspondence has been already studied in some depth.<sup>179</sup> However, one of the major differences between the two men's thought emerges from their opposing views over the relationship of time to matter. Roza'nov sees the historical aspect to Solov'ev's work as a denial of the Earth in its present condition. This view is repeated in Roza'nov's frequent appraisal of Solov'ev as a person; he considers Solov'ev a cold, ghostly figure, who lacked any real devotion to God's world or other people. For Roza'nov, it follows on that Solov'ev is essentially unable to love: he had no family, no children, and no real home.<sup>180</sup>

У Соловьёва [...] было какое-то «томление духа» (Экклезиаст) по человеку... Его предсмертный труд – «Разговор под пальмами», столь грустный по тону, столь безнадежный – давно, может быть с молодости, капля по капле зрел в его душе. «Конец всемирной истории», «ничего не нужно», «ничего не возможно» – как с этими мыслями не побежишь куда-нибудь, к кому-нибудь?<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Roza'nov, always on the search for motifs of renaissance, admires Solov'ev for his attempts to bring about a Russian spiritual rebirth. Roza'nov believes that religious reform can lead to a renewal of a people's strength, and looks at the historical examples of the Renaissance in Germany, and of religious reforms in England and Scotland. He credits Solov'ev with providing the impetus for a similar type of religious renaissance in Russia. See V.V. Roza'nov, 'Ob odnoi osobennoi zaslu'ge Vl. S. Solov'eva', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 432-41 (pp. 435-36).

<sup>179</sup> Much of the scholarship into the polemics between Roza'nov and Solov'ev centres on their views on religious freedom. See, for example, Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, pp. 262-67. In these pages, Fateev also discusses at length the arguments between the two men over the nature of the Apocalypse. However, Roza'nov believed that their hostility originated in their varying appraisals of Pushkin. V.V. Roza'nov, 'V literaturnoi pracheshnoi...', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 196-99 (p. 198). This argument reveals their opposing views on 'active' or 'passive' Christianity, and on the role of the family. Solov'ev believed that Pushkin did not display true Christian forgiveness in participating in his fateful duel with d'Anthès. Roza'nov, on the other hand, believed that Pushkin acted religiously in defending his family against the slanders perpetuated against them. Their differing opinions to the way Pushkin should have responded to d'Anthès reveals much about the opposition Roza'nov establishes between Orthodox humility and the centrality of the family in his worldview. For a further investigation of this, see V.V. Roza'nov, 'Khristianstvo passivno ili aktivno', in *Religiia, filosofii, kul'tura*, pp. 143-53.

<sup>180</sup> Roza'nov writes about Solov'ev's inability to love in many places, but perhaps one of the most importance locations where he links Solov'ev's lack of roots with his coldness to other people is in V.V. Roza'nov, 'Avtoportret Vl.S. Solov'eva: Tserkovnye zaniatiia ego i ego lichnost'', in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 392-99 (p. 398). Roza'nov was astonished that the ascetic Vladimir Solov'ev could emerge from such a productive figure as his father Sergei, who was a true family man with many children. Roza'nov writes that 'the philosopher Solov'ev is the living and personal negation of the historian Solov'ev'. V.V. Roza'nov, 'Literaturnyi rod Solov'evykh', in *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma*, pp. 79-87 (p. 81).

<sup>181</sup> V.V. Roza'nov, 'Iz starykh pisem. Pis'ma Vlad. Serg. Solov'eva', in *Russkaia mysl'* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2006), pp. 444-81 (p. 455).

Rozanov cites Solov'ev as the main culprit for promoting eschatological trends in Russian culture.<sup>182</sup> Solov'ev's thought is orientated towards the future, and this is why Rozanov criticizes him for constructing out of Russian culture his own forward-looking symbols.<sup>183</sup> Despite acknowledging Solov'ev's contribution to the development of Russian philosophy and for challenging the Church hierarchy's strict supervision of Russian religious thought, he complains that Solov'ev has perpetuated its eschatology.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, Solov'ev has contributed to the wider dissemination of these eschatological elements throughout Russian culture. Rozanov concludes that followers of Solov'ev – especially Merezhkovskii and Filosofov, just as their idol – will be intrinsically anti-Russian.<sup>185</sup>

Rozanov makes it his mission to disentangle history from eschatology in Russian thought, by insisting that all matter is linked to the start of time. In one sense, he is linked to the symbolist movement initiated by Solov'ev, in that Rozanov seeks earthly symbols demonstrative of man's relationship with God. However, Rozanov tries to locate new symbols which point back to the Creation. There is no sense in Rozanov that he wishes for the complete liberation of the individual worshipper from all symbols of faith, in the same way that Shestov or Tareev do: there is no developed concept of freedom in Rozanov's thought. The baby and the phallus become the most important objects of examination for Rozanov; both are related in a complex system which rests on their activity. In opposition to these, Christ acts as a false symbol which destroys the relationship between the ideal and the real; Christ must be overcome. Hence Rozanov looks back to civilizations where the Phallus of God takes precedence over the Logos, and which have preserved a relationship with the physicality of God. He is drawn to cultures which are closer in a temporal sense to the Creation, and also for whom the Creation has central place. This explains his fascination with ancient Egypt.

Although a very Russian thinker, Rozanov is forced to reject the philosophical programmes advanced by his predecessors and peers. Rozanov is aware that he is part of a massive religious revival in Russia, and yet he opposes the intentions and discourse used by his fellow thinkers. In engaging with the religious renaissance, Rozanov questions exactly what types of religious thought should be resurrected in Russia. He accused others, in particular the formal Slavophiles such as the Aksakovs and the Kireevskii, of an over-intellectual approach which lacks feeling for the beginnings of time. Rozanov also challenges what he considered the neo-Byzantine

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<sup>182</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Frantsuzskii trud o Vlad. Solov'ev', in *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma*, pp. 136-45 (p. 139).

<sup>183</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Chto protiv printsipa tvorcheskoi svobody nashlis' vozrazit' zashchitniki svobody khaoticheskoi', in *Russkaia mysl'* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2006), pp. 387-421 (p. 390).

<sup>184</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Programma tserkovnykh reform', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 188-90 (p. 189).

<sup>185</sup> V.V. Rozanov, "'Otoidi, Satana'", in *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma*, pp. 281-83 (pp. 282-83).

movement emerging in Russia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Understanding that something within the Church needed to be changed, these thinkers made the fatal error of looking back not to Egypt, but to Byzantium, and demanding that the Church be returned to its Greek forms. Such moves would be catastrophic for Russia, according to Rozanov, as they would only strengthen the focus on the Crucifixion.<sup>186</sup>

Yet for Rozanov, this future must be deeply rooted in a history which preserves the continued sanctity of the world. He is deeply optimistic, in his belief in the innate goodness of nature, and also in his hopes for Russia's future. Rozanov believes that Russian spirituality can only be revived through the return to religious practices based on the Creation. He has a deep love for the ancient world, where everything is paradoxically still new, and cites ancient Egyptian religion as the true origin of man's relationship with God. The Russians can only be saved by bringing back into practice pre-Christian beliefs, myths and rituals. His attempt to restore ancient Egypt within Russia is problematic, but also reveals much about how the Russians examined their cultural heritage at this time, and the tensions between old and new.

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<sup>186</sup> 'Perstye temy', p. 133.

## Chapter Two

### Rozanov and Ancient Egypt: Myths of Birth and Death

#### 1. Egypt in the Russian Silver Age

One of the characteristics of the Russian Silver Age is the explosion of interest in the exotic, the occult, and in particular Eastern religions and their practices.<sup>1</sup> There is already existing scholarship on the re-examination of ancient religions in this period.<sup>2</sup> However, as yet little attention has been directed towards Rozanov's place within this cultural phenomenon. Many of Rozanov's peers turned their attention towards theosophy, magic, cultish forms of worship, and the ancient religions of the orient. There was a growth of interest in mystical writings which lay outside the Orthodox tradition, such as those of Boehme or Swedenborg.<sup>3</sup> To a large extent, this interest in the esoteric was a common theme across Europe. However, the Russian approach was marked by a belief in the practical reality of such ideas, and by a conviction that such ideas should be realized for Russia's wellbeing.<sup>4</sup> This interest in foreign religions emerged as a result of the growing dissatisfaction with the

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<sup>1</sup> This thesis acknowledges the problems over the use of the term 'Silver Age', its definitions and the period to which it applies. For a discussion of some of the major recent arguments, see the opening section of Roger Keys, *The Reluctant Modernist: Andrei Bely and the Development of Russian Fiction 1902-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 3-18. In contemporary scholarship, the Silver Age is often seen as the final flourishing of Russian culture before the Bolshevik assumption of power, and is contrasted with the Golden Age of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Silver Age has often been associated with the twilight of Russian culture, the night and the moon. Rozanov was keenly sensitive to the pervasive sense of living at the end of time, but saw in this the opportunity for the rebirth of Russian spirituality. Rozanov frequently points out that night is always followed by day, and the moon always gives way to the sun. In many ancient Semitic religions, the moon, a symbol of the Silver Age, was seen as the symbol of rebirth. Theodor Reik, *Pagan Rites in Judaism: From Sex Initiation, Magic, Moon-Cult, Tattooing, Mutilation and Other Primitive Rituals to Family Loyalty and Solidarity* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Company, 1964), p. 92. This point has significance in the context of this chapter, and Rozanov's attempt to explain death, and the waning of cultures, as a possibility for rebirth.

<sup>2</sup> Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, 'Introduction', in *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, ed. by Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 1-32 (p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Boehme's influence on Solov'ev has been given attention in existing scholarship. See for example, D. Strémooukhoff, *Vladimir Soloviev and his Messianic Work*, trans. by Elizabeth Meyendorff, ed. by Phillip Guilbeau and Heather Elise MacGregor (Belmont: Nordland, 1980), p. 64. In this passage, Strémooukhoff quotes a letter from Solov'ev to S.A. Tolstaia, in which Solov'ev rejects the subjectivism of Gichtel, Arnold and Pordage, but underlines the importance of Paracelsus, Boehme and Swedenborg. The original letter, dated 27 April 1877 (O.S.), is reprinted in V.S. Solov'ev, *Pis'ma*, ed. by E.L. Radlov, 4 vols (St Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1903-23), II (1909), p. 200. In his investigation of sophiology, Florenskii quotes the same letter in his examination of Sophia. See Pavel Florenskii, *Stolp i utverzhenie istiny*, 2 vols (Moscow: Pravda, 1990), II, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Mikhail Epstein has characterized Russia as an 'ideocracy', a cultural arena in which ideas can be readily put into practice. He also, however, marks the negative aspect of this, and describes the Russian ideocracy as an environment where individuals have historically been imprisoned by ideas, ruthlessly implemented by the thinking elite. He presents the Russian, and especially the Soviet, ideocracy as a tyranny, where Plato's concept of the 'czardom of ideas' has reached its final stage of development. See <[http://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/rus\\_thought\\_overview.html](http://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/rus_thought_overview.html)>, last accessed 29 November 2006.

established religious institutions and practices.<sup>5</sup> Rosenthal notes that the fascination in the occult stemmed from a loss of confidence in the dominant myths maintained by the establishment.

The occultism that flourishes in such periods can be seen as response to the spiritual disorientation and cultural confusion that accompanies the death of the myth (the dominant belief).<sup>6</sup>

Pyman, among other scholars, has written extensively not only on the fascination with the esoteric, but also on the maximalist approach thinkers adopted towards such cults, and their desire to ‘whole-heartedly embrace and act out [their] ideas’.<sup>7</sup> In the Russian Silver Age, this belief in the reality of ideas, coupled with an interest in the exotic, and often downright bizarre, made for a potent cultural mix.

Many of Rozanov’s contemporaries drew on the rituals of non-Orthodox religions. For example, Merezhkovskii, Gippius and Filosofov put into practice their belief in the holiness of the number three. They lived together and promoted their triumvirate as the first step to realizing a new religion. Viacheslav Ivanov hosted regular Wednesday evening gatherings in his ‘Tower’, which soon gained notoriety as a home of ‘a dangerous and, on occasion, rather ridiculous mix of mystic eroticism and sociological maximalism’.<sup>8</sup>

In the Silver Age, one of the major loci of investigation was ancient Egypt. This in itself is hardly surprising; the Egyptian empire was one of mankind’s earliest and most successful, and the remnants of their religion had for centuries intrigued and inspired man. Although the Russian revival of Egypt had specifically national traits, it can be placed to some extent within the broader European context. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the view gathered pace that the classical world was not the exclusive basis for European civilization. The tendency for Europeans to accord themselves a privileged position above pagans saw mounting challenges in the Renaissance and beyond; such influential thinkers to challenge the established view included (though by no means exclusively) Michel de Montaigne, Rousseau and Vico.<sup>9</sup> By the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars had

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<sup>5</sup> Rosenthal, ‘Introduction’, in *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Pyman, p. 240. Lidia Zinov’eva-Annibal once famously, at a party hosted by Minskii, mixed blood taken from the guests in a goblet and wine, and passed this round for all to drink. In his Petersburg period, Rozanov would often attend such bizarre ceremonies, but kept his participation secret from his wife. Rozanov later comments on the Zinov’eva-Annibal incident with some curiosity, but cites this as proof of the Jews’ unique attraction to human blood. See V.V. Rozanov, ‘Napominaniia po telefonu’, in *Oboniatel’noe i osiazatel’noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 336-39 (p. 337).

<sup>8</sup> Pyman, p. 272. As noted in the Introduction, it is in this cultural and philosophical arena, where thinkers accept and expect a direct correspondence between religious activity and reality, that Katsis contextualizes Rozanov’s conclusions over the Iushchinskii murder. See the Introduction, n. 85. This point will also be examined in Chapter 3.

<sup>9</sup> For an investigation of challenges to the view that European history is superior to non-European cultures, see especially Joseph Mali, *The Rehabilitation of Myth: Vico’s ‘New Science’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University



begun to re-evaluate the relevance specifically of Egypt for the origins of their civilization. The prevailing view had been that European civilization emerged from the classical world, in particular Greece. Hamilton's 1930 work *The Greek Way* demonstrates the place accorded to Greece in early twentieth-century scholarship.

We think and feel differently because of what a little Greek town did during a century or two, twenty-four hundred years ago. What was then produced of art and of thought has never been surpassed and very rarely equalled, and the stamp of it is upon all the art and all the thought of the western world. And yet this full stature of greatness came to pass at a time when the mighty civilizations of the ancient world had perished and the shadow of 'effortless barbarism' was dark upon the earth. In that black and fierce world a little centre of white-hot spiritual energy was at work. A new civilization had arisen in Athens, unlike all that had gone before.

What brought this new development to pass, how the Greeks were able to achieve all that they did, has significance for us today [...] No sculpture comparable to theirs; no buildings ever more beautiful; no writings superior. Prose, always late of development, they had time only to touch upon, but they left masterpieces. History has yet to find a greater exponent than Thucydides; outside the Bible there is no poetical prose that can touch Plato. In poetry, they are all but supreme; no epic is to be mentioned with Homer; no odes to be set beside Pindar; of the four masters of the tragic stage three are Greek.<sup>10</sup>

The classical heritage was also apparent in Russia (although in Russian political and ecclesiastical history there have been debates over the precedence of Rome or Greece). Ivan III claimed direct lineage from Byzantium through his marriage to Sofia Paleologue, niece of the last Byzantine emperor. Ivan's grandson, Ivan IV, formalized the title tsar (an epithet intermittently used by former rulers of Muscovy), taken from Rome.<sup>11</sup>

However, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholars in Europe and Russia started to look specifically to Egypt for their cultural heritage.<sup>12</sup> Interest was further aroused by archaeological discoveries in northern

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Press: 1992), pp. 82-85. Rozanov is in line with Montaigne's view that man is no higher than the beasts; in this regard they both reject intellectual achievement as the basis for a culture's success.

<sup>10</sup> Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (New York/London: W.W. Norton, 1964), pp. 13-14. Hamilton's work and its revision with regards to the rediscovery of Egypt are discussed in Hare, *ReMembering Osiris*, pp. 212-19.

<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), pp. 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> Hare exposes the manner in which classicists such as Hamilton underlined the formative influence of Athens on European civilization. He also discusses the work of modern scholars, such as Bernal, who have challenged Hamilton's view, and stressed the role of the Egyptian legacy in European culture. Hare, pp. 215-18. In his studies, Bernal calls for the replacement of the Aryan model of ancient Greece (which he considers anti-Semitic) with the 'Revised Ancient Model', which, while noting the Indo-European origin of the Greek language, highlights the fact that Egyptians settled in the Aegean in the late Bronze Age, and wielded a massive influence over the development of Greek culture. Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 2 vols (London: Free Association Books, 1991), II: *The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence*, p. 78. Rozanov, nearly a century prior to Bernal, argues that the Greeks took all their main religious concepts from the Egyptians (though for Rozanov Greek religion is only a poor and incomplete adaptation of

Africa, by scholars such as William Petrie (1853-1942), and Howard Carter (1874-1939). Russia was not late in matching Europe's fascination with Egypt. Some writers have even hinted at Russia's priority in this field, suggesting that Russian pilgrims opened up Egypt during their journeys to the Holy Lands.<sup>13</sup> The Russian diplomat A.N. Murav'ev ensured that two granite sphinxes from the reign of Amenhotep III (also known as Amenhotep the Magnificent, reigned 1390-53 B.C.E.) were brought to St Petersburg, where they were placed on the Neva's University Embankment in 1834.<sup>14</sup> Many scholarly works on Egypt around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries quickly reached Russia and were translated. Rozanov had access to the Russian versions of works by the leading Egyptologists of his time, including James Henry Breasted (1865-1935), Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884), and Gaston Maspero (1846-1916). Rozanov often turned to these for the basis of many of his own works on ancient Egyptian religion, and his essays abound in quotes and copies of drawings from their output. He was also knowledgeable of the work of Russian Egyptologists, such as Vladimir Golenishchev (1856-1947) and Boris Turaev (1868-1920).

In Russian culture, particularly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt played an important role, which scholars are only just starting to examine.<sup>15</sup> Egyptian motifs were very common in Russian romanticism, feeding into the art of Pushkin (who was well aware of his own African heritage). For Dostoevskii's Raskol'nikov, Egypt becomes the setting for an imaginary paradise before the tumult of murder.<sup>16</sup> In the Silver Age, the Egyptian body in particular was re-examined in the light of the burgeoning interest in new religions, theosophy and mysticism.<sup>17</sup> Solov'ev wielded considerable influence on these new trends; he had travelled to Egypt in 1875 to investigate the relationship between Sophia and primeval religions.<sup>18</sup> The interest in the oriental is pronounced in many spheres of artistic creativity among Rozanov's peers, such as in the music of Rimskii-Korsakov and his associates, and in the literature of writers as diverse as Bal'mont, Viacheslav Ivanov, Khlebnikov, Mandel'shtam, Nikolai Gumilev, and Merezhkovskii. Bakst, who was close to Rozanov (even painting him),

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Egyptian worship). See V.V. Rozanov, 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zhivotnymi', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 128-37 (p. 129). Interestingly, more recent research argues that the ancient Greeks themselves recognized Egypt as the cradle of all civilization; it was apparently well known to the Greeks that Homer, Solon, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus and Pythagorus had all travelled to Egypt to study. See Luc Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 141.

<sup>13</sup> Viktor Solkin, 'Peterburgskie sfinksy: Istoriia priobretenii i obshchii analiz pamiatnikov', in *Peterburgskie sfinksy: Solntse Egipta na beregakh Nevy*, ed. by V.V. Solkin (St Petersburg: Zhurnal "Neva", 2005), pp. 14-36 (p. 15).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Mondry, 'Beyond the Boundary', p. 659.

<sup>16</sup> This point is made by Gwen Walker, 'Andrei Bely's Armchair Journey through the Legendary Land of "Ophir": Russia, Africa and the Dream of Distance', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 46 (2002), 47-74 (p. 50).

<sup>17</sup> Mondry, 'Beyond the Boundary', p. 659.

<sup>18</sup> A.F. Losev, *Vladimir Solov'ev i ego vremia* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2000), pp. 45-47.

journeyed to Egypt to ‘touch the marble shoulders and breasts of the Nubian bodies’.<sup>19</sup> This interest was not confined to religious thinkers. Soviet Russian artists continued, at least for some years following the Revolution, to use Egyptian motives in their work. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Aleksei Shchusev’s avant-garde pyramid design for Lenin’s Mausoleum, which still stands today on Moscow’s Red Square.<sup>20</sup>

Rozanov is distinguished among his contemporaries in his exploitation of Egypt. Contemporary thinkers such as Solov’ev, Berdiaev, and Florenskii see Christianity as the synthesis of all previous religions, standing at the pinnacle of man’s religious experience and preparing the world for its eventual transfiguration at the end of time. Egyptian practices do not generally hold a superior position among other pagan systems, and are merely signposts which point to the later wonders of Christ and Christianity. Both Solov’ev and Merezhkovskii consider Egyptian beliefs to be simply one of the many pagan systems surrounding the Hebrews, and assign a superior position to Israel. In his reverse understanding of human history, Rozanov places Egypt at the zenith of religious experience, and tends to view the course of history thereafter as a catastrophic detachment of man from God; however, as this chapter hopes to demonstrate, Rozanov does attempt a complex solution to help man relocate his pagan heritage.

Although work is emerging on Rozanov’s approach to Judaism, hardly any attention has been devoted to his fascination for Egypt and Egyptology. Rozanov had from a young age a profound interest in the pre-Christian world, and was well aware of the problems he faced trying to reconcile this with his innate Orthodoxy.<sup>21</sup> His love for the ancient world was developed at university, and once he had moved to the imperial capital with its various museums, he was able to indulge his curiosity. This interest in Egypt deepened alongside the renewal of his Christian faith. Rozanov needed to root his new-found feeling for God in a historical context. However, his interest in Egypt was not just academic, although he did over the years become very familiar with publications by western archaeologists; it was intensely religious. He focused on examining the physical symbols left behind by ancient civilizations, more than on academic studies into Egyptology. This search led Rozanov to become a frequent visitor to Petersburg’s museums, including the Hermitage and the Imperial Museum of Egyptology. It also extended into his personal collections. Rozanov was a keen and knowledgeable collector of coins from the ancient world.

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<sup>19</sup> Mondry, ‘Beyond the Boundary’, p. 659.

<sup>20</sup> The mummification of Lenin’s body, performed by Boris Zbarskii and Vladimir Vorob’ev, and its location in the antechamber within the Mausoleum, has obvious connotations with Egyptian practices. In addition, in the manner in which the body is displayed for public reverence, it is also reminiscent of the Orthodox belief that the incorruptibility of the corpse is a sign of saintliness, and in its own way suggests the forgotten links between ancient Egypt and Christianity.

<sup>21</sup> In 1893 he wrote to Leont’ev, ‘Да, я люблю древний мир, как не следовало бы любить христианину, и эту любовь прежде выражал и тут выражаю’. *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 295.

Rozanov wishes to attain a philosophical closeness to the Creation, and achieves this in part through a study of pre-Christian peoples and their religions. He turns his attention further back than Christ to the cradle of humanity, and concludes that only the Egyptians understood the Creation.<sup>22</sup> Rozanov believes that Christianity emerged naturally from pagan beliefs, specifically from ancient Egyptian religion (although he often pays tribute to the beliefs of Egypt's neighbours, such as the Assyrians and Phoenicians, who share a reverence for the Creation). Rozanov's project is to explain that religion emerges from Egypt. He frequently identifies aspects of paganism still existent in Orthodoxy, and re-clarifies the original meaning of their practices. Rozanov examines apparently separate themes such as circumcision, pyramids, hieroglyphics, Christmas trees, the Apocalypse, medical scholarship, and relies on Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Russian and European historical sources.

As in his interpretation of other religions, Rozanov adopts a 'pick-and-mix' attitude towards Egypt, selecting elements of history and religion which can be accommodated within his own utopian vision. Rozanov treats Egyptian religion as unified and unchanging, and believes that its success lies in the fact that throughout their history, the Egyptians preserved their youthfulness and respect for the Creation. He does not comment that throughout history, religious beliefs in Egypt were subject to much development and often violent change. He does not mention the brutal wars, revolutions and hardships experienced by the Egyptian people, but portrays them as a race which permanently smiled.<sup>23</sup> Nor does he discuss the rich pantheon of Egyptian deities, which changed according to location or period, but concentrates primarily on Osiris and his phallus. However, he does occasionally also discuss other gods, such as Isis, and the cow-goddess Hathor.<sup>24</sup> He rejects the scientific approach to Egyptian history, as this does not examine the Egyptians' understanding of the family and the Creation.<sup>25</sup> Rozanov even rejects the phrase 'Egyptology' in his criticism of European scholars in the field. In an essay from 1901 Rozanov lays out the basis for his investigation of Egypt, recollecting the very first time he saw the Sphinxes on the Neva.

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<sup>22</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zivotnymi', p. 129.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>24</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Istoricheskie kategorii', in *Vozrozhdaishchisia Egipet*, pp. 244-52 (p. 246). Rozanov's obsession with breasts is not limited to human females. He had a special love for cows, often recalling the cow which his poor family owned when he was a child in Kostroma. It is not surprising that this idealization of the cow is tied to his attention to breasts, suckling, and the life-giving properties of milk. In his Egyptian essays he uses the term '*korovotsentrizm*' to describe his own fascination with the animal. In many ways, Rozanov was able to tie together the beginnings and ends of his own life, spending his childhood and his last days in desperate provincial poverty. His final starving reminiscences lend a dream-like quality to his recollections of former Petersburg affluence, destroying the sense of reality of those years. 'Господи, как сладко даже помнить. Увы, теперь «сладки» только поминания и пуста еда. У меня мечта: когда пройдет револ., «назваться» к Вам в гости, и Вашего [...] папу и маму упросить МЕНЯ УГОСТИТЬ. Ну так... пир богов [...] Я хотел бы быть Полифемом и пасти коз и овец, а молоко бы у них высасывал СОБСТВЕННЫМ РТОМ. Кстати, меня давно уже манит собственным ртом напиться у коровы молока, насосаться из вымени это так красиво.' Letter to Gollerbakh of 29 August 1918, reprinted in *V nashei smute*, p. 370.

<sup>25</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zivotnymi', p. 130.

Самая коротенькая река в мире течет мимо их, как три тысячи лет назад текла самая длинная; и город самый новый из европейских шумит около обитателей самого ветхого в истории города. Однако все эти мысли-сопоставления пришли мне на ум гораздо позднее: при первом же разглядывании меня остановило удивительное выражение лица сфинксов. Как это может проверить наблюдением всякий, – это суть *молодые лица с необыкновенно веселым выражением*, которое я не мог бы определить выше и лучше, как известную поговорку: «Хочется прыснуть со смеху». Я долго, внимательно, пытливо в них всматривался, и так как позднее мне случилось два года ежедневно ездить мимо их, то я не могу думать, чтобы обманулся во впечатлении: это были *самые веселые и живые из встреченных мною в Петербурге* действительно, казалось бы, живых лиц!<sup>26</sup>

Rozanov's Egyptology is not mere artistic innovation. It is a serious endeavour to help effect a renewal of Russian spiritual life. Although Rozanov never visited Egypt, unlike some of his contemporaries, he berates European archaeologists for neglecting the true religious meaning of their discoveries. He opposes the juvenile energy of Egypt against the decline of Russian and European civilization. Furthermore, Rozanov is intensely critical of his artistic contemporaries who use Egyptian themes purely for aesthetic purposes. Rozanov firmly rejects the suggestion that he also exploits Egypt for stylistic achievement. He insists that his own interest in Egypt emerged not from artiness, but from a love for the real world.<sup>27</sup> It is worth comparing Rozanov's passage above on the Sphinxes with Ivanov's poem on the same theme.

Волшба ли ночи белой приманила  
Вас маревом в полон полярных див,  
Два звери-дива из стовратных Фив?  
Вас бледная ль Изида полонила?

Какая тайна вам окаменила  
Жестоких уст смеющийся извив?  
Полночных волн немеркущий разлив  
Вам радостней ли звезд святого Нила?

Так в час, когда томят нас две зари  
И шепчутся лучами, дея чары,  
И в небесах меняют янтари, –

<sup>26</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Egipet', in *Vozrozhdaishchiiisya Egipet*, pp. 301-06 (p. 302). Emphasis in original.

<sup>27</sup> Rozanov writes, '«Художественность» всегда была для меня последнее дело, и холодной эстетикой не подвернута ни одна моя страница. Да неужели это не чувствуется? Вся сила моя или вообще, если есть «качества», и лежит в любви: но реальной любви и к реальному.' V.V. Rozanov, 'Literaturnye i politicheskie aforizmy', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 412-43 (p. 423).

Как два серпа, подъемля две тиары,  
Друг другу в очи – девы иль цари –  
Глядите вы, улыбкивы и яры.<sup>28</sup>

This reveals much about the way in which the Egyptian heritage was interpreted in the Silver Age, and also displays tensions between aesthetic and religious issues which Rozanov appears to tackle. Whereas Ivanov's poem is highly stylized, Rozanov's description of the Neva Sphinxes concentrates on content, and highlights the reality of their earthly presence, and the possibility of cultural renewal through their youthfulness. The smile of Rozanov's Sphinxes is not the arrogant laughter which comes from hidden knowledge, but the joy of the beginnings of life. Moreover, throughout Rozanov's life it is the Volga, rather than the Neva, which should be the focal point for Russian religiosity.<sup>29</sup>

For Rozanov, Egypt was built on this joy of newness, creativity and childbirth. Rozanov compares the Egyptian love for progeny with the Church's hostility to the family, and his burgeoning interest in Egypt corresponds with his serious investigations into the Christian family. His first major series of essays into the religious philosophy of the family, *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, draws heavily on Egyptian motives. At the same time, he started to publish articles devoted specifically to the history of Egyptian religion, which generally appeared in periodicals such as *Novyi Put'*, or *Mir Iskusstva*. His first major notable essay on pre-Christian religions (principally Judaism and Egypt), and their relationship to modern Russian religiosity, was 'Nechto iz sedoi drevnosti', which first appeared in his 1899 book *Religiia i kul'tura*. This was quickly followed by 'Velichaishaia minuta istorii', published the following year in *Novyi zhurnal inostrannoi literatury*. In 1901, he wrote a series of articles for *Mir Iskusstva* under the title 'Zvezdy'. Over the next 16 years he wrote scores of articles on Egypt and eastern religions, which appeared in various organs such as *Novoe Vremia*, *Mir Iskusstva* and *Vesy*.<sup>30</sup>

In November 1916, Rozanov started to consider writing a book devoted specifically to Egyptian religion. He considered a variety of different titles for this compilation, including *Moi Egipet*,

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<sup>28</sup> Viacheslav Ivanov, *Sfinksy nad Nevoi*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4 vols (Brussels: Foyer Oriental Chrétien, 1974), II, p. 323.

<sup>29</sup> Rozanov starts one of his most famous travel writings in the following fashion: '«Русским Нилом» мне хочется назвать нашу Волгу. Что такое Нил – не в географическом и физическом своем значении, а в том другом и более глубоком, такое ему придал живший по берегам его человек? «Великая, священная река», подобно тому как мы говорим «святая Русь», в применении тоже к физическому очерку страны и народа.' See 'Russkii Nil', p. 145.

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed history on the publication of Rozanov's Egyptian work, see A.N. Nikoliukin, 'Kommentarii', in *Vozrozhdaishchisia Egipet*, pp. 500-13.

*Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet* (which conveyed the idea of rebirth he was trying to express), before settling on *Iz vostochnykh motivov*; this was also adopted for the title of the 38<sup>th</sup> volume of Rozanov's projected complete works, which would contain his Egyptian studies.<sup>31</sup> *Iz vostochnykh motivov* was intended to comprise previously-published articles dating back from 1900, as well as new texts written specifically for the book. Rozanov planned to publish ten sections of *Iz vostochnykh motivov*, though only managed to release the first three, between November 1916 and March 1917. Several more articles, designated for this compilation, were written but not published in Rozanov's lifetime, and remained in the RGALI archives until their eventual release by the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The opening of the archives and the labours of INION RAN has provided access to Rozanov's work on Egypt. Although the planned complete collected works remains some way off, INION has published all of Rozanov's major works on Egypt, in the 2002 book entitled *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*. This book republishes Rozanov's Egypt essays from 1900 to 1917, and also contains for the first time work from the archives which did not appear in Rozanov's lifetime. It is interesting to note that most of Rozanov's work for *Iz vostochnykh motivov* was written at the same time that he was composing his masterpiece, *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*. Both were written at the end of Rozanov's life and sit in a strange yet understandable relationship alongside one other, one investigating the roots of religion, the other a fervent lament of the end of Russian culture. This chapter will focus predominantly on the essays specifically on Egypt included in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*. Nevertheless, as Rozanov turns to Egypt again and again throughout his work, this chapter will draw on essays from other sources where necessary. For the same reasons as in Chapter 1, these works will be treated synchronically rather than diachronically.

## **2. The Philosophy of Mythology**

Rozanov is drawn to the tales the Egyptians passed down to explain the origins of the universe. Rozanov focuses on theories of culture and cultural transmission, because he is concerned with how man preserves the union with God throughout time. For Rozanov, the way this relationship is conveyed through generations is not an intellectual transmission. It is not surprising that Rozanov would turn from his first organized philosophical work to the types of narrative and informal discussions one observes in his later journalistic work and the *Opavshelistika*, which display Rozanov's dissatisfaction with systematic philosophy.<sup>32</sup> In examining the validity

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 500.

<sup>32</sup> It is a trait of pre-modern life that profound ideas can be conveyed through simple narrative forms. For instance, Clifford writes, 'Near Eastern "philosophical" thinking was normally done through narrative. Retelling

of ancient Egyptian myths, Rozanov's work itself becomes almost 'mythological', in that it fulfils the same purpose as the original sources he is researching, that is the conveyance from human to human of the importance of the Creation and the need for a kind of physical communion with the Almighty.

Myth and mythology have played a crucial and highly complex role in practically all human cultures. Having been used in many different contexts, the terms do not lend themselves easily to definition. In common parlance, as well as in academic philosophy, the term 'mythology' has often assumed negative connotations, referring to the fabricated, rather than the truthful (in such discourse the pursuit of truth has been the exclusive domain of the philosopher). Therefore, the concept of mythology has not always sat easily alongside philosophy, which has typically appealed to the rational and logical.<sup>33</sup> The relationship between mythology and philosophy is highly complex, and often does not permit a clear delineation. Despite the tendency to denounce mythology as untruthful, many philosophers have relied on myths, which sit alongside their systems as a vital means to explain further their worldview. This is the case for some of the most important thinkers, including Plato, Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche and Lacan.<sup>34</sup> This is also the case in Rozanov, who often uses the term 'mif' to reject the untruths of his opponents or certain ancient Greek legends, whilst using the same word in a positive context in expounding Egyptian mythologies.

Despite the importance of myth in human history, the complexity of its relationship with philosophy is difficult to examine. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a large increase in the study of myth, especially since the end of the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> In general terms, there are two ways in which myth has been examined.<sup>36</sup> The former, favoured in anthropology and ethnology, examines myth as a literal truth which emerges from the belief structures of pre-historic peoples. Such famous proponents of this view include Frazer and Eliade. The latter refers to symbolic interpretations of myth, which are more common in the traditions of idealist philosophy and theology, and where myth is understood as the allegorical expression of eternal truths.<sup>37</sup>

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one basic narrative in slightly different versions enabled ancients to reflect about the governance of the world and explain the course of history, especially the history of their own nation. Their era took for granted the existence and power of the gods and factored them into their reflection, as our era takes for granted and reckons with a different (and less ultimate) range of forces, for example, the power of ideas, of free trade, of energy resources. To do philosophy, theology, and political theory, modern thinkers employ the genre of the discursive essay rather than the narrative or combat myth.' Richard J. Clifford, 'The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth', in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. by Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein, 3 vols (New York: Continuum, 1998), I, pp. 3-35 (p. 34).

<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Marchenkov, 'Aleksi Losev and His Theory of Myth', in *The Dialectics of Myth*, trans. by Vladimir Marchenkov (London/New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 3-65 (p. 4).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> David Bidney, 'Myth, Truth and Symbolism', in *Myth: A Symposium*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok, (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1955), pp. 3-24 (p. 21).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



In the traditions of ancient Greece, mythology was often defined as the invented and thereby opposed to philosophy, which was dominated by theoretical discourse. Plato distinguishes myth-makers from the philosophers, the former as peddlers of untruths who should be expelled from the Republic.<sup>38</sup> This notwithstanding, Plato still uses myth as an allegory for the ideal, therefore imbuing myth with didactic properties. Plato himself ‘invents’ the Myth of Er, which explains how souls are rewarded in the afterlife for leading a good life on Earth.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps more famously, in his *Symposium*, Aristophanes speaks of man’s original androgyny, and his division into two genders as punishment for his hubris.<sup>40</sup> In Aristotle, the fictional nature of myth is highlighted, as he is careful to delineate the creative act of story-telling from the rational work of philosophizing.<sup>41</sup>

A crucial development in the understanding of myth was made by Vico, who argued that it enjoyed a common origin with language. Vico believes that mythologies and language were developed simultaneously by the ‘heroic classes’ in order that they may convey universal virtues to which all men should aspire, such as valour or prudence.<sup>42</sup> Vico’s idea that language and myths emerge simultaneously fed into the Romantic period,

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<sup>38</sup> Plato, *Republic*, X, 606. In this case taken from Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Desmond Lee (London: Penguin, 1987). For a detailed description of the superiority of logos over mythos in Plato, the latter being ‘unverifiable discourse’ as opposed to discourse which can be proved, see Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 614-616a.

<sup>40</sup> It is regrettable that Rozanov did not engage with the *Symposium*, as his comments would no doubt have made interesting reading. As noted in the previous chapter, androgyny became an important theme of the Russian Silver Age, which took inspiration from the sophiology of Vladimir Solov’ev; the idea of human totality became intertwined with other important concerns of the period, especially utopianism and the value of the flesh. Matich writes that ‘androgyny symbolizes perfection, plenitude or a godlike state, achieved by the transcendence of masculine-feminine polarity [...] As a symbol of harmony, the androgyne of the past was never a part of empirical or objective reality. It was a sign of divinity, which is not of this world and is revealed only momentarily, if at all.’ Olga Matich, ‘Androgyny and the Russian Silver Age’, *Pacific Coast Philology* (1979), 42-50 (p. 43). Rozanov would not agree that the division of humans into two genders was punishment from God; on the contrary, he argues that our sexual polarization is a divine gift, as God has awarded us the potential for divinization through sexual intercourse. Rozanov explicitly rejects the belief common to many Christians that Adam and Eve only had sexual intercourse subsequent to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden (thereby interpreting the sexual act as a punishment and a consequence of our fallen nature), but insists that they had sex in Paradise. Therefore Rozanov insists that sexual activity is part of God’s original plan for humans, and not associated with sinfulness. For Rozanov, sin is not inherited from former generations through the flesh. He insists that only the soul is able to sin, as sin is the individual’s decision to reject the will of God. Sin is therefore related to the human’s choice to divorce his spiritual and intellectual faculties from his physiological characteristics. See V.V. Rozanov, ‘Grekh’, in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 347-55 (p. 349).

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Aristotle, *On Poetics*, trans. by Seth Benardete and Michael Davis (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine’s Press, 2002), p. 48. In his examination of Greek philosophy, Fontenrose argues that myth assumes a specifically ‘ideological character’, as it is used to ‘provide rationale for institutions’; therefore each change in the establishment requires a new myth to underpin its authority. See Joseph Fontenrose, *The Ritual Theory of Myth* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1971), p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press: 1976), p. 128. In his examination of the universal archetypes for the development of human civilizations, Vico anticipates much work of many nineteenth and twentieth-century thinkers, such as Marx, Nietzsche, Frazer, as well as theoreticians in the field of comparative religion. Curiously, Vico cites the Hebrews as being uniquely exempt from the laws of history, as they have preserved

where the poet was accorded an elevated status, and endowed with the ability to create new myths. This myth-making was 'perceived as an activity that unites the existing mythological material, the artist's personality' and his art; in time, this gave way to the idea of myth as a modern expression of an 'eternal truth and a source of formation, unification and renovation of culture'.<sup>43</sup> For Schelling, myth is a vital phase in the development of human consciousness, but has 'its own mode of necessity and its own mode of reality' as it helps to unveil the Absolute.<sup>44</sup>

In twentieth-century theories, myth has been separated from its religious connotations, and its treatment has spread into other areas. Literary criticism has examined the use of myth as an archetype in literary works. Myth can point to universal themes, which also offer a way of understanding the relationship between the literary form and narrative. This relationship became increasingly complex in the modernist period. For example, Joyce's *Ulysses* uses mythology in its attempt to find lasting meaning within the chaos of a modern world which appeared to reject tradition and history. Eliot's *The Waste Land* drew heavily from ancient myths and legends, as well as from contemporary anthropological sources, particularly *The Golden Bough*. Specifically in the Russian context, myths have often been used to bridge the divide between the philosophical and the literary. They convey eternal ideas, but avoid the closed and systematic manner of philosophical discourse. Myths are open-ended and have creative potential, and so culture is understood as the development of basic myths which are realized through their repeated expression and expansion.<sup>45</sup>

Myth has also been used in modern linguistics and cultural studies. Lévi-Strauss, in a similar fashion to Rozanov, believes that 'primitive' cultures held much knowledge which were contained in their myths, but which has been lost in modern thought. He contends that 'what takes place in our mind is something not substantially or fundamentally different from the basic phenomenon of life itself', and looks back to primitive myths, which contain a 'qualitative' type of knowledge, whereas science has purely a 'quantitative aspect'.<sup>46</sup>

Lacan returns to the Freudian version of the Oedipus myth in order to investigate the way man overcomes his

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secret truths which have not been disseminated among other people; Rozanov revisits the view that the Hebrews have a unique course of history because they have kept hidden truths secret from the rest of humanity, though his conclusions from this are remarkably different from Vico's.

<sup>43</sup> The use of mythology in criticism of Russian literature is examined in Katsman's monograph on the importance of myth in Dostoevskii. See Roman Katsman, *The Time of Cruel Miracles: Mythopoesis in Dostoevsky and Agnon* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 24-25.

<sup>44</sup> Bidney, p. 6. One of the major developments in the art of the Romantic period was the reassessment of classical myths and the manner in which these were made acceptable to a predominantly Christian audience; this was achieved mainly by reinterpreting pre-Christian myths as anticipating Christian truths which awaited a later revelation in Christ. See Alex Zwerdling, 'The Mythographers and the Romantic Revival of Greek Myth', *PMLA* (1964), 447-56 (pp. 448-49).

<sup>45</sup> Elena Vital'evna Osminina, 'Tvorenie mifa i interpretatsiia kul'turnogo geroia: Pushkin i Rozanov' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Kostromskoi gosudarstvennyi universitet, 2005), p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (London/New York: Routledge, 1978), pp. 18-19.

primeval urges by converting the penis into a symbol.<sup>47</sup> There is a great deal of value in the reconnection, presented in social anthropology, of myth and meaning. Although myths narrate events, they do not exist purely in order to tell stories; they differ from narrative in that they fulfil ‘the human desire to express the inexpressible or to know the unknowable’.<sup>48</sup> In Voegelin, myths constitute the means by which man reconciles himself to the limited nature of his existence. Human consciousness unravels our own finiteness, and yet this is accompanied by an awareness of the infinitude of the cosmos; myths act as a finite symbol which provides “‘transparence” for a transfinite process’.<sup>49</sup>

Scholarship in Russia and the west, especially since around the 1960s, has begun to recognize the special role played by mythology in Russian culture. Within the Soviet Union, semiotic studies, inspired by Lotman, investigated the meaning of ancient narratives, and the way these structure contemporary cultural forms.<sup>50</sup> Recent academic work has focused in particular on the importance of myth-building in the Silver Age. Gasparov argues that mythologizing was a vital tool in this period for what he terms ‘total eschatological synthesis’.<sup>51</sup> He contends that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, writers and thinkers saw their period as the culmination of all prior cultural achievements, which were being re-experienced simultaneously in a final flourish.

In the age of Russian Modernism the concept of *cultural tradition*, which had dominated the consciousness of the preceding century, was replaced by the idea of *cultural myth*. Historical succession gave way to mythological simultaneity. Historical phenomena previously seen as causally linked now were perceived as syncretic; events earlier understood in terms of ‘causes’ and ‘effects’, connected along a temporal axis, were merged into a mythological paradigm or amalgam. All the elements of this paradigm were simultaneously present in every ‘manifestation’ of any one of them.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), p. 313.

<sup>48</sup> This quote is taken from Debra A. Modellmog, *Readers and Mythic Signs: The Oedipus Myth in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, trans. and ed. by Gerhart Niemeyer (Columbia/London: University of Missouri Press, 1978), p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Lotman’s investigation into the anti-modernist nature of mythological writing is particularly useful for our investigation; as Lotman notes, myth is not designed to teach us something new about the world, but predominantly helps organize the world of the reader. See Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. by Ann Shukman (London/New York: I.B. Tauris & Co.), p. 154.

<sup>51</sup> Boris Gasparov, ‘Introduction: The “Golden Age” and Its Role in the Cultural Mythology of Russian Modernism’, in *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism: From the Golden Age to the Silver Age*, ed. by Boris Gasparov, Robert P. Hughes, and Irina Paperno (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 1-16 (p. 3).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. Emphasis in original.

Gasparov goes on to argue that the protagonists of the time did not ignore ‘traditional historical and aesthetic problems’, but re-examined such issues according to the mythological worldview they established; this mythology was typically eschatological.<sup>53</sup>

Many scholars now argue that a mythological worldview has traditionally been a strong trend in Russian culture, a trend manifest in various facets of Russian life.<sup>54</sup> Ethnographic studies have underlined the peculiar role of myths in Russian popular culture, which have survived alongside the teachings of the organized Church. ‘Dvoeverie’ persisted in Russian culture well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, partially because of the established Church’s failure to engage fully with the people at parish level.<sup>55</sup> In this phenomenon one witnesses the predilection in Russian culture for domestic, intimate beliefs (such as in the domovoi, bannik or the vodianoï), rather than the complex mythology of, for example, the ancient Greeks.

Mythology became a tool to which many nineteenth-century Russian writers turned, as they saw a device which merged the philosophical and the aesthetic. Such techniques are used by authors who might not be automatically considered mythological. Dostoevskii relied on mythologies throughout his work, perhaps most famously in his ‘legend’ of the Grand Inquisitor. Many of Tolstoi’s stories, especially the short moral tales of his later period, such as ‘Chem liudi zhivy’, or ‘Molitva’, are presented as myths, and act as a deliberate rejection of the narrative literature predominant in Russia at that time.<sup>56</sup> For Shklovskii, myths provide the formal element in the artist’s memory, through which familiar material is made new; but each time the myth is repeated, it itself emerges in a new version. In Shklovskii, myths are not the peaceful domain of containing one’s relationship with the ancient world, but are violent places of battle.<sup>57</sup> Recent studies have examined the role of mythology specifically in Soviet culture, including the cults of Soviet leaders, and the myth of the creation of the socialist state.<sup>58</sup>

In Russian culture, myth often provides an explanation for a supposed natural relationship between man and the universe, in which consciousness and the world do not stand in opposition to one another, but are unified. According to this view, man does not consider the world objectively, as he is a vital component of the world, which itself constitutes a unified whole.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>54</sup> M.Iu. Smirnov, *Mifologiiia i religiia v rossiiskom soznanii* (St Petersburg: Letnii sad, 2000), p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Hosking, pp. 211-12.

<sup>56</sup> The rejection of tired literary forms and the search for a new literature at this time has been widely investigated in western and Russian scholarship. A useful discussion of such trends is presented in Slobin, pp. 22-25.

<sup>57</sup> Viktor Shklovskii, “‘Mif’ i “roman-mif””, in *Izbrannoe v dvukh tomakh*, 2 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1983), II, pp. 246-48 (p. 247).

<sup>58</sup> This is examined, for example, in Zh.F. Konovalova, ‘Sovetskii mif i ritual’, in *Ritual i ritual’nyi predmet*, ed. by L.V. Konovalov (St Petersburg: GMIR, 1995), pp. 143-51.

Исследователи мифосознания [...] указывали на нерасчленённость в древних мифах природы и человека, вещи и слова, предмета и знака, субъекта и объекта.<sup>59</sup>

Myths point back to a pre-philosophical period, where consciousness and reality do not emerge independently from one another, but simultaneously. Myths recreate the primeval harmony of consciousness and the world.<sup>60</sup> Losev, whose ideas will be explored in greater depth below, describes this primeval unity of thought and reality: he argues that mythology reflects the 'primitive-intuitive reaction to a thing'.<sup>61</sup> By using myths, the writer is able to express his natural unity with the world; such a process has been termed 'mythologization' ('mifologizatsiia').<sup>62</sup>

In Silver Age thought, pre-Christian myths took on special importance as thinkers looked beyond Orthodox traditions for less abstract expressions of the divine truth. It is difficult to examine this period without accounting for the rediscovery of mythology.<sup>63</sup> As in so many aspects of this period, Solov'ev's work was a major inspiration in the way Silver Age artists took aesthetic qualities from myths.<sup>64</sup> Solov'ev was influential in positing the ancient world as a stage in man's history in the movement towards the eventual synthesis of all religions. One of his first works was a study of mythology in pre-Christian religions, in which he lays out theories on myths and paganism which were to remain essentially unchanged for the rest of his life.<sup>65</sup> In his short essay 'Mifologicheskii protsess v drevnem iazychestve' (1873), Solov'ev draws on the theories of Khomiakov and Schelling to explain the development from primeval beliefs to more developed religious systems, and insists that readers should study these two philosophers to increase their understanding of religion.<sup>66</sup> Early religions proclaim the unity of being, and do not have the ability to distinguish between the abstract-spiritual and the earthly. Nature is the external manifestation of God, and is born by the 'material cause of the phenomenon' ('material'naia prichina proiavleniia'). This cause is associated in mythology with the mother god, as the ancients did not conceptualize purely spiritual deities. Solov'ev draws an analogy between

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<sup>59</sup> Smirnov, pp. 14-18.

<sup>60</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. by William R. Inge (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964), p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> Losev, *Dialektika mifa*, p. 68.

<sup>62</sup> Osminina investigates the way subsequent writers created and exploited a myth around Pushkin, and Rozanov's treatment of Pushkin within this context. See Osminina, p. 9. This thesis will examine Rozanov's investigation of Pushkin in Chapter 4.

<sup>63</sup> Evelies Schmidt, *Ägypten und Ägyptische Mythologie: Bilder der Transition im Werk Andrej Belyjs* (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1986), pp. 1-8.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> I am grateful to Oliver Smith for this comment. From private discussions.

<sup>66</sup> Jonathan Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 104.

the words matter and maternal.<sup>67</sup> The movement of spirit onto the Earth is characterized as the activity of the counterpart male god, the father and creator of all things, and so mythology is the way that the energies of the divine are understood to work through nature.

Solov'ev does not himself hold a mythological outlook. He goes on to develop a sophisticated sophiology to explain the connection between God and humanity. He does not reserve a special place for the Egyptian god Osiris, but equates him directly with the creator god in other cultures, such as Shiva, Adonis, Fro, and Iarilo.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, Solov'ev notes the importance of the ithyphallic Osiris in Egypt, but does not accord the penis a specific role in the downwards motion of the energies of the creator-god. Solov'ev, unlike Rozanov, reserves a unique place for the Jews in his discussion of oriental mythologies.<sup>69</sup>

Following Solov'ev, the Russian symbolists sought a new narrative to unify all previous religions, and found in mythology a useful tool. As Schmidt writes, myth offers a pre-logical outlook to contemporary society, and therefore embodies the collective consciousness, one of the aims of the God-Seekers.<sup>70</sup> However, they tended to see such myths not in their own right, but as signposts which pointed to the realization of a future form of Christianity.<sup>71</sup> However, like Solov'ev, most of these thinkers preserved the distinction between narrative discourse and the Essence of God, and by consequence their language demonstrates the separation between man and the divine.

In his own belief system, Merezhkovskii ascribes a higher role than Solov'ev to pre-Christian myths. Merezhkovskii believes that pagan myths contain the secrets of Christianity. He believes that all myths contain some degree of truth, and even writes that 'all gods are true' (although he does not reserve an elevated position for Osiris).<sup>72</sup> He insists that these eternal truths can be unlocked only through the Sacraments of the Church.<sup>73</sup> Merezhkovskii believes that, as man cannot know God directly, all theology is in fact mythology; nevertheless, myths serve a purpose in directing our focus to the final transfiguration of the cosmos.<sup>74</sup> However Merezhkovskii's temporal focus concurs largely with Solov'ev's, as he believes that paganism points towards the future, and the third age of the Spirit.

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<sup>67</sup> V.S. Solov'ev, 'Mifologicheskii protsess v drevnem iazychestve', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, ed. by A.A. Nosov (Moscow: Nauka, 2000-), I, pp. 17-37 (pp. 24-25).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> Schmidt, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> D. Merezhkovskii, *Taina trekh: Egipet i Vavilon* (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Losev is one of the most important Russian theoreticians of myth, and this work is only now undergoing reappraisal after its prohibition by the Soviet authorities.<sup>75</sup> Despite Losev's negative appraisal of Rozanov's work, his theory of mythology sheds light on the manner in which myths and symbols were appreciated in the Silver Age. For Losev, all myths are symbols, and cross the gap between God and the material world. To ensure the proximity of God to man, and also to circumvent pantheism, Losev relies on a dialectical relationship between the myth and the divine, which are at the same time identical and different. This dialectic parallels the Orthodox teachings on the Essence and Energies of God, which are equal to one another, but also distinct. In such a way, the image of a person is simultaneously identical to, but separate from, that person's essence. Myth corresponds in Losev's description to that person's image, likewise being equal and distinct. Therefore myth is the expression of the person in words. All myths are part of the Absolute Myth in that they form part of the expression of God and our relationship to Him. Each myth is a symbol, and is divine because it is identical to God. However, the fact that the myth is also distinct from God means that Losev can avoid the crude pantheism which he sees as pervasive in Rozanov.

Тут мы должны избежать одного подводного камня, на который часто натывается абстрактно-метафизическая мысль многих исследователей. Именно, *отличие* лика от личности толкуют как раздельность лика и личности, их вещественную и *субстанциальную* отдельность одного от другого. Сейчас я не стану входить в рассмотрение диалектики сущности и энергии, вопроса, излагавшегося мной неоднократно. Скажу только, что диалектика требует *одновременно* признания и *тождества* личности с ее проявлениями и энергиями и – *различия* их между собой. [...] Миф не есть сама личность, но – лик ее; и это значит, что лик неотделим от личности, т.е. что миф неотделим от личности. Лик, мифический лик неотделим от личности и потому есть сама личность. Но личность отлична от своих мифических ликов, и потому она не есть свой лик, ни свой миф, ни свой мифический миф.<sup>76</sup>

Losev carries forward this identification of myth and the Divine Energies into the way we relate to all symbols. His theology is reflected in his anthropology. Each living person, and, by his extension, each living thing, has a substance, but also possesses its own myth, its energistic expression. The greatest symbol is the Name of God, the 'unfolding magical name' ('razvernnytoe magicheskoe imia').<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Losev's life and work, see Marchenkov, pp. 4-15.

<sup>76</sup> Losev, *Dialektika mifa*, pp. 99-100. Emphasis in original.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Although there is at first glance a wide difference in the views of Losev and Rozanov, Losev's insistence on the sanctity of the symbol, and hence of all myths, puts him closer to Rozanov than to more abstract thinkers, such as Belyi, who valued the earthly symbol only in the way that it points to a 'new, third world'.<sup>78</sup> Losev insists on the identity of the real and the ideal; he insists that every organism (as well as being mythological) is symbolic, as it only signifies itself, and nothing exterior to itself.<sup>79</sup> Losev repeats Rozanov in locating ontological equality in creature and creation. Moreover, in identifying myth with the karygmic expression of all living things, Losev posits an open-ended vision of culture, in which life is not shunned, but glorified.

### 3. Rozanov's Interest in Mythology

Rozanov did not lay down a theory of mythology, and his interpretations of pre-Christian myths are highly complex. He frequently uses the word 'mif' in his descriptions of pagan narrative structures, tales and legends, though his use of the word is inconsistent. He also often uses the terms 'saga', or 'legenda'. Yet, like those philosophers cited above, Rozanov denounces certain myths as 'untrue', fabricated stories, while simultaneously relying on myths which corroborate his own worldview. The Egyptian myths of childbirth and the family are valid for Rozanov, as they underline the significance of beginnings. At the same time, Rozanov is prepared to reject, for example, myths of ancient Greece which have nothing to do with childbirth. These myths are superficial, 'marble-like', and do not penetrate to the essence of things.<sup>80</sup> For Rozanov, myths play a vital role in explaining the truths of religion, and overcome tensions between the real and the ideal.

Сага, «миф» (как сказал бы неверующий скептик, «материалист» наших дней); но, как «слово», «επος», так ли она призрачна, как и прочие слова поэтов и сказочников? Нет, «рассказ о рае», «вера в рай» составляет до такой степени основной столп религиозного мирозерцания, что даже и материалист всякий, желая посмеяться над верующим, скажет: «неужели вы *верите в религию*? Что же, по-вашему, *есть в самом деле рай?*» Таким образом, «миф» этот, «сага» входит в самое существо и содержание религии: и мы, начиная детей «учить религии» («Закон Божий»), в первый же час учения рассказываем им о «рае», т.е.

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<sup>78</sup> Belyi insists that the symbol creates a third, new world, enabling the artist to privilege himself over reality. See Andrei Belyi, 'Magiia slov', in *Simvolizm kak miroponimanie* (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), pp. 131-42 (pp. 131-32). Nevertheless, it is difficult to divorce Rozanov totally from symbolist ideas, because, although he rejects symbolism as an art form, to a large extent his own views emerge from, and are informed by, symbolist principles. His relationship to symbolism will be explored further in Chapter 4.

<sup>79</sup> Losev, *Dialektika mifa*, p. 42.

<sup>80</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 228.



передаем (по эллинской терминологии, как сказали бы они о себе) «священную сагу».<sup>81</sup>

Myths express the sanctity of the Creation in contemporary society. They are a vital stabilizing force in human religiosity, as they mitigate against the harmful effects of history. Even when myths do not narrate the Creation, they still have validity for Rozanov by recounting events which signify holy activity. Myths are vital to Rozanov's worldview, as, unlike many of his contemporaries, he does not understand history as the gradual revelation of the divine to man in a promise of the eventual transfiguration of matter. For Rozanov, God's revelation is not a historical process, but a single event, which itself is shaped around the Creation. Therefore Rozanov cannot embrace human history as a rapprochement of God and man. Rather, Rozanov's philosophy is based on preserving the religious significance of one single moment. Contemporary experience can only be validated by repeated reference to this event, a function performed by myths. Throughout his work, Rozanov refers to single moments of revelation which confirm God's relationship with man. This is demonstrated in an article from 1911, in which he narrates how desert nomads from Mesopotamia were suddenly filled with a feeling for the divine.

Сухие, высокие старики пустынь были мудрые люди. Великий жар безмолвной души связался с великим жаром палящего солнца, полнокровных, полносочных звезд; и стало что-то одно, между Землею и Небом, не Земля и не Небо...  
Стала молитва. Стало чувство Бога.  
Стала религия.  
Без догм. Без определений, без границ... Религия бесконечна, как бесконечна пустыня. Религия как торжественность. Религия как святость.  
Религия как «мое» у каждого старика.<sup>82</sup>

This quote expresses for Rozanov the moment where the ideal and the real are unified, and the realistic possibility that the significance of the Creation can be relocated. For Rozanov, myths help in re-connecting man with his beginnings, and hence with God. Each encounter of man and God is shaped in Rozanov's work as a renewal. It repeats the primordial encounter of consciousness with the world. Humans react spontaneously and instinctively to this abrupt sense of harmony with God. They automatically raise their hands to Heaven, pray and give thanks to God for their being.<sup>83</sup> A similar response is felt by each new mother, who without thinking, prays

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<sup>81</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Chto skazal Teziiu Edip?', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 287-98 (p. 290). Emphasis in original.

<sup>82</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Bibleiskaia poeziiia', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 441-56 (pp. 441-42).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.

to God to thank Him for her child.<sup>84</sup> Rozanov believes that myths spring naturally and spontaneously from this encounter with God.<sup>85</sup> If religion is based upon the unthinking answer to the feeling of the divine, then in Rozanov's view, myths and rituals succeed this feeling, and are constructed to help convey the eternal importance of the Creation. Therefore myths and rituals emerge simultaneously from the same religious events, and are inseparable from one another. Myths figure, explain and substantiate religious human behaviour, enabling man's original religious experience to be repeated. Rozanov uses his own life as the example for the way this encounter forms the basis for future religious experience. As a rebellious schoolboy, Rozanov had turned away from Christianity and, like so many Russian religious thinkers, had for a time considered himself a nihilist, investigating socialism and avidly reading the works, among others, of Pisarev, Nekrasov, Bentham, J.S. Mill and Malthus. However, the moment of revelation for Rozanov came whilst a student at Moscow Imperial University. One day, disturbed after an unsuccessful examination in Greek and unable to sleep, Rozanov had picked up a Bible and started to read it at random. Despite his limited knowledge of Old Church Slavonic, as Rozanov read through the Old Testament he was suddenly taken by an unknown feeling.

И тут я почувствовал, именно сейчас после смены тех греческих впечатлений, до чего же это могущественнее, *проще, нужнее*, святее всего, всего... Первый раз я понял, почему это «бог вдохновенно», т.е. почему так решили люди вот об этой единственной книге, а не о других. Это шло куда-то в бездонную глубину души.<sup>86</sup>

Rozanov repeatedly refers to this incident throughout his works, not only to juxtapose the worthless legends of ancient Greece against the truths of Scripture, but also to reconfirm to himself and the reader the validity of this metanoia.

In many ways, Rozanov's view of mythology echoes that of Renaissance scholars who provided a Christian interpretation of classical myths. This was a phenomenon of the desire to reform Christianity in the Renaissance, and to accept other schemes of knowledge which might lie outside the Roman Catholic tradition.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zivotnymi', p. 131.

<sup>85</sup> 'Grekh', p. 349.

<sup>86</sup> 'Slovo Bozhie v nashem uchen'i', p. 77.

<sup>87</sup> For a detailed description of the reinterpretation of ancient myths in the Renaissance, see Brisson, pp. 137-61. Despite frequent references by his peers to Rozanov as the Russian Luther (Rozanov also often compared himself to the great reformer of Western Christianity, and praised the German for the manner in which he personalized the individual's relationship with God and revitalized religious consciousness in Europe), Rozanov is also particularly drawn to the Renaissance as a period in Christianity which rejected the asceticism of the Middle Ages. V.V. Rozanov, 'Na chem mozhet povernut'sia "religioznoe soznanie"?' in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 364-74 (pp. 365-66). Rozanov wrote that one of his aims in his discussions of paganism was to bring together Egypt and the Renaissance. 'Iz sedoi drevnosti', p. 32.

One of the features of the Renaissance in Western Europe was the new-found ability of Christians to accept and adopt non-Christian myths, as long as they expressed in some manner the truths of Christianity. Painters such as Michelangelo and Titian frequently used Greek myths in their work.<sup>88</sup> Rozanov's approach is reminiscent of projects which reconcile Christianity with human history through mythology, by providing alternative means to express the activity of God on Earth. In this respect, Rozanov's interpretation bears similarities with Schelling's. Rozanov, like Schelling, believed that philosophy was incapable of unravelling the deepest truths of mankind's condition. They both insist that only outside philosophy can the 'I' formulate a relationship with the 'not-I'. But Schelling, just as Solov'ev and Merezhkovskii, believed that myths pointed forwards towards the synthesis of all religious truths; in this sense, Schelling thinks that the development of human history itself was the revelation of God's truth.<sup>89</sup> Rozanov also plays down the supremacy of Biblical myths where he feels that pagan myths express the same truths. The story of Diana has a similar value as the stories of the Old Testament, those of Abraham and Job. Rozanov is happy to neglect New Testament stories which do not correspond to his own worldview. Many of Jesus's parables, such as that of the wealthy youth who wished to enter Heaven, and those which attack family life, are dismissed as 'fairy tales' ('skazki').<sup>90</sup> The holiest myths have existed since the start of mankind, and still have the same relevance. Rozanov sees direct parallels between pagan beliefs and the myths of Christianity. Rozanov's issue with contemporary Orthodoxy is that the essential meaning of these myths has been lost. The obelisks of ancient Egypt connect the Earth with Heaven, and hold the same function as the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>91</sup>

In comparison to his expansive studies of Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek and Roman myths, Rozanov devotes relatively little attention to the rich history of Slavonic tales and legends. This is somewhat surprising, given Rozanov's background and his attachment to the Russian countryside of his youth. Nikoliukin has noted that the region where Rozanov grew up, surrounded by forests and the most majestic of Russian rivers, was steeped in a feeling for the mythological.<sup>92</sup> It appears that in his career Rozanov was more concerned with tackling society's relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church, rather than investigating in depth Russian

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<sup>88</sup> This is especially true of one of Rozanov's favourite painters, Raphael, although Rozanov more often discusses images of the Madonna in Raphael's work, whilst examining pagan motifs in them. For Rozanov, Raphael was able to express the universal truths of motherhood. See for example 'Iz sedoi drevnosti', p. 31.

<sup>89</sup> This comment is also made in Victor C. Hayes, *Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* (Armidale: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1995), p. 8.

<sup>90</sup> Rozanov is often critical of Christ's parables which encourage man to reject the family. See especially V.V. Rozanov, 'Khristos i bogaty iunosha', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, pp. 139-42 (p. 142).

<sup>91</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O drevneegipetskikh obeliskakh', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 10-14 (pp. 11-12).

<sup>92</sup> Nikoliukin refers to the woods and forests surrounding the Volga, as well as the river itself, which gave rise to the myths and legends which are common in that area. Nikoliukin, *Golgofa Vasiliia Rozanova*, p. 17. Rozanov himself recognized that the word 'Kostroma' derived from the name of an ancient Slavic god. V.V. Rozanov, 'Kostroma i kostromichi', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 215-18 (p. 216).

folklore. Nevertheless, throughout his vast output, there are hints that Rozanov was concerned over how he felt the Greek faith had destroyed the natural religious attitude of the Russian people towards the world. In one essay from 1910, he writes that the Greeks brought with them a 'dark' faith, characterized by its severe formalism.

Русские – блондины; и «боги» у них были блондины. Волосом русы, глаза голубые. Сердце отходчивое и незлопамятное.

Из Греции пришли «брюнеты», – глаз строгий, волос черный и длинный, взгляд требовательный.

Забоялась Русь... «Эти будут строже, эти потребуют к ответу».

Попрятались народные праздники, попрятались песня, сказка и хороводы... Ну, не совсем: кое-что осталось собрать Рыбникову, Бессонову, Шейну. «Лешие» ушли глубже в лес, «русалочки» позднее стали вылетать к лунному свету...

Все стало тише и строже.<sup>93</sup>

There are tensions between the complex pantheons constructed by the Greeks, and something more basic yet closer to the personal which is witnessed in Russian life. Warner has worked on this in her research.

Unlike the Greeks, Indians or Iranians, the Russians have no elaborate corpus of myths about pagan gods, no ancient holy books or extensive narratives. However, while the more sophisticated mythological systems may be poorly represented in Russia, the converse is true for the more primitive levels of myth concerned with the natural world, the family and basic needs of ordinary people.<sup>94</sup>

Although he does not discuss the issue directly, the tension between the complex and formal on the one hand, and the domestic and personal on the other, is clear in Rozanov, who directs his attention towards man's attitude towards the family and informal domestic practices.

#### 4. Rozanov's Theory of Cult

Rozanov develops his theories on cult relatively early in his career, and his later works continue these themes. In an essay from 1893 on education in Russia, Rozanov contends that culture should spring organically from man's most basic attitude towards the world. He deliberately draws on the etymology of 'kul'tura' and its derivation from the word 'kul't'. The cultish vision is defined by Rozanov as a primeval and elementary understanding,

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<sup>93</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Blondiny i briunety', in *Zagadki russkoi provokatsii*, pp. 56-59 (p. 57). Rozanov is here referring to Pavel Rybnikov (1831-1885) and Pavel Shein (1826-1900), respected Russian folklorists and ethnographers, and to the scholar in literary and Slavonic studies Petr Bessonov (1828-1898).

<sup>94</sup> Elizabeth Warner, *Russian Myths* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), pp. 7-8.

where the world is looked upon as a unified entity, but each time with ‘new eyes’ and with wonder.<sup>95</sup> Although Rozanov does not describe this form of understanding in detail, he emphasizes that culture depends on a continued renewal of man’s encounter with the world. Each event should be understood as being experienced for the first time. Rozanov is close to the Shklovskian desire to make the old new through creative activity, but for Rozanov this also involves making the new ancient, by understanding the modern world as new, but in terms of its ancient values.

В понятии *культы* содержится внутренний, духовный смысл культуры; в понятии «сложности» содержится ее внешнее определение. Культурен тот, кто не только носит в себе какой-нибудь культ, но кто и сложен, т.е. не прост, не однообразен в идеях своих, в чувствах, в стремлениях, – наконец, в навыках и всем складе жизни.<sup>96</sup>

The cultish attitude is manifested in the establishment of an exclusive relationship with individual objects. In a cult, the individual enters into an ‘internal and particular’ relationship with an object, which is then preferred above all other things.<sup>97</sup> For Rozanov, culture emerges from the external expression of this internal relationship in its contemporary context.

Культура начинается там, где начинается любовь, где возникает привязанность; где взгляд человека, неопределенно блуждавший повсюду, на чем-нибудь останавливается, и уже не ищет отойти от него. Тотчас, как произошло это, является и внешнее выражение культуры, сложность: новые и особые чувства отличаются от прежних, обыкновенных.<sup>98</sup>

The cultish vision unlocks the way in which the ancient should be used to create the new. Rozanov stands in the tradition of Russian thinkers who posit culture as emerging naturally from the masses, rather than imposed from above. Florovskii describes Russian culture as the ‘organic self-definition’ of the people. Sukach notes that Rozanov’s view of culture as defined above is close to Florenskii’s.<sup>99</sup> Epstein contends that in Russia there has been, at least since Danilevskii, a tradition of viewing culture as ‘a complementary aspect of cult, that is, as a

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<sup>95</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Sumerki prosveshcheniia’, in *Sumerki prosveshcheniia: Sbornik statei po voprosam obrazovaniia* (St Petersburg, no given publisher, 1899), pp. 1-82 (p. 24).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. Emphasis in original.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> I am very grateful to Viktor Sukach for this observation. From private discussions.

free creative response of man to God's act of creation'.<sup>100</sup> Rozanov calls upon the Church to revert to 'cultural', rather than dogmatic, forms of organization; the Church should bring the cult back into real life.<sup>101</sup>

## 5. Rozanov's Egyptology

Rozanov turns to Egypt as he sees in Russian Orthodoxy a failure to understand the Creation. He believes that Egypt contains the 'root of everything'.

Более всего я люблю египтян. Не буду отвергать и не буду порицать: в день и год юбилея надлежит быть мирным. Но никогда греки и римляне меня не притягивали, а евреи притягивали лишь временно – и, как я потом догадался, они притягивали меня отсветом, какой у них упал от Египта. Корень всего – Египет. Он дал человечеству первую естественную Религию Отчества, религию Отца миров и Матери миров... научили человечество молитве, – сообщил всем людям тайну «молитвы», тайну псалма...<sup>102</sup>

Only the Egyptians fully understood the implications of the Creation, laying the basis of all future religions and cultures, including Judaism and Christianity. However, the link between modern Russia and Egypt has been lost.<sup>103</sup> Therefore Rozanov's Egyptian work represents the search for a reconnection, which can only be secured through the family.

Египтяне *открыли семью* – семейность, семейственность. До них... Хотя кто же был раньше их на земле? – Они предшествовали всякимномадам. Таким образом, вернее сказать, что *около них, в соседстве с ними* бродили и жили племена, которые имели случки, работу женщины на мужчину, роды ребенка и кормление его грудью. Ребенок вырос и также случался, и около него росли дети, которые, выросши, начинали охотиться и тоже случались. Нить эта продолжалась бесконечно и еще могла бы продолжаться бесконечно. И собственно человеку предстояло оставаться дикарем, а человечеству – собранием диких племен, если бы египтяне первые во всемирной истории не задумались: «Что же это значит, что человек рождается? Как он рождается? И отчего?»<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Mikhail Epstein, 'From Culturology to Transculture'. Taken from <[http://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/tc\\_1.html](http://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/tc_1.html)>, last accessed 8 March 2007.

<sup>101</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Novaia kniga o khristianstve', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 9-17 (p. 16).

<sup>102</sup> Taken from Rozanov's foreword to *Iz vostochnykh motivov*, recollecting his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie', in *Vozrozhdaishchisia Egipet*, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zhyvotnymi', p. 128. Emphasis in original.

Fascinated with the miracle of childbirth, the Egyptians realized the significance of the Creation.<sup>105</sup> They understood through genealogical progression their links with God. Rozanov's hope that the Russians can reconnect with the Creation through Egypt has profound implications for his concept of historical continuity. He claims that the Egyptians were the first fully to understand the religious value of the family, the foundation of their civilization.

А поняв, вернее *создав* семью, они пришли ко всем прочим идеям строительного и религиозного характера: провидения, загробного суда, греха, фараонов, каст, жрецов, воинов. Дело в том, что идея семьи есть бесконечно построящая идея и бесконечно источающая идея. Можно до некоторой степени сказать, что семья есть *лицо человечества к Богу* – к Богу, *в вечность и в будущее*.<sup>106</sup>

It is this reverence for the family which Rozanov wishes to revive in Russia. The modern Russian must open himself up to the concept of the family.<sup>107</sup> This reveals the true 'religio', the tie between man and God. The most important aspects of religious behaviour are still performed unthinkingly within each Russian family. The Church, however, refuses to acknowledge the origins of such practices. Rozanov wishes to re-establish a natural continuity from what he terms the 'Egyptian church' ('egipetskaia tserkov'') to the body of the Russian people.<sup>108</sup> In order to demonstrate this continuity, Rozanov compares religious experiences from different periods in his life, according these events equal significance. One notable essay is based on his childhood memories and Easter celebrations in Kostroma.

«Начинается»... Вот появились два – три – шесть – десять, больше, больше и больше огоньков на высокой колокольне Покровской церкви; оглянулся назад – горит Козьмы и Дамиана церковь; направо – зажигается церковь Алексия Божия человека. И так хорошо станет на душе. А тут на чистой скатерти, под салфетками, благоухают кулич, пасха и красные яички. Поднесешь нос к куличу (ребенком был) – райский запах. «А, как все хорошо! И как хорошо, что есть вера, и как хорошо что она – с куличами, пасхой, яйцами, с горящими на колокольнях плошками, а в конце концов – и с нашей мамашей [...] и с братишками, и с сестренками, и с своим домиком».<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Rozanov uses the phrase 'Egyptian church' to refer to the body of the Egyptian people and the religion which naturally emerges from them. Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>109</sup> 'Ogni sviashchennye', p. 235.

He recalls his childhood with fondness, and affirms the permanent significance of such behaviour by noting that, years later, the same ceremonies are still performed in Russian churches, with the same religious attitude and the same reverence of fire. Today, the adult Rozanov congregates with the Orthodox and lights his candle with them, joining the communion of the Church. He insists on underlining the distinct physicality of Orthodox worship, misunderstood by his compatriots.

Да, как хороша религия в звуках, в красках, в движениях, с иконами, с большими непременно иконами, в золотых ризах, а еще лучше – в жемчужных, как в Успенском соборе в Москве, и с огнями. И пусть огни будут в руках, перед образами, на улице, особенно на колокольнях...

Если бы, я думаю, с облака посмотреть в эту ночь на землю – вдруг представилось бы, точно небо упало на землю, но упало и не разбилось, а продолжает пылать звездами. Может быть, бесы и смотрят на землю в Пасхальную ночь, смотрят и злятся, что люди не забыли своего Бога, что они сумели свести на землю небо. Да, огни в религии, лампы и свечи, я думаю, имеют в основании эту идею, эту мечту или философскую догадку: «попробуем устроить на земле, как на небе».<sup>110</sup>

Each people might have an undeveloped theology, yet they all possess a latent feeling for God. As noted in Chapter 1, this attitude is often expressed through fire, which for Rozanov has a mystical link with the soul.<sup>111</sup> Rozanov also cites other examples. On his visit to Rome, he saw on the Titan Arch depictions of how the Roman legions brought back the lamp from Solomon's Temple. He also refers to one of his favourite historians, Herodotus, on how the Egyptians also felt a closeness to God through fire.

Что такое «общение человека с Богом», как не простирание к Богу рук, которым ответно Бог простирает Свои руки; не смотрение очами... в очи Его? что такое иначе и молитва и Откровение? И как, значит, хорошо, что огни на земли, как повторение звездного неба, были избраны в символ общения человека с Богом и пронесены в истории на таком неизмеримом пространстве времен, какие от Геродота протекли до сего дня!<sup>112</sup>

People light fires because these mirror the stars, and this merges the heavenly with the earthly. Rozanov aligns himself with the pagan belief (also voiced by Origen) that stars have souls. Stars have their own biology, and are

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 235-36.

<sup>111</sup> See Chapter 1, n. 121.

<sup>112</sup> 'Ogni sviashchennye', pp. 238-39.



linked to human beings, who also burn with an inner fire.<sup>113</sup> Rozanov rejects a rational explanation for the universe, arguing that this cannot explain fully the cosmos.

Астрономы разложили небо в созвездия, вычислили с точностью до секунд все там движение; все исчислили, все смерили; все, казалось бы, рационализировали, но мы, не слушая их, твердо говорим: «Бог – в небе!».<sup>114</sup>

As with his studies into other religions, Rozanov accords himself a privileged position as uniquely able to interpret religious truths. Although he relies on the texts of Egyptologists and archaeologists, he is prepared to dismiss their work.

Но «задуматься о плодородии» не было обязательно и Шамполиону, и Бругшу, и Лепсиусу. «Они читали иероглифы». И натолкнувшись на сообщение египетского жреца: «Это – спинная кость Озириса», так как ничего сами не соединяли со «спинной костью», ибо ведь и анатомия, и физиология для них не была обязательна, отбросила его, – *отбросила уже вопреки требованию науки* – дать Египту египетские объяснения, – натворили с ней то же, что «необрезанные» натворили с объяснениями «обрезания».

Вообще, тема объясняется из темы; не нося темы в душе – нельзя понять темы у другого. И если не носить в душе главных тем Египта:

ПРОВИДЕНИЕ.

РОД, РОДОСЛОВИЯ; ПРЕДКИ И ПОТОМКИ.

СЕМЬЯ.

РЕЛИГИЯ. И в основе, и в стержне всего названного как «колыбель» религии, молитвы и рода:

ЖИЗНЬ И ПОЛ.

Если всего не иметь *лично* и *самому* задачей жизни, то нельзя ничего понять в Египте.<sup>115</sup>

Rozanov also criticizes the symbolists and decadents, who adopt Egyptian themes but miss the true meaning of their religion. Rozanov explains the true reverence of the Egyptians for living creatures.

Они, и ТОЛЬКО они, ЕДИНСТВЕННО они, были «пантеистами», не «говорунами», а «делом»: ибо если ты, мой друг литератор, воистину «пантеист»,

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 237. In Rozanov's examination of Russian literature, he states that only Lermontov fully expressed this holy reverence for the stars; Lermontov loved them 'not like stones or sand, not mechanically or geometrically', but as living creatures. V.V. Rozanov, 'Iz vostochnykh motivov', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 292-301 (p. 294).

<sup>114</sup> 'Ogni sviashchennye', p. 237.

<sup>115</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zhivotnymi', pp. 136-37. Emphasis in original.

то поди и пососи у коровы вымя, «как бы она была мать тебе». А если корова не «сестра тебе», то ты воистину литератор и ничем больше не можешь быть.<sup>116</sup>

All life emanates from God, and in turn contains Him. Therefore all life is open to veneration. The Egyptians did not reserve an elevated position for humans. Rozanov frequently refers to the Egyptian adoration of animals, especially the cow, and believes that contact with animals helped them to worship God.

Именно, многие животные привели египтян к самым поразительным открытиям: и они не ошиблись, «считая родоначальниками своими» Озириса и Изиду, «царей мифических», и затем барана, свинью и «прочих». Всех. «Все животные суть наши учителя. Они научили нас богу и молитве».<sup>117</sup>

In an example of his ‘korovotsentrizm’, Rozanov associates his own family cow with the entire cosmos, the stars, and the processes of the world which give life.<sup>118</sup> Rozanov treasures his intimate connection with this cow and its heavenly milk.<sup>119</sup> Animals worship God through their natural behaviour; Rozanov’s specific term for this is ‘ozirianstvovat’’, and man should copy this.<sup>120</sup> This does not demean humans to the level of animals, but elevates all forms of life to the divine. By breaking the categories between forms of life, Rozanov displays the unity of the world in a variety of manifestations. This is best demonstrated by the Sphinx, a combination of different animals.<sup>121</sup> Rozanov also notes drawings of men with animals’ tails, noting the parallels between humans and animals.<sup>122</sup> He glorifies incidents of sexual activity between men and cattle, and suggests that such proximity to animals can help man to reach God.<sup>123</sup>

Matter is dead unless life acts upon it to make it holy. Rozanov frequently expresses his fear that life on Earth might die out, leaving a planet devoid of all living things. The life of animals – especially their mating rituals – is intimately linked with the life of the Earth, in particular its seasonal cycles, and the movement of the sun.<sup>124</sup> In this respect, Rozanov diverges from the view expounded in the mythological investigations of Merezhkovskii and Solov’ev. Both these suggest that God is essentially masculine, and acts upon a feminine world. This leads Rozanov into a paradox. He insists *a priori* that the world is holy owing to its divine

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>117</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Pered zevom smerti’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 264-70 (p. 270).

<sup>118</sup> ‘Sem’ia i sozhitie s zhiivotnymi’, p. 129.

<sup>119</sup> S. Fediakin, ‘Sokrovennyi trud Rozanova’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 492-99 (p. 496).

<sup>120</sup> ‘Pered zevom smerti’, p. 267.

<sup>121</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Deti egipetskie’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 86-88 (p. 87).

<sup>122</sup> ‘Sem’ia i sozhitie s zhiivotnymi’, p. 135.

<sup>123</sup> Rozanov frequently highlights the physical relationship between man and beast, especially cows. He describes man’s interaction with the world as sucking at the teats of Osiris. He glorifies the case, taken from the Russian press, of a peasant who engages in bestiality with his cattle. See *Poslednie list’ia*, p. 221.

<sup>124</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Muzhestvo i otcheshtvo’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 237-39 (p. 237).

createdness, which in turn justifies natural human activity. Yet he also insists that the world can only be holy if man continues to reproduce. Rozanov is never sure whether man's interaction with matter is a purely epistemological issue, or a question of activity. At times he wishes it to be both. This irregularity in his thought reflects common problems in philosophy, where thinkers find it hard to reconcile the given with the posited, though in Rozanov it is particularly problematic as he constantly struggles to stress the continuing links between God and the world and underline matter's innate sanctity. This tension also has implications for Rozanov's literature, a question which will be examined in the final chapter.

## 6. Rozanov and Osiris

Rozanov relies on an embodied God who can reproduce, merging the transcendent and the immanent. The human body is likewise sanctified, made in the divine image and likeness. God has a penis, which guarantees His relationship with man, and upholds the unity of the real and the ideal. This connection is affirmed through circumcision, a ritual which Rozanov believes originated in Egypt, and which the Hebrews assumed from their neighbours.

Rozanov engages with the history of ideas over the physicality and emasculation of divinity. Many commentators have noted that, in the transition from paganism to modern Christianity, the body of God has disappeared. The deities of pre-Christian religions had bodies. The Egyptians attached great importance to the physical activities of their gods, especially their sexual prowess. Depictions of the rich pantheon of Egyptian gods, particularly of Osiris, often show their deities with an erect penis. The Hebrew God, especially in early Judaism, was also understood as embodied.<sup>125</sup> Rozanov's project involves the 're-membering' of God, the re-insertion into religion of the divine phallus.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Eilberg-Schwartz argues that it was the fact that the Jewish priesthood was forced into a homoerotic relationship with its God, that encouraged its members to configure Yaweh as a genderless spirit. Eilberg-Schwartz studies the problems inherent in the masculinity of the Jewish deity, and the implications for the Hebrews of having to relate intimately to a father figure. Much of the language of (especially early) Judaism describes the relationship between God and the Jews in erotic terms. For example, Eilberg-Schwartz argues that the reason that men were not allowed to gaze upon God was the fact that men were not permitted to see His penis. There are instances in the Old Testament where prophets were allowed to see God, but only from behind; he compares the language of Exodus 33. 21-33, where God warns Moses only to view His back, to Genesis 9. 20-25, where Shem and Japheth avert their eyes from their own drunken father's nakedness. See Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus*, especially pp. 60-64, 81-86. Rozanov frequently displays great fondness for the Song of Songs, which he considers justification for the sensual experience in religion. Rozanov often describes his own erotic relationship with God, but only to God's feminine side, circumventing any potential homoerotic encounter with the divine.

<sup>126</sup> The term 're-membering' is taken from Hare's investigation, and his description of how the Christian deity was disembodied through philosophical investigation. See Hare, p. 224. Rozanov's anamnesis, his version of the reconnection of man with God's body, is discussed below.

Out of all the Egyptian deities, Rozanov is particularly drawn to Osiris, his body, and his fatherhood of the Earth.<sup>127</sup> Rozanov draws parallels between Osiris and the Christian God; the two in his worldview are the same. The Osiris myth also proves that man may be deified.<sup>128</sup> In the Osiris myth, Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth, and his dismembered body was cast into the Nile. Osiris becomes a scapegoat, whose body is intrinsically linked with the Earth, the soil and the river.<sup>129</sup> Isis buries all the pieces of his body, except the penis, which she then uses to revive him. Osiris then impregnates Isis, and their son Horus kills Seth and takes his place as king of Egypt. The resurrection of Osiris is linked with the potency of his phallus and his procreative powers.<sup>130</sup> Although Osiris was originally a local god worshipped by small regional cults, over the course of Egyptian history he was assumed into a national mythology. Pharaohs came to believe that they were the earthly incarnation of Osiris. On their death they assumed the celestial form of the god, and their offspring then took Osiris' earthly form.<sup>131</sup> Initially, immortality was only the preserve of the pharaoh, but in time the belief in this type of rebirth was extended to all Egyptians.<sup>132</sup> Osiris becomes tied into a recurrent pattern of rebirth, where there is no such thing as death, but only the transition from one form of life to another. Osiris proves the immortality of the person through his children, but also the direct identity of man and God. There are similarities in the Osiris myth and the account of the death and Resurrection of Jesus. However, Rozanov opposes the Osiris myth and the story of Jesus' Resurrection, as they provide alternative representational structures for the ideal and the real. Most importantly, they offer two different versions of resurrection. In the Orthodox variant, the resurrection of the human involves his detachment from this world. However, in Egypt man's rebirth takes place not abstractly, but on Earth and within human time. This explains Rozanov's frequent references to myths which narrate a resurrection on Earth, such as Osiris, and the myth of the phoenix.<sup>133</sup>

Osiris was not just considered the god of life, but had a multitude of associations. He was equated with the entire universe, the annual harvest, death (which has a different meaning in ancient Egyptian culture to the Christian understanding), and the River Nile (considered along with the sun the source of all life).<sup>134</sup> There is no

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<sup>127</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Résumé ob Egipte', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 240-44 (p. 241).

<sup>128</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Taina chetyrekh lits, shesti kryl i omovenie', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 91-106 (p. 104).

<sup>129</sup> Hare, p. 20.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>131</sup> Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. by David Lorton (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 125.

<sup>132</sup> Hare, p. 34.

<sup>133</sup> See, for example, V.V. Rozanov, 'Homines novi', in *Kogda nachal'stvo ushlo...*, pp. 16-22 (p. 22).

<sup>134</sup> As this thesis has shown, the elemental aspect of Rozanov's thought is very important. He displays a deep affinity towards agriculture and nature, and especially the sun and water. The very name Osiris could possibly derive from the Egyptian word for moisture, which also figures as a life-giving substance in Rozanov's thought. Rozanov refers to the Volga, that river which has a special place in the Russian consciousness, as the 'Russian

distinct and constant version of Osiris' role in the wide variety of Egyptian myths, although one of the most important accounts is given in the Pyramid Texts.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, as one of the most important of Egyptian legends, the Osiris myth has been subject to constant revision, both throughout Egyptian history and in more modern times, to fit religious, philosophical and political requirements. Surviving documents from Egypt leave complex and often contradictory fragments. Most modern retellings derive from Plutarch's version.<sup>136</sup> Like Plutarch, Hegel and Lacan, Rozanov also takes the Osiris myth and uses it for his specific purposes. Rozanov contends that the Osiris myth has greater validity than the New Testament parables. For Rozanov, the most important aspect of Osiris is the way this narrative expresses God's paternity of the world. Rozanov writes about this in a deliberately explicit manner; he writes that in Egypt, the world is understood as the seed of God.<sup>137</sup> Rozanov writes that the Egyptians were the first to understand that the world is produced directly from God's phallus, and therefore the beauty and potentiality of all matter is linked to the procreative activities of God.<sup>138</sup> Divine semen is the building-block of the world.<sup>139</sup> The sexual organs are images of the divine (Rozanov uses the word 'obraz' with its obvious connotations of the Orthodox icon), through which all mankind is united.<sup>140</sup>

Египтяне имели гениальную догадку: в сути полового органа человека, именно мужского, его solo – увидеть прообраз, да прямо зерно и суть всей вообще космогонии, самого сложения мира, как бы сказать главнейшее: половой орган и рождает новое бытие оттого, что будучи и кажась «органом», он на самом деле есть зародыш и зерно мира, parvum in omne, pars pro toto, и еще как там выходит по-латыни или по-гречески. Отчего и проистекает не только сила его, но еще и те другие потрясающие феномены, что «боги и люди» (начало почитания животного у египтян), собаки, фараоны, девушки, царицы, волчицы, «чтут его одинаково» – чтут как египтяне в своих «тайнствах».<sup>141</sup>

Rozanov believes that the Egyptian view of the potential of God corresponds to his own. Osiris and Isis, who come together to create the world through Osiris' semen, are the same as the male and female aspects of the

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Nile'. 'Russkii Nil', pp. 145-99. Remizov also picked up on this elemental aspect in Rozanov, and named his posthumous tribute to his friend 'Kukkha', meaning 'moisture' in Remizov's artificial monkey-language. Remizov, *Kukkha*, p. 125.

<sup>135</sup> Assmann, p.125.

<sup>136</sup> Hare, p. 10.

<sup>137</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Vechnoe afrodzianstvo', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 186-91 (p. 188).

<sup>138</sup> 'Résumé ob Egipte', p. 241.

<sup>139</sup> Rozanov depicts a cosmos whose principal component is not the atom, but the eternally-flowing semen of God. See his letter of 9 March 1918 (O.S.) to Gollerbakh, reprinted in Gollerbakh, *V.V. Rozanov: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo*, p. 43.

<sup>140</sup> 'Résumé ob Egipte', p. 241.

<sup>141</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Skuka', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 277-81 (p. 280).

divine in his own religion, the two Elohim of the Hebrews.<sup>142</sup> He dismantles formal family relations demanded by the Church. According to Rozanov, there was in Egypt no formal rite of marriage, people were free to enter into and dissolve relations as they pleased. Cohabitation per se was considered sacred, and any kind of fecundity was holy. In his desire to establish genetic proximity between people, Rozanov idealizes the incest apparently common in Egyptian communities. He relies on the myth of Oedipus to underline the truth of this fact.

The Oedipus myth assumes a crucial role in Rozanov's thought.<sup>143</sup> The myth of Oedipus opens to mankind the secret of perpetuating life on Earth. For Rozanov, every wife can also be a mother to her husband. He writes that men cannot help but suck on their wife's breasts like a child.<sup>144</sup> In this way, the wife, with whom man copulates, becomes also the Madonna, the universal mother; Rozanov dismantles one cultural code and replaces it with a new one.<sup>145</sup> Rozanov called his second wife 'mama', and rumours (almost certainly malicious and unfounded) circulated in Petersburg that he was conducting an affair with his step-daughter.<sup>146</sup>

Rozanov writes that people are instinctively drawn to their genealogical relatives. He draws parallels between Egypt and incidents from contemporary Russian life, drawn from newspaper articles, which narrate tales of families whose members engage in sexual relations with each other. Rozanov writes that such cases of incest are common, and are perfectly natural. There is a curious cosmological model for this in Rozanov's thought. Although he believes that the Earth is the child of God, at the same time, God enjoys an erotic relationship with His creation. God might be the world's lover, as well as its creator. Rozanov also draws examples from the Old Testament.

Сеют: и посмотрите, ведь земля не только по виду своему, но и по существу своему – брюхата, посев есть совокупление зерна и планеты, ибо зерно есть старший и первый, есть Адам, а планета – только Ева, вторая и менее тяжеловесная. Зерно, падающее с дерева или с травы на землю, – оплодотворяет ее совершенно, как мужчина женщину. Но в «порядке личного существования» дерево, конечно, «выросло из земли», – это единичное дерево, – и есть сын ее. И что же мы видим? Великую тайну Эдипа: что сын оплодотворяет мать свою. Но смотрите, смотрите, как ноумен пронизывает феномены: если мужу даже 50 лет,

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<sup>142</sup> 'Résumé ob Egipte', p. 241.

<sup>143</sup> This thesis does not have the scope to go into the psychoanalytical aspects of Rozanov's thought, though a Freudian examination of his beliefs would undoubtedly provide interesting conclusions. Rozanov often discussed his mother in candid and sexual terms, and yet in his work and correspondence there is scant mention of his father. However, it is important to note that Freud does not consider mythology itself central to his views: Freud works from the point of view of psychology backwards – for him, the complex explains the construction of the myth, not vice versa. See Jean-Joseph Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Demetra i mif Edipa', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 256-60 (p. 257).

<sup>145</sup> 'Demetra i mif Edipa', p. 257.

<sup>146</sup> Gippius, 'Zadumchivyi strannik', p. 166.

а жене только 20, жена обнимает его сверху книзу, совершенно, как мать, баюкает его и психически смотрит на него как на своего ребенка. Всякая любовь – всякий раз, как мужчина и женщина совокупились между собой, жена таинственно усваивается в мать мужу: и «Эдипова тайна» есть вообще в браке.<sup>147</sup>

This 'edipstvo' is thriving in Russia, and people who engage in it lead holy and happy lives.<sup>148</sup> Rozanov believes that Oedipus was blessed with some knowledge superior to that of contemporary Russians, a revelation that came to him when watching a production of Sophocles' play in Petersburg.

Смотря на трагедию в ее заключительном аккорде, я почувствовал, что древние или некоторая часть древних, в общем развитии ниже нас стоящих, – в одном отношении, и именно «ведения», «знания», – необыкновенно над нами возвышались.<sup>149</sup>

Oedipus grasps the secrets of eternal life, the fact that each man becomes Osiris when he dies. Oedipus realizes that death does not lead to non-being, but is merely a change in status, the reverse side of the same coin as this life. In Rozanov's interpretation, the myth of Oedipus merges (Rozanov uses the word 'slivat'sia') with Egyptian thought, and also with the first books of the Bible. Therefore one of the major reasons for Rozanov's use of Egyptian myths is his need to understand death, to overcome the pessimism of Orthodox theology and the unhappiness of his own family life. It is clear that Rozanov was greatly influenced by Leont'ev's organic theories. However, it is not enough to accept an interpretation of being which accepts decline, dissolution, and finality. Rozanov overcomes Leont'ev's pessimism by revising his ideas and opening up his thought to the possibility of new life.

Уже Леонтьев более десяти лет назад ощущал это всеобщее кругом разложение и советовал, как политическую программу: «подморозить гниющее». Печальный совет самого пламенного из наших консерваторов, пожалуй, единственного консерватора-идеалиста. Печальный и бессильный совет: он забыл, что ведь не вечная же зима настанет, что на установку вечной зимы не хватит сил ни у какого консерватизма и что как потеплеет, так сейчас же начнется ужасная вонь от разложения. Он, биолог, забыл другое явление, что вырастают чудные орхидеи на гниющих останках старых деревьев, но, уже конечно, вырастают они

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<sup>147</sup> 'Demetra i mif Edipa', pp. 256-57.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>149</sup> 'Chto skazal Teziiu Edip?', p. 289.

вовсе не повторяя в себе тип и форму этого дерева, превратившегося, по закону всего смертного, в «персть земную».<sup>150</sup>

In Egyptian thought, death is not an end, but opportunity for a new beginning, a form of renewal where the unity of the person is preserved.<sup>151</sup>

В собственном смысле «мертвых» не было в Египте, в нем никто «не умирал», а лишь получал иную форму жизни, иное состояние бытия. Без этого убеждения они не строили бы пирамид своих и не укрепляли бы наподобие крепостей своих могил.<sup>152</sup>

Orthodoxy is unable to provide a satisfactory narrative for death where the unity of consciousness and reality is preserved. Instead, the Osiris myth provides a circularity to life. Death is not an end, but marks the renewed significance of birth.<sup>153</sup> Rozanov ties together both ends of man's life, ensuring that his death is seen as a rebirth. The cradle pulls towards the grave as the grave pulls towards the cradle.<sup>154</sup> This view is also applied to the whole of human history. The Revelation of St John is not apocalyptic in the Christian sense. Rozanov interprets this as a pagan narration of paradise.<sup>155</sup> The Book of Revelation does not herald the end of the world, but instead brings us back to its beginnings, the pre-historical period where the heavenly was equal to the earthly.<sup>156</sup> The beasts described by John are the same as those painted by the Egyptians. The number of the beast is the number of the Tree of Life. It is not to be read 'six hundred and sixty-six', but 'six-six-six', as it points specifically to the sixth day and to the creation of man.<sup>157</sup> At the end of the Bible, man is redeemed through this rebirth.<sup>158</sup> Salvation takes place within historical time, not outside human experience.

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<sup>150</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Gosudarstvo i obshchestvo', in *Kogda nachal'stvo ushlo...*, pp. 38-43 (p. 43).

<sup>151</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Pervaia kolybel'naia pesnia na zemle', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, p. 89.

<sup>152</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Iz "Knigi Mertvykh..."', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 144-49 (p. 144). Many commentators have remarked that the obsession with death formed the fundamental part of Egyptian culture, a pessimistic contrast to Rozanov's positive interpretation of their thought. For example, see Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy, and its Connections with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 1946, 1961), p. 26.

<sup>153</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'K risunku: "Anubis prinimaet mumiiu iz ruk plachushchei zheny, chtoby vnesti ee v mogilu"', in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, p. 144.

<sup>154</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Tut est' nekaia taina', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 309-12 (p. 311).

<sup>155</sup> Gippius recalls that the Apocalypse was the only New Testament book which Rozanov would accept, with the occasional concession to St John's Gospel. See Gippius, p. 173.

<sup>156</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Zverinoe chislo', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 237-42 (p. 241).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 239.



## 7. Russia and Egypt: The Mythological Heritage

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were understood by many across Europe and Russia as a new age, where traditional values were replaced by secularism and a growing reliance on technology. Progress itself was perceived eschatologically, as Altizer writes: ‘the very advent of modernity can be understood to be an apocalyptic event, an advent ushering in a new world as a consequence of the ending of an old world’.<sup>159</sup> Altizer argues that apocalypticism in western thought was initially made possible by St Paul’s division of body and flesh.<sup>160</sup> However, he argues further that Hegel has had most influence on apocalyptic trends in western philosophy by defining historical progress in terms of a logical dialectic, which can only take place through the complete negation of the subject. He insists that until Hegel, man did not conceptualize history in terms of dialectic progress and as a deviation from all that has gone before.

Until the advent of modernity, virtually all thinking was closed to the possibility of the truly and the actually new; the future as such then could only finally be a realization of the past, for history itself is ultimately a movement of eternal return, and even revelation or a divine or ultimate order is a movement of eternal return.<sup>161</sup>

The trend of seeing history in terms of cataclysmic shifts is highly pronounced in Russian culture. This tradition has many sources, including the strong affinity in Russian philosophy (especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) for German idealism, including Hegel.<sup>162</sup> Other reasons feed into this interpretation of history. In the semiotic schemes of Lotman and Uspenskii, Russian culture is described as binary, where opposing schemes of thought alternatively compete for authority, leaving no scope for compromise; the transition from one epoch to another is seen as a complete break with the past.<sup>163</sup> The understanding of history as a series of cataclysmic schisms exists alongside the desire of many Russian thinkers to interpret their past as a seamless progression of linked events. This helps explain the paradox at the heart of Russian religious conservatism with which Rozanov has to

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<sup>159</sup> Thomas J. Altizer, ‘Modern Thought and Apocalypticism’, in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, III, pp. 325-59 (p. 325).

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>162</sup> Motrenko argues that this attention to Hegel in the Russian religious renaissance stems from Solov’ev’s influence, not just in terms of his philosophy, but also in terms of his interpretation of other philosophers. T.V. Motrenko, *Gegelevskie idei v mirovozzrensko-religioznoi paradigme rossiiskoi filosofii XIX – nachala XX vekov* (Kiev: Slovo, 2005), p. 305.

<sup>163</sup> Iu.M. Lotman and B.A. Uspenskii, ‘Rol’ dual’nykh modelei v dinamike russkoi sistemy (do kontsa XVIII veka), *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii*, 28 (1977), 3-39 (pp. 3-6).

engage, in that, although the task of the Orthodox was to prepare the way for the realization of the Kingdom of God, political, religious or social change was feared for the potentially devastating effects this would have.<sup>164</sup>

Following Chaadaev, as Aizlewood explains, the theme of continuity versus rupture has become one of the defining paradigms by which to examine Russian philosophy.<sup>165</sup> The search for continuity in turn has led thinkers to look for the true basis of Russian history, be it Rome, Byzantium, or a vision of pre-Petrine Russian culture. Many Russian thinkers have been sensitive to perceived breaks in their history. For example, continuity is one of the major themes of Florovskii.

История русской культуры, вся она в перебоях, в приступах, в отречениях или увеличениях, в разочарованиях, изменах, разрывах. Всего меньше в ней непосредственной цельности. Русская историческая ткань так странно спутана, и вся точно перемята и оборвана.<sup>166</sup>

One consequence of this was the obligation placed on Russian thinkers to re-interpret breaks in Russian history and assimilate them within their own schemes. Temporal upheavals were presented either as a departure from the correct course of history, or alternatively were accorded a subsequent interpretation as part of the natural development of the Russian nation. For example, the reforms of Peter the Great were seen by the Slavophiles as a breach of the Orthodox heritage, and therefore explained the nation's spiritual decline. Alternatively, the Westernizers argued that Peter's reforms were undertaken within Russian traditions. These problems became more pronounced in the Silver Age; as Katsis has argued, thinkers of this period posited a series of eschatological events (such as the end of the century, the various wars and the subsequent revolutions) as the

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<sup>164</sup> Therefore in Russian philosophy, alongside its powerful historical element, there exists the tendency to separate soteriology from earthly existence. Kuznetsov has argued that the apophatic tradition which the Russians inherited from the Greeks has encouraged this distinction of history from eschatology. See P. Kuznetsov, 'Metafizicheskii Nartsiss i russkoe molchanie: P.Ia. Chaadaev i sud'ba filosofii v Rossii', in *P.Ia. Chaadaev: pro et contra. Lichnost' i tvorchestvo Petra Chaadaeva v otsenke russkikh myslitelei i issledovatelei*, ed. by A.A. Ermichev and A.A. Zlatopol'skaia (St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 1998), pp. 729-52 (p. 730). Aizlewood has also investigated this point in his study of the tensions between ontological and rational concepts of truth in Russian thought, and writes: 'earthly historical existence is viewed as essentially already completed, and so in inheriting this tradition Russian consciousness finds itself in a position of extra-historical existence'. See Robin Aizlewood, 'Revisiting Russian Identity in Russian Thought: From Chaadaev to the Early Twentieth Century', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 78 (2000), 20-43 (p. 23).

<sup>165</sup> Aizlewood argues that the overwhelming sense of temporal dislocation in Russia has been conducive to the traditions of eschatology and utopianism in Russian thought. Aizlewood, p. 39. In following this argument, it can be suggested that Rozanov's greatest contribution to Russian thought is his establishment of a utopian vision within time, at the very beginning of human history. The fact that the Garden of Eden existed (this is presented as a given in Rozanov) at the start of human history proves to Rozanov that his utopian project is not abstract or speculative, but grounded in the reality of material existence.

<sup>166</sup> Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia*, p. 500.

end of history. Yet once each of these events was passed, it was subsequently reinterpreted within each individual thinker's historical scheme.<sup>167</sup>

In presenting the natural connection between Russia and Egypt, Rozanov wishes to resurrect the religious beliefs of the ancients. He looks to the status accorded in Egypt to mythology, and states that for the Egyptians, myths are the foundation of their religion.<sup>168</sup> Rozanov sees the development of philosophy as a deviation from the true course of man's relationship with the world. Philosophy implies the construction of an objective understanding of reality, and the separation of consciousness from matter. Rozanov wishes to set the Russians back on the correct course of history, by resurrecting a mythological outlook and a feeling for God. He pre-empts more recent studies which suggest that the acquisition of rational knowledge and the development of systematic philosophy represent the dissociation of man from the Creation, and the rejection of mythologies which account for his origins.<sup>169</sup>

Rozanov identifies the transition from the Egyptian religious outlook to the Greek philosophical tradition as a deviation. He believes that Egyptians myths are their religion, whereas myths in other contexts are false. Greek myths are superficial, lacking true content. Rozanov expands to create an opposition between religion and philosophy. Whereas the Egyptians understand the Creation as the basis of the correct way to worship, Rozanov criticizes the ancient Greeks for the lightness of their prayers.<sup>170</sup> Rozanov describes the Greek worldview as obsessed with the external and superficial, and lacking an internal and moral quality. Greeks worship the flesh, but without any regard for its essence or its potential. In turn, this has permitted them to abstract thought from physical categories, leading to the separation of consciousness and the world.

Египтяне, узнавая греческие мифы (то же – и о милом Зевесе), могли только пожать плечами и сказать: «Это – пошлость». И прибавить: «У вас вообще нет религии, а мифы, сказки, – и о пошлых существах. У вас нет религии, а какие-то имена богов. У вас нет плача Изиды об Озирисе, – и целования Возлюбленного. Уйдите. Уйдите с глаз долой!».<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> L. Katsis, *Russkaia eskhatologiya i russkaia literatura* (Moscow: O.G.I., 2000), p. 12.

<sup>168</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zivotnymi', p. 129.

<sup>169</sup> Voegelin describes the advent of philosophy as the entrance of man into an ordered history, which in itself is apocalyptic as it creates the 'catastrophe of an old world and its *metastasis* into a new one'. Voegelin, p. 166. Emphasis in original. Strauss suggests that philosophy arises from the rejection of creation accounts hitherto presented by religion, and argues that the rejection of philosophy is the 'primary impulse' for philosophy. Leo Strauss, 'The Mutual Influence of Theology and Philosophy', in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964*, trans. and ed. by Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (Columbia/London: University of Missouri Press, 1993, 2004), pp. 217-33 (p. 219).

<sup>170</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Velichaishaia minuta istorii', in *Vozrozhdaishchisia Egipet*, pp. 8-19 (p. 19).

<sup>171</sup> 'Sem'ia i sozhitie s zivotnymi', p. 129.

Ultimately, Greek philosophy has fed into Christianity, where the fixation on spiritual matters completely disregards the physical.<sup>172</sup>

The transition from the Egyptian mythological to the Greek philosophical worldview is crucial in Rozanov's religion. Rozanov is in some ways a liminal figure, one who is drawn to ruptures in history; he wishes to examine these breaches in the context of his broader studies of how man maintains his links to the Creation throughout the passage of time. This helps explain the significance of Oedipus in Rozanov's thought. The Oedipus tale is traditionally understood as marking the transition from myth to philosophy. In particular the Sphinx, providing as she does the bridge between Egypt and ancient Greece, is seen as the symbol of this shift.<sup>173</sup>

Oedipus solves the Sphinx's riddle, and focuses our attention not on God or the world, but on man. Yet Rozanov is not content with this, and follows with another question: what is man? He is unsure; following the traditions of Orthodoxy, he contends that the essence of man, being made in the image of God, is unknowable. Divine apophaticism leads to anthropological apophaticism. Yet there are aspects in which Rozanov is clear: man is made in the image and likeness of God, and insists that this connection must be demonstrated physiologically. He wants the Russians to 're-member' God, by re-establishing physical ties with Him through the phallus. By engaging in sexual activity, man ends his isolation and embraces the ideal by re-enacting the Creation. More broadly, in all his activity man is called on to foster a sensual relationship with the past, and re-establish a tangible relationship with history, rather than simply studying his past intellectually.<sup>174</sup> Throughout his work, Rozanov displays a preference for physical contact with the past, rather than its intellectual examination.<sup>175</sup> Perhaps one of the most vivid examples Rozanov practices this is in his numismatics; Rozanov

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<sup>172</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ellinizm', in *Vo dvore iazychnikov*, pp. 171-77 (p. 173).

<sup>173</sup> Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, pp. 143-45. There may also be a further cultural explanation for Rozanov's fascination with the Sphinx. In mythology, the Sphinx has often been seen as the beast which performs rites of initiation on young men. She has been considered the object of man's deepest and darkest sexual urges, a strange feminine creature who tempts young men on the transition into adulthood into a potentially fatal union. One notes on an individual basis Rozanov's fascination in the transition of humans from one state to another, from adolescence to adulthood, and the rites which manage these changes. In mythology, teranthropomorphic beasts typically oversee 'liminal ritual situations'. See Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, pp. 37, 47.

<sup>174</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Zheltyi chelovek v peredelke', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 48-57 (p. 53). This is a particularly Rozanovian form of anamnesis, the remembrance of God. In general Christian terms, anamnesis is more than a 'straightforward "remembering"', but has 'confessional implications', where the worshipper enters into a relationship with Christ based on future salvation. See Richard J. Ginn, *The Present and the Past: A Study of Anamnesis* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1989), pp. 25-26. Concepts of anamnesis are contingent on theological interpretations of history. Rozanov's remembrance constitutes entering into a historical link with God, founded on the ongoing chain of human procreation and generation through which man traces his origins to the beginning of time. Christ, who has 'dephallicized' religion, disrupts this link.

<sup>175</sup> For example, at the end of March or the beginning of April 1901, on his return to Russia after a trip to Italy, Rozanov wrote to Suvorin of his joy in being able to come into contact with the same objects Pushkin had, displaying Rozanov's love for the tangible aspects of history over the merely cerebral. Rozanov writes:

does just not study his coins abstractly, but constantly fondles them, and uses them to make contact with the ancient world.<sup>176</sup>

Rozanov's turn to Egypt came a time when debates intensified over the future of Russia's political structures, and the manner in which religious questions shaped the relationship of the people to the state. Many of these arguments were formulated alongside debates over Russia's relationship with the west and her place in world history. The idea that Russia does not belong to the club of 'civilized' western nations, however that civilization was defined, has been common among European and Russian thinkers, and persists today. In these arguments, the comparison between Russia and Egypt as oriental, tyrannical states has often been made.<sup>177</sup> Egypt becomes a symbol for how Russia defines herself against the traditions of the west; this is as true for the idyllic musings of Belyi as it is for democratic reformers in contemporary Russia who portray Putin as a despotic pharaoh.

In nineteenth-century religious thought, proposals for the redefinition of the relationship between man and state were made theologically. In addition, the arguments of these thinkers drew on epistemic concepts which were largely at variance with those common-place in western political and religious systems. Slavophile thought was traditionally dominated by the idea that knowledge lay not in the reasoned authority of a single ruler, such as a pope, but was formulated corporately through the people. Dostoevskii advocated the organization of the Russian people along ecclesiastical lines, circumventing the cold and impersonal authority which he considered dominant in Europe. In a similar vein, Rozanov frequently expresses his abhorrence of the Russian bureaucracy, and advocates an intimate relationship between tsar and people based on genetic and familial ties. He produces a model of the Egyptian Pharaoh and his people, united in a community where the religious authorities are composed of the people. In this way, Rozanov inverts the notion of autocracy as backward and antithetical to national wellbeing, but as a vital component in preserving national unity and expressing the truth of the people. Rozanov often expresses his undying love for the tsar, without whom he

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‘Хорошо потрогать историю руками, мало о ней читать’. Letter reprinted in V.V. Rozanov, *Priznaki vremeni: Stat'i i ocherki 1911 g. Pis'ma A.S. Suvorina k V.V. Rozanovu. Pis'ma V.V. Rozanova k A.S. Suvorinu*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 2006), pp. 348-49.

<sup>176</sup> Rozanov's rejection of the interpretation of history as essentially apocalyptic, common among his peers, will be revisited in Chapter 3. I shall explore Rozanov's numismatics in greater depth in Chapter 4.

<sup>177</sup> The idea of the Russian people as eastern, anti-rational and anti-democratic, along the patterns of the Egyptians and other 'oriental despotic' regimes, and opposed to the west, has been highly influential and controversial throughout Russian thought. Such arguments have pervaded debates over political and social reforms in Russia, and her relations with the west. For a discussion of how these arguments were revitalized in the revolutionary environment, and especially for an examination of the frequent comparison which was made at that time between Russia and the feudalism of ancient Egypt, see Samuel H. Baron, 'Plekhanov's Russia: The Impact of the West Upon an "Oriental" Society', *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1958), 388-404 (p. 389).

cannot live; the tsar is the eye of God who is tasked with fulfilling the divine will on Earth.<sup>178</sup> Likewise, Rozanov is not critical of Egyptian pharaohs, but describes their wisdom and unending love for their people.<sup>179</sup> Rozanov is not an anti-western thinker per se – in much of his work he lauds the achievements of western civilization. But his focus on the intimate racial ties between the Russians leads him to reject what he considers to be the abstraction of western democracy.

The tensions between pre-Christian religiosity and modernity feed into Rozanov's work, and his struggle to manage their conflicting demands helps explain the conflicts he was drawn into with his contemporaries. Rozanov is confident that the connection between the Russians and the ancient world can be re-established. He uses as evidence that there is, in direct proximity to the Russians, another people which also strives to accommodate ancient, Creation-orientated, religious practices within the demands of modern-day society. Although the physical links between Russia and ancient Egypt have been lost, he notes that, out of the tribes of the ancient world, only the Jews survive to the present day. Rozanov believes that the Jews took their forms of worship from the Egyptians, but have preserved their reverence for the Creation and the family in contemporary Russia. Hence his fascination for the Jews arises not out of a specific semitiphilism, but because he understands them as a link back to the lost Egyptian world. He searches for the types of behaviour which allow the Jews to maintain a physiological link to the Creation, and the consequences of Rozanov's approach will be examined in the third chapter of this thesis.

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<sup>178</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 224.

<sup>179</sup> See for example Rozanov's discussion of the prayers of Amenhotep. V.V. Rozanov, 'Za 1400 let do R.Kh.', in *Vozrozhdaishchisia Egipet*, pp. 138-44. Rozanov sees the Tsar as the benevolent father of the Russian people, who has the ability to implement the will of the Russians into deed; his monarchism is founded on his religious views.

## Chapter Three

### Rozanov and the Jews: Rituals and the Creation in Contemporary Life

#### 1. The Eternal Significance of the Creation

The Creation is a single event at the beginning of history, and yet Rozanov must find a way to give this one moment a continued significance. Therefore he must find the means to preserve and manage the religious importance of this event, and reconcile it with the demands of contemporary life. Rozanov sees the relationship between human nature and modernity as having broken down. He believes that the feeling for God has been replaced with an indifference to religion. He argues that the Russian Church has detached itself from earthly affairs and secluded itself in remote monasteries; contemporary philosophy is dominated by positivists and socialists, who wage war on the family. As this chapter will demonstrate, Rozanov looks to home life, or 'byt', as the locus where the tensions between antiquity and modernity can be overcome. Moreover, Rozanov looks to activities which emphasize the religious importance of 'byt', and which help man reconnect with the Creation and restore pre-Christian values. Such activities emerge from man's natural behaviour, and, unsurprisingly, Rozanov in particular refers to marriage in this context. He writes that marriage allows man to leave the New Testament and 'return to the Prophets', allowing him to have contact with Old Testament values.<sup>1</sup> He considered himself reborn when he married his second wife, Varvara Rudneva. Rozanov divorces the meaning of these rituals from their specifically Christian context, and reclaims what he sees as their original, pagan significance.

Rozanov looks to the repeated cycle of family life, 'byt', on which he believes man's religious behaviour should be based. As noted in Chapter 1, the explanation of the Creation in Rozanov's thought is highly problematic. Although it marks the holiest event in Rozanov's religion, where the ideal and the real are equivalent, the Creation also represents the moment where the cosmos could potentially fall into disunity. Therefore Rozanov searches for a way in which continually to maintain the harmony of the ideal and the real. He locates this in the repeated patterns of family life.<sup>2</sup> Outside the family, a relationship with God is impossible: the family is 'the step towards God'.<sup>3</sup> Family life is the holiest form of existence through which, since the beginning of time, man has understood his relationship with God. By establishing family life, man is connected

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<sup>1</sup> See his letter of July 1901 to Suvorin, reprinted in *Priznaki vremeni*, p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Gippius notes Rozanov's love of rituals. See Gippius, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie ko vtoromu izdaniuu', in *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, p. 8.

to Eden. However, the Russian Orthodox Church's hostility to sex and the family means that it, for Rozanov, presents an obstacle between man and his pre-Christian values.

As noted in Chapter 2, Rozanov idealizes Egyptian religion for the fact that it is founded on the Creation, but he struggles to find a connection from their civilization to the Russians. He looks to the Jews, neighbours to the Egyptians, as he suspects that they took from Egypt the secrets of the Creation, which they have preserved.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, Rozanov examines Jewish ritual practices, the external marks of their religion. Therefore, his critiques of Egypt, Christianity, and Judaism cannot be understood independently from each other. It is his concern that Orthodoxy has lost its connections to the ancient world, especially to ancient Egypt, that motivates Rozanov to study contemporary Jewish religion. His work into Jewish people and their religion emerges not out of any affection for them, but from a hope that their rituals constitute the closest surviving example of ancient Egyptian life. Rozanov is fascinated by the lifestyle of contemporary Russian Jews, and the manner in which they revere the Creation. For example, he frequently cites the Song of Songs as a case of Egyptian worship which the Jews have assumed themselves from their neighbours, and insists that the Russians should imitate this erotic intensity.<sup>5</sup> Rozanov demonstrates an often uncomfortable enthrallment with the details of Jewish home life and sexuality. Underlying this, there is an expectation, and also a fear, that the Russians and Jews might share a similar approach in their religiosity, particularly in the physical way in which they accept God. Rozanov sees in the Jewish religion a source of admiration and inspiration, but this also gives rise to envy.<sup>6</sup>

Rozanov grew up in nineteenth-century provincial Russia to a pious Orthodox family, and in many ways his work is tinged with the suspicion of Jews which characterized that society. It is possible to contextualize his outlook within the broad framework of Russian conservative thinkers who expressed animosity towards the Jews.<sup>7</sup> These thinkers were preoccupied with the idea of Russian communality, and were concerned by potential disruption to this harmony. Despite benevolent references to Jewish people, they do not consider the Jews Russian. Instead such writers typically present the Jews as the other, an alien nation with an independent history. Such ideas are present in the figures that inspired Rozanov, including Dostoevskii and

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<sup>4</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Iudaizm', in *Novyi Put'* (July 1903), pp. 145-88 (p. 148).

<sup>5</sup> Rozanov insists that the Jews took the Song of Songs from the Egyptians. 'Pervaia kolybel'naia pesnia na zemle', p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Rozanov writes that 'the Jewish soul is close to the Russian soul, and the Russian – to the Jewish'. See 'Ogni sviashchennye', p. 238.

<sup>7</sup> N.P. Giliarov-Platonov, *Evreiskii vopros v Rossii* (St Petersburg, no given publisher, 1906), p. 6. For a discussion of state policy towards the Jews at the time, and especially of Pobedonostsev's influence on policy, see Leo Errera, *The Russian Jews: Extermination or Emancipation?*, trans. by B. Löwy (London: D. Nutt, 1894), pp. 16-18.



Suvorin.<sup>8</sup> However, Rozanov provides a unique approach to the Jewish question, in basing his attitude towards them on their proximity to the Creation. This belief in the Jews' superior knowledge fuels Rozanov's philosemitism, but also paradoxically his negative feelings towards them.

Rozanov insists that the Jews have taken the secrets of the Egyptians, but kept these mysteries hidden from the rest of mankind. Rozanov sets himself a privileged position as the only person (with perhaps the exception of Florenskii) capable of taking these secrets back from the Jews and exposing them. There is a more general issue here in the way Rozanov approaches religious questions, in itself problematic. Throughout his career, Rozanov was influenced by a worry that the most vital elements of religion, the mysteries of the Creation, lie beyond human knowledge, and that man should not attempt to discover them. He suspects that these mysteries should remain secret; what is knowable is not worth knowing, or possibly even dangerous to know. He explains that even God does not know the reasons for Creation.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, he was heavily influenced by Orthodox apophaticism, and also, like the symbolists, often makes reference to Tiutchev's well-known line that each thought expressed is a lie.<sup>10</sup>

The tensions between the knowable and the unknowable run throughout Rozanov's work. However, in his Jewish studies Rozanov is prepared to set aside many of his concerns and dig deeper into what he considers the mysteries of Jewish religion, hence his self-styling as 'the last Jewish prophet'.<sup>11</sup> His confidence in his ability to unlock these secrets, despite the fact that his conclusions are often highly subjective and startling even to himself, led to acrimonious disputes with his contemporaries. Rozanov is pulled by the desire to unveil the Jews' secrets for the Russians, but is also appalled by the conclusions he draws specifically about the physicality of their contemporary worship. There is also a more general point to be made about the delicate relationship in Rozanov's thought between the particular and the general, and Rozanov's tendency to construct universal systems from individual facts. This will be examined more closely in Chapter 4.

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<sup>8</sup> See Dostoevskii, 'Evreiskii vopros', XXV, pp. 74-77. Suvorin admits in a letter to Rozanov, dated 30 July 1901 (O.S.), his own hostility towards the Jews. Reprinted in *Priznaki vremeni*, p. 303.

<sup>9</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Rozanov admired Tiutchev's work, which he considered to have a religious value, and which he placed higher than the poetry of Vladimir Solov'ev. See 'Literaturnyi rod Solov'evykh', p. 83. One of the most problematic of Rozanov's essays concerns the limits of human understanding, and how the holy (in Rozanov's case, the sexual) can be expressed linguistically. See V.V. Rozanov, 'Kak razreshaetsia nedoumenie', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 457-59 (p. 457).

<sup>11</sup> Rozanov wrote to Izmailov in August 1918, 'Я не понимаю: евреи или не понимают себя, или забыли свою историю, или слишком развращены русскими. Иначе ведь они должны бы, уже со статей в «Нов. Пути», – обнять мои ноги. Я же *чистосердечно* считаю себя... почти не «русским писателем», но настоящим и воистину последним еврейским пророком'. Quoted in A. Nikoliukin, 'K voprosu o mifologeme natsional'nogo v tvorchestve V.V. Rozanova', in *Sakharna*, pp. 414-20 (p. 418). Emphasis in original.

It is difficult to prise apart Rozanov's Judophilia and his Judophobia; the two phenomena are components of the same approach. As Mondry contends, there is a very fine line, and often no distinction at all, between admiration for, and hatred of, Jewish practices.<sup>12</sup> Rozanov himself neatly divided his Jewish studies into his works with a positive assessment, and those with a negative appraisal.<sup>13</sup> Scholarship, following on from Rozanov's neat division, has often tended to fall into the trap of following Rozanov's example, and likewise categorizing his work as either positive (in particular his earlier career), or negative (in his later career). Scholars have struggled to find a turning point in Rozanov's thought, the event which forces a change of opinion. Some of these will be discussed below. However, I shall argue that it is not possible to separate and categorize Rozanov's work in such a manner. Rather, I shall contend that Rozanov's motivation behind his study of Jewish worship does not change, but remains his determination to get close to the Creation. Furthermore, the interpretation of Rozanov's Jewish studies as some kind of turning point, and a return to Christianity, does not fully account for the fact that in the last year of his life Rozanov asked the Jewish people for forgiveness, and constructed his most aggressive work against Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup> There is certainly an intensification in the expression of his bitterness towards the Jews, but this stems from his inability to answer the questions he himself poses about religion. Despite the fact that Rozanov in 1903 wrote a series of essays positively comparing aspects of Jewish worship and Orthodoxy, one also finds in Rozanov's earlier (pre-1910) works many critical references to the Jews.<sup>15</sup> He consistently maintains a deep distrust, and often a violent hatred, towards the Jews as a race, and is particularly fearful of their political and literary strength in Russia. Ironically, the strength of the Jewish family and their reproductive qualities – traits which Rozanov admires and which the Russians must replicate in order to survive – are also the characteristics which fuel his concerns over the threat to Russia.

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<sup>12</sup> Mondry, 'Is the End of Censorship in the Former Soviet Union a Good Thing?', pp. 115-16.

<sup>13</sup> In his draft plan for his proposed complete works, Rozanov divides his work on Jewish worship into essays 'expressing a positive relationship to Judaism' in volume 9, and works 'with a negative relationship to Judaism' in volume 10. 'Plan Polnogo sobraniia sochinenii, sostavlennyi V.V. Rozanovym v 1917 godu', p. 368.

<sup>14</sup> In Elshina's interpretation of *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*, Rozanov concludes that Jesus could not have been God, as he came to Earth. Rozanov finally concludes that God and the Earth must remain separate categories. As Jesus was not God, he must have been the Antichrist, who by his appearance brought about Russia's downfall. See T.A. Elshina, 'Dva razgovora ob Akopalipsise (VI. Solov'ev i Vas. Rozanov)', *Entelekhiiia* (2000), pp. 76-82 (p. 78). This work is by far the most pessimistic of Rozanov's, in his tacit admission that the apocalyptic forces threatening Russia had finally conquered; Rozanov's original contention is that Russia is doomed to experience hell, but in time and on this Earth.

<sup>15</sup> Throughout his work Rozanov manifests a profound suspicion of other ethnic groups who might disturb Russian unity. He was also concerned about the influence Jewish groups held over Russian literature (including Russian journalism), and often associated – as did many of his contemporaries – Jews with the revolutionaries, even prior to Stolypin's assassination (which in any case did deeply offend him). See, for example, the 1906 essay, V.V. Rozanov, 'Molchashchie sily', in *Russkaia gosudarstvennost' i obshchestvo*, pp. 99-101 (p. 100).

There is still relatively little scholarly work on Rozanov's Jewish studies, although this is growing. His contemporaries had long been aware that the Jews played an important role in his investigation of Christianity. In one of the Religious-Philosophical Meetings from the 1902-1903 season, Minskii criticized Rozanov for his over-enthusiasm for Jewish marriage, and his inability to see that any other path outside family life might also lead to the good.<sup>16</sup> As Rozanov's work became more embittered towards the Jews, his contemporaries and friends started to become more aggressive in their critique of his work. In autumn 1913, Rozanov released a selection of hagiographical essays for the murdered youth Andrei Iushchinskii, proclaiming the guilt of Mandel Beilis and reviving the Jewish Blood Accusation. The respectable conservative press, including *Novoe Vremia*, refused to publish these articles, and they were only accepted by the notorious *Zemshchina*. This marked Rozanov's ostracism from what might tentatively be labelled the mainstream of Russian religious philosophers (I use this terminology with care, as the Religious-Philosophical Society itself was an esoteric clique, detached from mainstream Russian society). Merezhkovskii and Kartashev especially were outraged by Rozanov's essays, and other senior members of the Society, particularly Filosofov, moved to have Rozanov thrown out of the association. However, Rozanov welcomed this exclusion. By 1913 he was unwilling to associate further with Merezhkovskii and Filosofov. He had already stopped attending the Religious-Philosophical Society, before the meeting on 26 January 1914 (O.S.) which formally proclaimed the 'impossibility of cooperation with V.V. Rozanov'.<sup>17</sup> However, not all of Rozanov's colleagues turned against him. Spasovskii, for example, claimed that Rozanov was not anti-Semitic, but had sought the manner in which the Jews' connection to blood was manifested through their rituals.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Minskii points out that it is Rozanov's inability to permit a multiplicity of truths which restricts his focus to the 'cult of the family'. In highlighting his monism (an interpretation of Rozanov which Bakhtin would repeat a generation later), Minskii compared Rozanov to Tolstoi. In Minskii's view, both 'see only one ideal of the good, and in its name reject any alternatives'. Quoted in *Zapiski peterburgskikh Religiozno-filosofskikh sobranii*, p. 272. Six years later, Minskii wrote an essay opposing Rozanov and Tolstoi, to which Rozanov would retort that the differences between himself and Tolstoi were not so great, but that both in fact agreed that love was the 'only and fully adequate sanction of the physical union of the sexes'. See V.V. Rozanov, 'Voprosy sem'i i vospitaniia (Po povodu dvukh novykh broshur g-zhi H. Zarintsevoi), in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 50-60 (p. 54).

<sup>17</sup> "'Sud" nad Rozanovym', p. 211. It is important to note that the Jewish question was not the only reason for Rozanov's exclusion. Filosofov also condemned at length Rozanov's proclamation that returning political emigrants should not be given amnesties. He also points out Rozanov's contradictoriness. According to Filosofov, Rozanov's words had lost their value, and had even started to destroy each other. "'Sud" nad Rozanovym', p. 187. Nevertheless, Mondry indicates how the two issues, both of Beilis and political radicals, have become conflated in contemporary Russian scholarship, and have been turned into a patriotic issue where the Russians are portrayed as victims of revolutionaries and Jews – essentially the same phenomenon. See Mondry, 'Is the End of Censorship in the Former Soviet Union a Good Thing?', p. 118.

<sup>18</sup> M.M. Spasovskii, *V.V. Rozanov v poslednie gody svoei zhizni* (New York: Vseslavianskoe izdatel'stvo, 1968), p. 45.

More recent scholarship has also struggled with the apparent contradictions in Rozanov's Jewish studies. Glouberman has argued that Rozanov's anti-semitism emerges from his own 'perverted utopianism', the fact that Rozanov simultaneously admires and envies the Jews for their special relationship with God. In Glouberman's interpretation, Rozanov believes that he cannot achieve communion with the divine as long as there are still Jews on Earth.<sup>19</sup> Nikoliukin (who has not prioritized the republication of many of Rozanov's important works on Jewish worship) explains Rozanov's apparently contradictory attitude towards the Jews by contextualizing him within the antinomial traditions of Russian anti-rationalism. Nikoliukin also investigates Rozanov's myth-making about the Jews, and the manner in which this was misunderstood by his contemporaries.

Он был «православным язычником» и потому творил миф об «обонятельном и осязательном отношении» евреев к жертвоприношениям, поскольку это вытекло из созданной им мифологемы. Его мало интересовали исторические реалии (поэтому при переизданиях он отказывался исправлять фактические неточности, на которые ему указывали). Прежде всего писателя заботила виртуальная литературная мифологема, творимая им по своим собственным внутренним законам. Современники же воспринимали его мифологемы как прямое видение действительности.<sup>20</sup>

Nikoliukin contends that Stolypin's murder proved the turning point in Rozanov's anti-Jewish stance, after which Rozanov always felt guilty that his anti-Semitic works would be hurtful to Gershenzon.<sup>21</sup> In a similar fashion, Fateev points out Rozanov's antinomies, and describes his attitude towards the Jews as vacillating between a 'passionate fascination with their Old Testament life ['byt'] and an extreme rejection of their role in the political life of Russia'.<sup>22</sup> Out of western scholars, Mondry has worked on Rozanov within the framework of modern cultural studies, and has contextualized Rozanov's views within the scientific racial theories of his time, especially those of Jung, Weininger and Sander Gilman.<sup>23</sup> Mondry also echoes Glouberman in pointing to Rozanov's deep envy of the Jews' privileged position in world history. In particular, she criticizes Nikoliukin's apologetics for Rozanov's antinomial thought as clichéd (though at the same time she praises Nikoliukin's efforts in opening up Rozanov's work to contemporary academics). Mondry's major criticism of Nikoliukin is that he discusses the Jews in Rozanov's interpretation as an intellectual construct, or a myth, constructed by

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<sup>19</sup> Emanuel Glouberman, 'Vasilii Rozanov: The Antisemitism of a Russian Judephile', *Jewish Social Studies*, 38 (1976), 117-44, pp. 138-39.

<sup>20</sup> Nikoliukin, 'K voprosu o mifologeme natsional'nogo v tvorchestve V.V. Rozanova', p. 419.

<sup>21</sup> Nikoliukin, *Golgofa Vasilii Rozanova*, p. 409.

<sup>22</sup> Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, p. 527.

<sup>23</sup> Mondri, 'Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia literatura', p. 159.

Rozanov, but that at the same time Nikoliukin also argues that Rozanov treats the Jews as real people whom Rozanov detests.<sup>24</sup> However, both Mondry and Nikoliukin omit the processes through which Rozanov creates new myths about Jewish life.

One reason offered for Rozanov's turn against the Jews concerns his wife's illness. There is some degree of truth in this. Rozanov sees the world in terms of opposites, and despite his best efforts finds no way to reconcile Judaism and Christianity. During his most virulent anti-Christ moments, he uses the Jewish proximity to blood as a positive thing, to attack the disembodiment of the Orthodox Church. However, when his wife fell suddenly ill, Rozanov saw this as divine retribution for his campaign against Christ. On 26<sup>th</sup> August 1910 (O.S.), Rudneva suffered what appears to be a stroke, which left her left side paralysed. According to his daughter Tat'iana, Rozanov saw Rudneva's illness as punishment for his blasphemy. This represents a profound shift from the playful probing of religion which had marked Rozanov's earlier works, to a much more serious and sadder mood in his later period. According to his own recollections and the memoirs of relative and friends, Rozanov was deeply shaken by Rudneva's illness. He spent nights on his knees before an icon, begging for forgiveness for eleven years of attacks on the Church and on Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Another point lies in Rozanov's response to the murder of Andrei Iushchinskii in 1911, a case which forms the basis of the final two sections of this chapter. Iushchinskii was a young Christian boy from Kiev, whose dead body was dumped in a cave after having been subjected to a series of injuries, deliberately inflicted to create the impression that he had been victim of a Jewish ritual killing. Although it became quickly apparent that a criminal gang was responsible for the murder, many individuals in the Russian state selected to pursue a Jewish factory worker, Mendel' Beilis. Reviving the ancient Blood Accusation, they accused Beilis of involvement in anti-Christian Jewish practices.

To the twenty-first-century mind, the accusations made against Beilis may seem bizarre. Even to many observers at the time, the suggestion that Jewish people sacrificed Christians and consumed their blood was ridiculous. Rozanov's response must be contextualized within the intense interest in religious issues of the

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<sup>24</sup> Mondry does not comment on the fact that the concept of vacillation is absolutely central to Rozanov's thought; truth is located only in the totality of competing ideas. Interestingly enough in the context of this chapter, Rozanov defends Merezhkovskii against Minskii's accusations of inconsistency: 'Договорю о Мережковском и Минском: никому не в голову не придет, кто знает лично Мережковского, чтобы он сколько-нибудь *перед собою* был не искренен в диаметрально противоположных взглядах [...] Мы не боги, абсолютной истины не знаем; оттого колебаемся, утверждаем и отрицаем'. For Rozanov, those who adhere to a rigid philosophical programme have no real convictions, but only know how to call out at the required moment. See V.V. Rozanov, 'Dva obyska v odin den', in *V nashei smute*, pp. 98-101 (p. 100).

<sup>25</sup> Tat'iana Rozanova, pp. 60-61.

Silver Age.<sup>26</sup> This was a cultural environment where religious matters were not restricted to scholarly examination, but were lived out and made real in a climate of intense apocalypticism. Although many Russian statesmen and philosophers spoke out fiercely against the persecution of Beilis, many important cultural figures were convinced in the reality of Jewish sacrificial worship, and supported the authorities' actions against him.<sup>27</sup> Many religious thinkers were convinced in the Blood Accusation. Former friends and allies fell out with each other over the affair. Khlebnikov and Mandel'shtam almost duelled with each other.<sup>28</sup> Rozanov can only be fully understood within this highly-charged eschatological culture. Moreover, for all his faults, Rozanov, alongside Florenskii, was the only person to attempt an in-depth investigation of Jewish rituals.<sup>29</sup>

It is becoming clear among academics that Rozanov had a limited, and often erroneous, knowledge of the formal precepts of Jewish religion.<sup>30</sup> He had access to certain works on Judaism, including a Russian version of the Torah, translated by Naum Pereferkovich (1871-1940).<sup>31</sup> It is highly doubtful, however, that Rozanov read such theological texts systematically – the evidence seems to suggest that he merely browsed through these books and extracted certain choice phrases which appeared to fit with his own ideas.<sup>32</sup> Hence this chapter will not assess the accuracy of Rozanov's assessment of Judaic theology and scholarship, but will critique instead the way in which he compares aspects of Jewish practices against his own religious framework.

Rozanov started to explore Judaism towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at the same time that he started seriously to investigate Egypt, and to criticize the Russian Orthodox Church's attitude to the family. He devoted scores of articles specifically to the subject of Judaism, and many of his other articles nominally addressed towards other topics also discuss Judaism and the Jews. This chapter will draw on a wide variety of Rozanov's work from around 1900 up to the end of his career. Much of this was written in articles published in a variety of publications, including *Novoe Vremia*, but also *Novyi Put'*, where in 1903 he wrote a series of essays under the title 'Judaizm'. This chapter will also examine Rozanov's investigations of Christian marriage, especially in the

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<sup>26</sup> Tat'iana Rozanova notes that her father, when reading about ancient religious practices, never doubted that these were real facts which actually took place. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Fateev notes that many Russians, including Vasilii Skvortsov and other senior government officials, as well as large sections of Russian society, believed in Jewish ritual killings, and in Beilis' guilt. See Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, pp. 517-18.

<sup>28</sup> Katsis, "'Delo Beilisa" v kontekste "Serebriannogo veka"', in *Delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager, p. 417. For full reference, see Introduction, n. 86.

<sup>29</sup> Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, p. 518.

<sup>30</sup> L.F. Katsis, 'Iz kommentarii k iudeiskim motivam V.V. Rozanova', *Nachala*, 3 (Moscow, 1992), 75-78 (p. 78).

<sup>31</sup> Naum Pereferkovich, *Talmud, Mishna i Tosefta* (St Petersburg, no given publisher, 1889-1904). See Glouberman, p. 120.

<sup>32</sup> Fediakin discusses how Rozanov handles other scholars' writing, to which Fediakin refers not as 'chtenie', but as 'vgliadyvanie'. See Fediakin, 'Sokrovennyi trud Rozanova', p. 493. Rozanov admitted that he did not read books properly, lacking a 'reading angel' ('angel chteniia'). Even Strakhov questioned the undisciplined manner in which Rozanov read: see *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 163.

1903 book *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, where he compares the ritual elements of Orthodox and Jewish marriage and divorce. It will also examine significant writings by Rozanov on the Jews which emerged later in his career, ‘Bibleiskaia poeziia’ (1912), his Leaves-style *Sakharna* (written in 1913 in three parts, ‘Pered Sakharnoi’, ‘V Sakharne’, and ‘Posle Sakharny’, but not published in full until 1998), ‘V sosestve Sodoma’ (1914), “‘Angel Iegovy” u evreev’ (1914), ‘Evropa i evrei’ (1914), and *Oboniatel’noe i osiazatel’noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* (1914). Rozanov frequently discusses the ideal of cohabitation in his Egypt works, which will also be referred to in this chapter.

## 2. Concepts of Ritual

I argue that Rozanov sees the world in terms of activity rather than simply as being. Ritual activity holds a particular importance for Rozanov, as he sees in rituals the means of re-enacting the Creation. Therefore this chapter will provide an extended examination of rituals, and will examine the way Rozanov uses them to maintain a connection with the pre-Christian world.

Scholarship on ritual is complex, with many ideas and theories competing for authority. There is no consensus on a definition, or on how ritual should be investigated.<sup>33</sup> Therefore this chapter will not seek to provide its own rigid interpretation of the meaning of ritual, but will examine some of the major themes in the treatment of the subject. Ritual has been subject to the dominant trends of twentieth-century thought, through the structuralists who sought to identify the structures of human behaviour which are constant and eternal, to the post-structuralists who attacked ritual as ‘meaningless activity’.<sup>34</sup>

Bell, who has provided a useful categorization of the different types of study into ritual, suggests that the investigation of ritual is tied up with the study into the beginnings of religion itself, and has emerged from debates over ritual or myth as the origin of religions.<sup>35</sup> Bell is careful not to offer a definition of ritual. However, she does identify three separate schools of thought on the topic. The ‘myth and ritual school’ identified ritual as the very origin of religion, and hence saw religion as having evolved from universal belief patterns in ‘primitive’ cultures. Adherents to this way of thinking were heavily influenced by the work of W. Robertson Smith (1846-94). Robertson Smith identified rituals as emerging from totemic cults, and providing a means by which groups of people commune with their gods, and also preserve social unity.<sup>36</sup> Sir James Frazer (1854-

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<sup>33</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. x.

<sup>34</sup> Leonid L. Mitchell, *The Meaning of Ritual* (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1977), p. ix.

<sup>35</sup> Bell, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

1941) was inspired by Robertson Smith's ideas, and agreed on the priority of ritual in the formation of religion. However, he proposed that all ritual involves the re-enactment of the death and resurrection of a deity, who in turn protects that society. Adherents of this view, such as the 'Cambridge school', with which T.S. Eliot was closely associated, saw literature emerging directly from ancient ritual activity, and not from history or folk imagination.<sup>37</sup> In broader terms, one observes the influence of such thought across European literature of the modernist period; the re-examination of pagan ritual becomes a common theme in the works of Mann, Joyce and Woolf, as well as in Russian writers such as Merezhkovskii, Viacheslav Ivanov and Mandel'shtam.

The second major school Bell identifies, the phenomenological, rejected the historical and evolutionary aspect of religion, and tended to prioritize myth over ritual. Members of this school looked for the 'underlying patterns or structures' in myths, which are universal in all cultures. The leading proponent in this field was Eliade, who, in Bell's words, posits ritual as a 'reenactment of a cosmogonic event or story recounted in myth'.<sup>38</sup> Smith posits myth and ritual as vital means of determining place, and of maintaining social order.<sup>39</sup>

Bell labels the third group the 'psychoanalytic school', which stresses that performers of rituals are not aware of the reasons for their actions, but are motivated by subconscious human urges.<sup>40</sup> Freud argued that religion is a social form of personal neurosis, in which the patient compulsively performs irrational ceremonial activities in an attempt to overcome repressed desires. Similar urges are also examined in Girard, who describes man's ontology as being essentially determined by desire.<sup>41</sup> For Girard, ritual, and especially sacrifice, can be explained as society's method of controlling the primeval urge of its members towards covetousness, violence and vengeance, by providing a necessarily innocent scapegoat to act as focus and endpoint for the group's rage, which is made manageable through formal ritual acts.<sup>42</sup>

The social-functional aspect of ritual has also been emphasized by Van Ness, who argues that ritual emerges from a social need without the practitioners' awareness of the reasons for their actions. Van Ness

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>40</sup> Bell, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Burton Mack, 'Introduction: Religion and Ritual', in *Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, ed. by Robert G. Hammerton-Kelly (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 1-70 (p. 68).

<sup>42</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp. 7, 13, 23.



rejects the ‘cosmogonic’ feature of ritual in favour of a ‘social therapeutic’ model, whereby ritual behaviour promotes relaxation, and by which the community’s, and consequently the individual’s, tensions are settled.<sup>43</sup>

Hoffman discusses the inherent difficulties in finding meaning in rituals. He argues that studies cannot ignore the continuity of meaning held in such acts. He concedes that rituals evolve over time; however, they do contain aspects which are lasting and which continue to hold meaning in the present day. To ignore the permanent dimension in favour of a historical approach would mean losing the meaning of rituals to those who believe in and practise them today.<sup>44</sup> Hoffman further indicates the dangers in presenting an external and scientific meaning to ritual. He rejects attempts at universal meaning, and states that each event must be appraised in its specific cultural context. He advocates a careful ‘cultural reconstruction’ of the public meaning of ritual which does not appeal to discursive knowledge, but which is rather ‘presentational’.<sup>45</sup>

The above discussion suggests that, until recently, most of the major studies into ritual have been conducted in the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology. At present, there is little work devoted to the philosophy of ritual. Schilbrack indicates that this shortage of philosophical inquiry in itself indicates a division between mind and body, as it denies any intellectual content to bodily activity. The assumption is that rituals are performed without conscious consideration of their content.

Rituals are typically seen as mechanical or instinctual and not as activities that involve thinking or learning. This assumption reflects a dichotomy between beliefs and practices and, ultimately, a general dualism between mind and body.<sup>46</sup>

Schilbrack uses more recent developments in philosophy to investigate ritual from the perspective of embodied knowledge. He describes twentieth-century thought as being particularly marked by the ‘practice turn’, a rejection of the Cartesian division of mind and body in favour of a view of knowledge as ‘necessarily embodied, intersubjective, and active’.<sup>47</sup> Members of the pragmatic school point to the deficiencies in both rationalism and empiricism in understanding man’s relationship with the world. Instead, they posit embodied experience, or being-in-the-world, as providing a new source of meaning which overcomes the detached purity of Cartesian

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<sup>43</sup> Peter H. Van Ness, ‘Religious Rituals, Spiritually Disciplined Practices, and Health’, in *Thinking Through Rituals: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. by Kevin Schilbrack (New York/London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 251-72 (p. 256).

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>46</sup> Kevin Schilbrack, ‘Introduction’, in *Thinking Through Rituals*, pp. 1-31 (p. 1).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

knowledge.<sup>48</sup> One of their greatest influences was the work of Heidegger, who developed Dasein as a means of explaining being in this world.<sup>49</sup> Following from this, Crossley argues that rituals should be seen as ‘embodied know-how’.<sup>50</sup> Using Merleau-Ponty’s description of Dionysian worshippers, Crossley provides a description of ritual as embodied activity.

Through the power of ritual as an imaginative act, make-believe misrecognized as worship, [the Dionysian worshippers] bring their God into being for themselves, experiencing His existence intensely [...] It is ritual, as a body technique for modulating emotional and imaginative intentions, which is able to call up this attitude. Ritual situates agents imaginatively. It is for this reason, I suggest, that Pascal argued that he did not kneel and pray because he believed in God but rather believed in God because he kneeled and prayed. The ritual frames the experience which, in turn, shapes the belief. Pascal is able to believe in God because, by way of the ritual of prayer, he “experiences God”. It is for this same reason, moreover, that individuals may experience discrepancy or dissonance between what they believe “rationally” and their “faith” or what they “feel”.<sup>51</sup>

Such theories deny the existence of a transcendental realm as their referential, but instead examine the inner meaning of ritual. Crossley realizes that such an understanding could lead to religion as being seen as ‘bad faith’. However, he does argue that ritual helps the human make sense of their existence, and especially time, by providing a temporal structure which allows us to punctuate the potentially meaningless flow of our lives.<sup>52</sup>

McCauley differentiates between rituals which are performed only once, such as marriage, and those which are repeated, such as the taking of the Eucharist. She argues that these two types of ceremony require by their nature two very different approaches, and two different kinds of memory. Unrepeated rituals require a ‘script’ which must be learned in advance by the participants. By contrast, repeated rituals become routine, and this familiarity negates the requirement for a cognitive approach; such rituals are performed ‘mindlessly’. McCauley also stresses the internal benefit of repeated behaviour, in that it helps construct our sense of personal identity.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ‘The Spatiality of the Lived Body and Motility’, in *The Philosophy of the Body: Rejections of Cartesian Dualism*, ed. by Stuart S. Spicker (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), pp. 241-71 (p. 268).

<sup>49</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. by Thomas Rentsch (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), p. 52.

<sup>50</sup> Nick Crossley, ‘Ritual, body technique, and (inter)subjectivity’, in *Thinking Through Rituals*, pp. 31-51 (p. 36).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Robert N. McCauley, ‘Philosophical Naturalism and the Cognitive Approach to Ritual’, in *Thinking Through Rituals*, pp. 148-72 (p. 165).

The above demonstrates the varied and complex nature of studies on ritual. Despite the difficulty in attempting a definition of the term, Van Ness offers a framework for future study. Pulling together previous work, he argues that there are five general criteria which define ritual. Firstly, rituals should necessarily be formalized, in that the acts are circumscribed by former practices. Secondly, rituals are by nature traditional, in that they enable the practitioner to repeat the activities of previous generations. Thirdly, they are characterized by their invariance, where spontaneity is subordinated to a 'formal adherence to traditional models of speech and action'.<sup>54</sup> Fourthly, rituals have a wider moral function, in that they set out codes of social behaviour which must be observed. Van Ness provides as an example the Jewish Sabbath rituals, where men and women have specific duties which are publicly fulfilled. The final criterion for rituals is that they must have the power to transfigure reality and delineate the sacred from the profane.<sup>55</sup>

### **3. Rozanov and Rituals of Family Life**

It is apparent from the above that repeated behaviour forms a vital part of ritualistic practices. The notion of repetition is vital for the purposes of this study, which argues that Rozanov's thought is based on the search for a method to repeat the Creation in a modern-day context. Repetition enables man to enter into history, which in turn is based on the Creation. Each ritual act paradoxically represents a new event, and a new opportunity for creativity. Rituals help manage this relationship between the old and the new. They maintain an intricate relationship between tradition and the present, the beginning and repeated time. The complexity of his thought lies in the fact that Russia must return to old religious practices by being renewed through the continual presentation of new life.

Recent scholarship, particularly in the west, has tended to emphasize Rozanov's interest in new and original forms of life. Such academic work, partly influenced by the theories of Bakhtin, rightly underlines Rozanov's attention to the value of creativity and new life. Crone writes of Rozanov's 'impulse towards the dissolution of old and hackneyed literary forms'.<sup>56</sup> Dimpleby concentrates on Rozanov's desire to overcome existing forms of literature and his love for the 'miracle of new birth'.<sup>57</sup> This focus on new forms of life, however, can only be explained in terms of his preoccupation with ancient forms of human behaviour. Rozanov was in many ways backward-looking, and professed a hatred of the new. He loved old and dead languages,

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<sup>54</sup> Van Ness, 'Religious Rituals, Spiritually Disciplined Practices, and Health', p. 254.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254-55.

<sup>56</sup> Crone, *Rozanov and the End of Literature*, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> Dimpleby, p. 59.

despite his own admission that he had no talent for languages.<sup>58</sup> His earliest philosophical examinations are filled with studies of the meanings of Greek terms, especially those used by Aristotle.<sup>59</sup> He used Latin terms in many of his studies, for example his investigation of the manner in which blood, sperm and the body should be considered not ‘in statu quo’, but ‘in statu agente’.<sup>60</sup> He also used Old Church Slavonic, and revived archaic Russian words.<sup>61</sup> He was considered one of the most extreme conservative thinkers of his time, and to no small extent won this notoriety through his work for *Novoe Vremia*, one of the most patriotic publications of the pre-revolutionary period. He has often been categorized as ultra-conservative by his contemporaries and by modern scholars.<sup>62</sup> However, as noted in Chapter 1, Rozanov’s worldview is also orientated towards the future. It is only by creating new life, based on repeated and known patterns, that the miracle of the Creation can be continually re-enacted. Hence ‘byt’ assumes a religious significance for Rozanov, as it becomes the organizing principle around which religious life is understood.

Among Rozanov and his peers, ‘byt’ assumes special significance in their investigations of time. More radical thinkers saw ‘byt’ as stultifying, the repressive tedium which had poisoned Russian history. Maiakovskii famously talked about fighting ‘byt’ by hammering his head into it.<sup>63</sup> The formalists looked specifically to artistic production as a vital means of overcoming the tedium of the everyday. Shklovskii saw Russian culture as having been killed by the habitual (‘privychnost’), and looks to the ‘device of estrangement’ (‘priem ostraneniia’), by which the familiar is made new through artistic creativity, avoiding the dull repetition of the recognizable.<sup>64</sup>

Rozanov shares these concerns over a cultural revival, though he manages this in a different manner. It is precisely within the comfort of ‘byt’ that Rozanov attempted to revive Russian spirituality and literature. His writings are filled with seemingly trivial descriptions of home life, friends and family, whose importance can only be understood within the way these patterns of behaviour structure his reverence for the Creation. On a

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<sup>58</sup> Rozanov admits to Strakhov his struggle to co-produce, along with his fellow teacher Pavel Pervov, a translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 154.

<sup>59</sup> See for example his letter of 15 February 1888 (O.S.) to Strakhov, where Rozanov re-explores the meaning of understanding and form, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Predislovie ko vtoromu izdaniuu’, in *V mire neiasnogo i nereshennogo*, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> For example, in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, Rozanov includes essays such as ‘Nashi vozliublennye usopshie’, relying on archaic Russian terms; or alternatively ‘O sobornom nachale v tserkvi i o primirenii tserkvei’, in which the word ‘sobor’ is throughout printed written in an Old Slavonic typeface.

<sup>62</sup> Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, p. 142.

<sup>63</sup> From Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Pro eto*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v trinadtsati tomakh*, 13 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1961), IV, pp. 135-85 (p. 165). Hutchings, who also quotes this Maiakovskii passage, discusses in depth the manner in which formalists struggled with the opposition of art and everyday life. See Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>64</sup> See Viktor Shklovskii, ‘Isskustvo kak priem’, in *Gamburgskii schet* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1990), pp. 58-72 (especially pp. 68-70). The relationship between literature and ‘byt’ will be further examined in the final chapter of this thesis.

stylistic level, Rozanov often repeats himself, and re-quotes his own work, both to reinforce his arguments, and to reaffirm the theme of the old as new. Essential to this is the manner in which he deliberately maintains a childlike sense of wonder at the world. He is constantly enchanted with the everyday, as if it is constantly new to him. He refused to relinquish this naive state of amazement before the world.<sup>65</sup> Rozanov approaches the familiar on each occasion with renewed wonder, maintaining its potential for creativity.

Rozanov was a deeply habitual person who loved the comfort of the home and the security of the known.<sup>66</sup> Within the home, he is able to order his self of sense, and structure his relationship with his family. In her memoirs, Tat'iana Rozanova depicts a cosy family life run on routine. The family rise and eat at the same time, the father drinks coffee and reads the same newspapers before leaving for the *Novoe Vremia* offices at the same time.<sup>67</sup> Tat'iana recollected the relationship with her father as being structured around repeated references to the same passages of Russian literature; she would often recite the same Pushkin poem to her father, caught between a 'smile and a tear'.<sup>68</sup> Rozanov crossed himself after meals and on seeing a church building. Ideal home life is built around these simple, daily pleasures. Rozanov takes revolutionary terminology and subverts it, making it domestic.

Папироска после купанья, малина с молоком, малосольный огурец в конце июня, да чтоб сбоку прилипла ниточка укропа (не надо снимать) – вот мое «17-е октября». В этом смысле я «октябрист».<sup>69</sup>

Rozanov was addicted to smoking (in Russia traditionally considered a demonic vice), although this unrestrained love for tobacco was never something he was able to explain rationally. Rozanov was pleased when

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<sup>65</sup> *Opavshie list'ia I*, p. 341. Rozanov deliberately preserved a childlike naivety in his behaviour, which others misinterpreted as immaturity or even debauchedness.

<sup>66</sup> Contemporary scholarship has attempted to link the love of the habitual in Rozanov with alleged mental illness, using this to explain his unwillingness, or inability, to cope with the unfamiliar. It is not the intention of the present study to discuss the possibility that Rozanov might have suffered from a variety of mental illnesses, including autism and schizophrenia. However, even during his own lifetime, Rozanov was often accused of insanity by many critics, including Pobedonostsev. Rozanov himself admitted that he had always had a tendency towards madness: 'Я всегда был с примесью сумасшествия'. See *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 211. Rozanov's background as a provincial schoolmaster added to accusations that he suffered from a form of Peredonovism, and a pathological obsession with sex. A contemporary study has examined the fact that certain aspects of Rozanov's behaviour exhibit possible autistic and schizophrenic symptoms. Zhelobov notes that the love of the familiar and personal, as displayed frequently in Rozanov's work – most notably his frequent references to 'my God' and 'my religion' – is commonly observed in autistic patients. Zhelobov also suggests that Rozanov's love of suffering might be a sign of masochistic tendencies. See A.P. Zhelobov, 'K voprosu psikhopatologii tvorchestva V.V. Rozanova', *Entelekhiiia* (2000), 100-06 (pp. 100-03).

<sup>67</sup> Tat'iana Rozanova, pp. 29-30.

<sup>68</sup> *Opavshie list'ia I*, pp. 342-45.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356. Rozanov is referring here to the October Manifesto, signed 17 October 1905 (O.S.) after a period of revolutionary turmoil in Russia, in which Tsar Nicholas II ceded some of his powers to a Council of Ministers.

his mother died, as this meant that he would be able to smoke at will. In a strange way, this seems to fit in with Rozanov's mechanism for coping with death; death is reinterpreted as the opportunity for new life which is then mitigated by cycles of pleasurable activity. However, there is more to Rozanov's interpretation of time. He believes that time follows holy patterns, as it emerges from the six days of God's creative activity and His day of rest. All days belong to God, the 'Great Gardener', and earthly life follows the cyclical patterns of nature to which man should also adhere, particularly the working week.<sup>70</sup> Rituals emerge naturally from these patterns. Likewise, the work of the Church should revolve around the movement of nature. This helps explain Rozanov's aversion to dogma, artificial ceremonies which do not account for the true growth of the universe. Genesis provides the basis for Rozanov's history.

*Рост* всей мировой истории определен, предуказан и освящен в творческом Божеском благословении «раститься, множиться» [...] Все росло. Все двинулось. Все *исполнило* Божеское: «раститесь, множитесь». Вот это-то Божеское слово не было принято во внимание на вселенских соборах [...] и они постановили *вечные правила*, уже самую *вечностью* свою направленные против роста, против жизни, против Божеской заповеди «раститься, множиться». Постановили это, да еще постановили под «анафему» рост, жизнь, изменение.<sup>71</sup>

Rozanov privileges the spontaneous acts of men which pay reverence to God. The Sacraments of the Church should not be *a priori* constructs, but must be tied to the lifecycles of man and nature. Church rituals should acknowledge the Creation; childbirth repeats the start of the world.<sup>72</sup> A couple are reborn when they get married. Rozanov considers rites and rituals not simply as deeds in themselves, but in terms of their potential for creativity. In this aspect, he is close to certain Jewish traditions which view embodied rituals as 'the producers and sustainers of life-generating religious values and traditions', providing a crucial link between the individual and wider society.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> 'O rasstroistve trudovogo goda', p. 125. In this way, Rozanov provides his answer to the most accursed of all questions in Russian philosophy: 'Как «что делать»: если это *лето* – чистить ягоды и варить варенье; а если *зима* – пить с этим вареньем чай.' V.V. Rozanov, 'Embriony', in *Religiia, filosofii, kul'tura*, pp. 225-32 (p. 225). Emphasis in original. All activity for Rozanov should be configured around the flow of nature. He notes that the Old Testament command to observe the Sabbath is immediately followed by the order to honour our parents. The best way of fulfilling this obligation is to repeat the activity by which they brought you into the world, and bear them a child. The idea of human activity, and in particular paid labour, being configured around God's creative activity, has implications for the way in which Rozanov writes, and will be investigated further in the next chapter.

<sup>71</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Mitropolit Antonii v sovremennoi smute', in *V nashei smute*, pp. 43-52 (pp. 49-50). Emphasis in original.

<sup>72</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie ko vtoromu izdaniiu', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 19-22 (p. 19).

<sup>73</sup> See Colleen M. Griffith, 'Spirituality and the Body', in *Bodies of Worship: Explorations in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), pp. 67-83 (p. 78).

In his series of essays 'Judaizm', Rozanov investigates how Judaism has incorporated natural human activity into its ceremonies. In these articles, Rozanov highlights family-orientated aspects of Jewish worship and compares these to the abstraction of Orthodox ceremonies. Rozanov writes that Orthodox rituals are repeated acts, but are performed mechanically and out of a sense of duty, not out of a real love for God. In this negative sense, Rozanov uses the word 'ritual' to describe such meaningless acts.<sup>74</sup> There is nothing creative in such rituals. He criticizes them, because priority is given to form over content. The believer devotes all his attention to ensuring that the ritual is performed in exactly the correct manner. Rozanov touches on long-running debates in Russian Orthodoxy over the formal value of ritual behaviour. It has long been a tendency within Russian Orthodoxy to understand the forms of rituals as in themselves containing the truths of God, a fact which has led to intensely bitter disputes among Church leaders which some outsiders might find difficult to understand.<sup>75</sup> Rozanov rejects as irrelevant debates over how many times to sing 'alleluia', or how many fingers should be used to cross oneself: what is important for him is the potential of rituals to bring forth new life.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to Orthodoxy, Rozanov insists that Jewish worship is dominated not by meaningless rituals, but by rites ('obriady'). These rites are full of joy, and each time are filled with new content. Rozanov idealizes Jewish ceremonial behaviour, as it cleanses man of the sin he has accrued during his life on Earth, and recreates his primeval innocence. He rejects Christian sacraments as they require only the passive involvement of the worshipper. In Orthodox sacraments, such as baptism and Christian marriage, the Church is the active participant, and demands the loyalty of the passive worshipper.<sup>77</sup> However, the Jews have a different psychology of prayer and a real passion for God.<sup>78</sup> They pray not out of a sense of compulsion, but out of a genuine religious feeling. Although the form of their worship remains largely constant and has done so for generations, Rozanov admires the fact that in each performance the rite is filled with new content and a renewed love for the divine. This is the strength of Jews – they are able to configure time religiously, around the creative activities of God. The failure to do so means that human experience becomes meaningless monotony.<sup>79</sup>

Вся природа последует в образе бытия своего образу бытия Творца своего. Не воскресает ли день в своем утре? Не воскресает ли год в своей весне? [...]

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<sup>74</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Judaizm', in *Novyi Put'* (November 1903), pp. 155-84 (p. 159).

<sup>75</sup> Billington discusses at length the conflation of form with religious content in the time of Avvakum. Billington, pp. 135-37.

<sup>76</sup> Rozanov criticizes the Church's pedantic focus on such trivia in 'Ob odnoi osobennoi zaslude Vl. S. Solov'eva', p. 435. Rozanov's view of the abstract nature of Russian religious reforms will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 4.

<sup>77</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Iz sovremennykh gazetnykh tolkov o khristianskom brake', in *Semeiny vopros v Rossii*, pp. 138-55 (p. 148).

<sup>78</sup> 'Judaizm' (November 1903), p. 159.

<sup>79</sup> 'Résumé ob Egipte', p. 242.

Как грустна жизнь наших образованных людей или, вернее, части их, которая отошла от религии и по старой отвычке уже не может к ней вернуться. Монотонно тянется их жизнь; день идет за днем, и воскресенья они не отличают от понедельника, а весенних дней от осенних, – иначе как по нужде снять одно и вынуть другое платье, одеться теплее или прохладнее. Для них есть смена температур в году, но нет смены великой мистерии года!<sup>80</sup>

The Jews understand their Sabbath in a very real way, and they fuse the principles of time and place, recreating Paradise, through observance of that day. The success of Jewish survival is built on their strong generational focus. Rozanov admires the Jewish family for its strength, opposing their sexual powers and reproductive strength to the weakness of the Russian family. Rozanov sees the only course for Russian salvation in adopting the type of attitude towards the family by which the Jews have survived against the odds through the millennia.<sup>81</sup> Scholarship supports Rozanov's view that the family plays a strong role in Jewish society. Freeze writes that the family is, at least for Eastern European Jews, 'a basic institution, the critical unit for social bonding and cultural transmission'.<sup>82</sup> Biological links play a vital role in the perpetuation of Jewish culture. Old Testament time is marked by the passing of generations. The most important Jewish rites and rituals, such as circumcision and Passover, are celebrated by families, and reaffirm their genealogical connections.

The way religious authority recognizes the way man and woman come together plays a vital role in Rozanov's investigations. He believes that the union of man and wife is a natural and holy act which has existed since the beginning of time, predating the Christian Church.<sup>83</sup> Rozanov insists that Adam and Eve had sexual relations with each other in the Garden of Eden before the Fall.<sup>84</sup> The Church places its emphasis on the ceremony of marriage, rather than the loving relationship between the couple. Rozanov wants the Church to return to the pre-Christian idea of marriage as a rite.<sup>85</sup> Marriage, like all such acts, cleanses the individual and the human race, and childbirth redeems our sins.<sup>86</sup> In marriage, the spouses should worship God, not Christ. He goes against the Orthodox teaching that marriage is a sacrament which starts from the teachings of Jesus, and

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<sup>80</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Smert' i voskresenie', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 109-12 (pp. 109-10).

<sup>81</sup> Engelstein discusses in detail the contradictions inherent in Russian anti-Semitic discourse, the problematic manner in which the battle against the Jews was often depicted as a sexual struggle, and Rozanov's place within this context. See Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, pp. 302-05.

<sup>82</sup> ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Brak – kak religiiia i zhizn'', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 82-103 (p. 88).

<sup>84</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Neskol'ko raz''iasnitel'nykh slov', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 370-72 (p. 371).

<sup>85</sup> Rozanov writes: 'Мне кажется, *обрядность* должна влиться внутрь брака; надо (слегка) обрядно супружествовать, материнствовать, отчествовать'. See 'Neskol'ko raz''iasnitel'nykh slov', p. 372. Emphasis in original.

<sup>86</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Elementy braka', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 119-22 (p. 120).



which therefore can only be sanctioned by the Church. Rozanov uses the example of Abraham to demonstrate the tender love which should exist between couples, and in particular the manner in which parents should prioritize procreation as their religious duty. He cites the manner in which Sarah gave up her servant Hagar for Abraham to have a child with (Genesis 16. 1-5), as the ideal of sexual love having superiority over formal ceremonies sanctioned by the Church.<sup>87</sup>

Rozanov believes that the Church, regardless of its teachings which might permit wedlock, in practice views all conjugal relationships as sinful. He thinks that marriage is condoned, but only extremely reluctantly; in any case, following Paul's example, the Church will always prefer celibacy. This doctrinal animosity towards any type of sexual relationship feeds into the clergy's practical and legal attitudes towards marriage. The Church only allows weddings which are performed through the Church. Children born outside wedlock are automatically seen as sinful, a view which pushes unmarried women to murder their new-born children rather than face the scorn of society. Rozanov bases his attacks on the Church in part on his own experience. The Church refused to countenance his divorce and remarriage to Rudneva. Consequently, his second marriage was performed unofficially and in secret, in the local church by a complicit Orthodox priest. Rozanov saw his marriage to Rudneva as the start of his new life.<sup>88</sup> Rozanov understood this wedding as legitimate before God, but would have preferred this union to have been formally acknowledged by the Church and by the state. Rozanov also protested over the fact that he was not recognized as the legal father of his children, whom he in no way considered illegitimate.

In privileging natural behaviour over Church doctrine, Rozanov insists that Russians should be allowed to abandon failed marriages and remarry. He believes that the Church does not recognize the way in which relationships grow and consequently fall into dissolution. Rozanov believes that it is natural for the initial frenzy of love to fade away, and for spouses to find new love with different partners. Indeed, he states that people usually fall in love twice or three times in their life, and only very rarely once.<sup>89</sup> However, the Church's strict rules on divorce mean that people are trapped in loveless marriages. Couples who have fallen out of love should be free to divorce and find new love – this cleanses the family.<sup>90</sup> This fluidity also benefits children, who are often trapped in unhappy families, and who would be happier if their parents could remarry and provide them with a more loving home. The success of the Jews lies in the way they can abandon and construct new marital

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<sup>87</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Deti solntsa... Kak oni byli prekrasny!..', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 659-80 (p. 673).

<sup>88</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 118.

<sup>89</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Smeshannye braki', in *V nashei smute*, pp. 229-32 (p. 229).

<sup>90</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O neporochnoi sem'e i ee glavnom uslovii', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 82-92 (p. 91).

relationships.<sup>91</sup> Contrary to his conservative critics, Rozanov does not see divorce as weakening the family, but strengthening it.

Развод есть постоянный канал, через который совершается очищение главного социального института. Необыкновенно чуткий инстинкт, в силу которого реальная жизнь супругов прерывается и даже оканчивается с первым неискупленным, не заглаженным через признание в нем, грехом, есть как бы естественный и самим Богом установленный страж здоровья семьи; закон, через действие которого этот вечный, к вечной жизни призванный институт не может захворать.<sup>92</sup>

Rozanov sees in the Church's attitude towards marriage proof of its inability to reconcile religious and secular issues, and proof also of the Church's obsession with earthly authority. For Rozanov, the Church only sees the union of man and woman in base, material terms. It defines marriage as a purely physical, sexual, coming together of two bodies, and cannot understand the sanctity behind it. Its imposition of strict regulations upon marriage proves to Rozanov its desire for secular power, and its longing to control the activity of the Russian people.<sup>93</sup>

Statistics suggest the historical context of Rozanov's views. In the late imperial period, Jews, just like all non-Orthodox groups, were accorded greater legal freedoms in issues of marriage and divorce. These marriages were performed outside the authority of the established Church, and were not considered valid by the state. They were far easier to dissolve than Orthodox marriages, which at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was practically impossible.<sup>94</sup> The Jewish marriage was considered in Russia merely a legal 'union entailing mutual responsibilities and benefits'.<sup>95</sup> The Jewish community in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had by far the highest divorce rate of all Russia's religious groups, a fact which only changed in the early 1900s when divorce became easier for the Orthodox and the rates of Jewish divorce slowed.<sup>96</sup>

As well as marriage, circumcision is an important ritual in Rozanov's investigations.<sup>97</sup> The phallus provides the most intimate link between human and divine activity, and through circumcision, man enters into a relationship with God, a state of permanent prayer.<sup>98</sup> At the moment of circumcision, the Angel of Jehova

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<sup>91</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Sredi obmanutykh i obmanuvshikhsia', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 718-92 (p. 776).

<sup>92</sup> 'O neporochnoi sem'e i ee glavnom uslovii', p. 91.

<sup>93</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Kakov razvod, takov i brak', in *V nashei smute*, pp. 70-73 (p. 71).

<sup>94</sup> Freeze, p. 137.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> 'Iudaizm' (July 1903), p. 151.

<sup>98</sup> 'Iudaizm' (November 1903), p. 155.

descends on the young boy and remains with him until his death.<sup>99</sup> Rozanov does not understand circumcision as fundamentally Jewish: he believes that it has sources in ancient Egypt, where Abraham formulated his covenant with God, and then took the rite with him into Israel.<sup>100</sup>

Modern scholarship has investigated the original meaning of circumcision in Judaism. There is evidence it emerged in ancient Israel as a fertility rite.<sup>101</sup> It is this aspect of fecundity which Rozanov emphasizes in his investigations, and in his references to Abraham and his family.<sup>102</sup> When Abraham was circumcised, he entered into an intimate and personal covenant with God, and was promised numerous offspring.<sup>103</sup> Rozanov also insists on the biological ties which unite the Jewish race – all Israel was ‘created from one circumcision’.<sup>104</sup> Rozanov notes the Talmud quotation that God created the world specifically so that man would be circumcised.<sup>105</sup>

Глубина обрезания (у евреев) и заключалась главным образом в том, что им снимался *упрек* и *осуждение* (возможные) с genital’ий, а следовательно, и снимался стыд с точки всемирной стыдливости. Обрезание снимает «кожаное препоясание» с Адама, – а снова вводит его в Эдем. Этот Эдем – семья: через нее открывается, что все и течет в бытии своем и в благе своем из genital’ий.<sup>106</sup>

Rozanov criticizes St Paul for abolishing the rite of circumcision and replacing this with New Testament law.<sup>107</sup>

As well as circumcision, Rozanov also examines other Jewish ceremonies which link the body to God. He examines Nazaritehood, the form of Hebrew monasticism introduced by Moses.

Вот я хочу быть назореем. «Тогда, – учит Моисей, – ты поди в Скинию свидения, («свидание», «встречи» с Богом: ибо она была вечно наполнена «Славой Господнею», как бы мы сказали теперь: «полна Св. Духа», «полна благодати»). Там, купив жертвенное животное [...] *сними одежды с себя, и священник, служивший при храме, положив к ногам твоим это животное, обреет кругом твое тело*, так, чтобы срезанные волосы падали в шерсть этого животного и смешивались с волосами его». После того животное закалывалось и сжигалось на жертвеннике всесожжений, *вместе с волосами нового назорейя*, «в сладкое блазоухание Господу». Затем «назорей» возвращался в дом свой, к жене и детям (без жены и детей не было евреев), обязанные на дни «назорейства», срок коего

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Judaizm’ (July 1903), p. 149.

<sup>101</sup> Hoffman, p. 39.

<sup>102</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Angel Iegovy u evreev’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 465-74 (p. 466).

<sup>103</sup> ‘Judaizm’ (July 1903), p. 150.

<sup>104</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Po kanve egipetskich risunok’, in *Vozrozhdaishchiisia Egipet*, pp. 127-28 (p. 128).

<sup>105</sup> ‘Angel Iegovy u evreev’, p. 467.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Deti solntsa... Kak oni byli prekrasny!..’, p. 679.

<sup>107</sup> Kurganov, ‘Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia religioznaia filosofia’, pp. 121-23.

он сам для себя определял, «воздерживаться от сикера и вина», как известно, *расхолаживающего* (разжижающего) *кровь и расслабляющего половые силы*. Срок назорейства [...] был темпом изощренно-чистых, глубоко-ясных в сознании, совокуплений.<sup>108</sup>

Through procreation the Jewish worshipper dedicates himself to God. The Nazarite fulfils God's command to be fruitful and multiply, whereas the Christian monk falsely believes that he can be saved through castration.<sup>109</sup>

The complexity of transferring foreign forms of worship to the modern-day Russian setting is demonstrated in Rozanov's investigation of the mikvah, which constitutes the core section of *Uedinennoe*. As Clowes notes, Rozanov takes this aspect of Jewish worship, subverts its meaning, and makes it his own.<sup>110</sup> In Judaism, the mikvah is used to achieve ritual purity after certain bodily functions associated with childbirth, such as menstruation, labour, or circumcision (for males). The mikvah is also used by the Jewish bride and groom to cleanse themselves before marriage. The word 'mikvah' derives from the Hebrew word for a gathering of waters, and is used in the Creation narrative when God creates the seas on the third day ('God said, "Let the water under the heavens be gathered into one place, so that dry land might appear", and so it was. God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of the water he called sea; and God saw that it was good'; Genesis 1. 9-10). Even today, the connection is preserved between the mikvah and the primordial waters. There are strict conditions governing how the water for the mikvah is gathered. Living water must be used, which has never been stagnant, and which has been collected naturally, from an underground source, from rainwater, or even melted snow.<sup>111</sup>

Rozanov discusses the mikvah in detail. He writes on the exact depth of the water, the length of time the worshipper should be immersed, and the processes involved. He is aware of the primeval origins of the water, and he narrates how this is used to cleanse and refresh the various parts of the body. Candles are lit, and the room is filled with aroma. The Hebrews are united through the ritual. God *is* the mikvah, who cleans the soul

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<sup>108</sup> *Liudi lunnogo sveta*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> Clowes, p. 172.

<sup>111</sup> Rozanov erroneously insists that the subject of the mikvah is taboo, and argues that in Jewish culture the indecent and the holy can coincide; this seems to contradict his criticism of the strict Jewish division between the sanctified and profane. In *Uedinennoe*, Rozanov contrasts the unspoken, esoteric nature of Jewish rituals, against Christian rituals, which he claims are open and easily understandable. Eventually, this frustration at his own inability to get to the core of Jewish rites develops into a deep bitterness at the Jews' supposed refusal to share their secrets. In any case, Rozanov is mistaken about the mikvah; there is no evidence to suggest that it is forbidden to pronounce the word 'mikvah', and there is ample writing which discusses the matter in depth. See, for example, <[www.mikvah.org/inside.asp?id=126](http://www.mikvah.org/inside.asp?id=126)>, last accessed 31 December 2007.

of Israel.<sup>112</sup> Rozanov explains how contemporary Jews perform the ritual cleansing, following from Moses and Abraham. Having narrated how an elderly Jewish man undergoes the mikvah, Rozanov then provides a contemporary, Russian version of the same ritual.

Но оставим старика и перекинемся к нам, в нашу обстановку, в наш быт, – чтобы объяснить это древнее установление евреев и дать почувствовать его душу. Представим себе наш бал. Движение, разговоры, «новости», и «политика». Роскошь всего и туалеты дам... Анфилада зала с белыми колоннами и стенами. И вот кто-нибудь из гостей, из танцевавших кавалеров, утомленный танцами, отходит совсем в боковую комнату: и, увидя на столе миску с прохладною водою, кем-то забытую и ненужную, осторожно оглядывается кругом, притворяет дверь и, вынув несколько возбужденную и волнующуюся часть, – погрузил в холодную воду... «пока – остынет».

Он делает то, что иудеи в микве и мусульмане в омовениях («намаз»).

И ушел. Вся разгоревшаяся впорхнула сюда же женщина... Она разгорелась, потому что ей жали руку, потому что она назначила свидание, – и назначила сейчас после бала, в эту же ночь. Увидев ту же миску, она берет ее, ставит на пол, – и, так же осторожно оглянувшись кругом и положив крючок на дверь, повторяет то, что ранее сделал мужчина.

Это – то, что делают иудеянки в микве.<sup>113</sup>

The above passage is an excellent example of the way Rozanov engages with Judaism, and demonstrates more broadly the way in which he constructs general truths from individual facts. It is also obliquely demonstrative of his dissatisfaction with systematic philosophy and formal theology, and indicates the transition he makes from around 1911 onwards to his own genre, which he feels is more suitable to his originality and creativity. I shall return to the manner in which Rozanov writes in Chapter 4.<sup>114</sup>

#### **4. Temple, Place and Rhythmic Time**

Despite Rozanov's own focus on the specifics of Russian religiosity, he criticizes the Jews for their exclusivity. Whereas Rozanov attempts to extract universals from the particular, he attacks the Jews from turning general aspects of religion into racially specific issues. He contends that the Jews, although they took their secrets from others, are only interested in their own salvation.

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<sup>112</sup> *Uedinemoe*, pp. 190-91.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-92.

<sup>114</sup> Clowes discusses the incompatibility between 'Rozanov the philosopher' and 'Rozanov the social commentator', arguing that the former creates problems which the latter is unable to deal with. See Clowes, p. 181. However, I shall argue in the subsequent chapter that Rozanov's focus on creativity holds this fragile relationship together.

Rozanov is particularly critical of the Jewish distinction between the holy and the profane. He dismantles boundaries between categories, drawing religious activity into the mainstream. He merges the categories of the temple and home, where the most sacred activity can be performed.<sup>115</sup> One example of this is his frequent suggestion that newly-married couples should live in the church after their wedding until their first child is conceived. Rozanov also identifies specific places and objects which make the transcendent immanent on Earth. The body is the model for this; the body is a temple to God on Earth.<sup>116</sup> The phallus is the guarantor of this creative activity. Both temple and home are places where man feels the divine, and the same activities should be performed in each place.<sup>117</sup> In many religions, particularly in ancient Egypt, the temple is seen as the locus where Heaven is recreated on Earth. But for Rozanov this is sexual. Rozanov stresses rituals where sexual processes are performed in the home or the temple. He attaches importance to the Jewish puberty ritual, where adolescents are brought to the temple and shaved, marking their readiness to procreate.

More recent studies have provided means to investigate the importance of place. Such work criticizes concepts of absolute space, and has examined how humans formulate concepts of specific places which have significance in relation to their activity. Casey challenges the preconception that humans understand the world initially in terms of absolute space and from there construct a notion of place. He uses European phenomenology to explain how twentieth-century thinkers such as Husserl tackled “‘the natural attitude”, that is, what is taken for granted in a culture that has been influenced predominantly by modern science’.<sup>118</sup> One of the major objects of examination was the received notion of monolithic space. Phenomenologists deconstructed the Kantian argument that experience takes second place in perception, that space and time were *a priori* categories of the mind, ‘pure forms of intuition’.<sup>119</sup> Instead, they argued that lived experience is primary, and that through embodied interaction with the world humans create the concept of place, and are also created by place.<sup>120</sup>

Given that we are never without perception [...] we are never without emplaced experiences [...] We are not only *in* places but *of* them. Human beings – along with

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Iz sedoi drevnosti’, pp. 27-29.

<sup>116</sup> Rozanov creates a correspondence between body and temple. This point is also made in Mondri, ‘Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia literatura’, p. 159. In this regard, Rozanov is close to St Paul’s quote that the body should be a temple to God (I Corinthians 6. 19).

<sup>117</sup> ‘Iz sedoi drevnosti’, pp. 27-29.

<sup>118</sup> Edward S. Casey, ‘How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time’, in *Senses of Place*, ed. by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 13-51 (p. 13).

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

other entities on earth – are ineluctably place-bound [...] Our sensing body reflects the kinds of places we inhabit.<sup>121</sup>

Therefore humans prioritize place above space in their dealings with the world, and are in turn shaped by their interaction with this place. Casey notes that it was in fact Kant who first challenged Newtonian ideas of absolute space. In what might appear a contradiction to his own theories on categories, in his 1768 tract ‘On the First Ground of the Distinction of Material Regions in Space’, Kant describes how humans necessarily orientate themselves in the world through the body.

Even our judgements about the cosmic regions are subordinated to the concept we have of regions in general, insofar as they are determined to the sides of the body... However well I know the order of the cardinal points, I can determine regions according to that order only insofar as I know towards which hand this order proceeds... Similarly, our geographical knowledge, and even our commonest knowledge of the position of places, would be of no aid to us if we could not, by reference to the sides of our bodies, assign to regions the things so ordered and the whole system of mutually relative positions.<sup>122</sup>

Smith uses the same quote from Kant to explain how repeated patterns of behaviour in a specific location help humans create an idea of place, where strangeness is overcome and a sense of familiarity is created. Smith terms this place ‘home’, where man houses his memories of the past and uses these to construct a coherent sense of self. This notion of familiarity within a specific place is not restricted exclusively to the family home, but is also extended to other locations where rites and ritual are performed.<sup>123</sup>

One can carry forward this analysis into Rozanov’s conception of the temple and its coincidence with the home. Rites and rituals allow Rozanov to recreate a sense of self through the reformulation of memories. Memory for Rozanov is not simply a mental recollection of the past, but has ontological, religious qualities. This enables him to encounter physiologically past moments and ensure that the past holds the same value as the present. It also helps him, through rituals, to overcome potential breaches in the past, and reintegrates personal and human history into a scheme which is given meaning through the Creation. Rozanov is close to Heidegger in associating *Unheimlichkeit* with the anxiety over the disruption of the relationship with the home. It is clear

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Smith, *To Take Place*, pp. 28-29.

that Rozanov grounds this particularly in his own home, but he can only achieve this through the activities of family life, and especially through his relationship with Rudneva.<sup>124</sup>

Самый смысл мой осмыслился через «друга». Все вочеловечилось. Я получил речь, полет, силу. Все наполнилось «земным» и вместе каким небесным.<sup>125</sup>

As Hutchings argues, the unity of the self for Rozanov is ‘intrinsically linked with the home’.<sup>126</sup> Rozanov stands in opposition to Leont’ev, who associates the home and comfort with ‘a lack of vitality and creativity’.<sup>127</sup> Relatively little of Rozanov’s writing relates contact with strangers, but tends to describe friends and relatives, and seemingly trivial domestic incidents. Although the inspiration for many of his thoughts takes place outside, he cannot wait to get back to his home where he can properly feel God.

От «своего» куда уйти? Вне «своего» – чужое. Самым этим словом *решается* все. Попробуйте пожить «на чужой стороне», попробуйте жить «с чужими людьми». «Лучше есть краюшку хлеба у себя дома, чем пироги – из чужих рук».<sup>128</sup>

This is an example of Rozanov’s ‘domestic prophesying’ (‘domashnee prorochestvo’). Like Gershenzon in *Vekhi*, Rozanov juxtaposes the idea of staying at home to put oneself in order with the chaos and de-personalization brought about by revolution (for Rozanov revolution is an anti-Russian and anti-familial act).<sup>129</sup>

The family also provides an ordered sense of time. Each family has its own particular rhythm by which it lives. Through the home, Rozanov is able to provide stability against the unfamiliar and chaotic aspects of modern life. He creates his own personalized time, which combats the abstract and impersonal implications of modernity. A common feature of the modern period is that monolithic spatial and temporal concepts are separated, dismantled and made personal by the author. In Rozanov, however, reference is always given to the Creation.

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<sup>124</sup> This is in turn close to the idea in Orthodox religious thought that breathing is equated with existence and matches ontological truth. Florenskii, p. 15.

<sup>125</sup> *Opavshie list'ia I*, p. 360.

<sup>126</sup> Stephen C. Hutchings, ‘Breaking the Circle of Self: Domestication, Alienation and the Question of Discourse Type in Rozanov’s Late Writings’, *Slavic Review*, 52 (1993), 67-86 (p. 72).

<sup>127</sup> Kline, *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia*, p. 41.

<sup>128</sup> *Opavshie list'ia I*, p. 303. Emphasis in original.

<sup>129</sup> This point is made in Gary Saul Morson, ‘Prosaic Bakhtin: *Landmarks*, Anti-Intelligentsialism and the Russian Countertradition’, in *Bakhtin in Contexts*, ed. by A. Mandelker (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1995), pp. 33-78 (p. 39). Rozanov stated that he was an observer, and not an actor. It is impossible to imagine him participating in revolution. It is significant to highlight Gershenzon’s *Vekhi* satire on the radicals, also cited by Morson: ‘A handful of revolutionaries has been going from house to house and knocking on every door: “Everyone onto the street. It’s shameful to stay at home!”’ Despite Rozanov’s admiration for *Vekhi*, one can imagine his disagreement at this particular idea.



## 5. The Body as Apocalyptic Symbol

Within a philosophical tradition which privileges practicability over abstraction, Rozanov stands out for stressing the manner in which the ideal becomes real. Rozanov is concerned with the downward activity of Heaven onto the Earth, predominantly through the phallus. Rozanov is very much part of the Silver Age and its attempts, albeit in various ways, to make religion manifest through the embodied human, and also through organized groups of believers. The Religious-Philosophical Society was an obvious example of this, but so are the many *jours-fixes* which were also a vital part of Russian cultural life at this time. Rozanov's Sundays, Ivanov's Wednesdays, and the meetings of the Merezhkovskii triumvirate were all seen in their own ways as an addition, and often alternative, to traditional forms of religious gatherings. However, Rozanov's peers tended to constitute these associations as apocalyptic bodies, whose attention was directed towards the end of time.<sup>130</sup>

For Rozanov, such beliefs highlight the potential division of the spiritual and the earthly. This is one of the reasons why Rozanov is drawn to Hebrew worship.<sup>131</sup> The Hebrew word for human being, 'nepesh', was initially understood as flesh and spirit as 'inseparable components of an individual'.<sup>132</sup> The Jewish worshipper sees the body 'almost as a sacrament – its use and relations (particularly sexual ones) symbolize a relationship to God and the right order of creation'.<sup>133</sup> Rozanov writes that Jewish thought has resisted the tendency in western philosophy, perpetuated by Plato, Descartes and Hegel, to revere the idea of the thing over the thing itself.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, he contends that eschatology is absent from Jewish thought. In the Old Testament there is no 'idea of the end' and no reference to an 'existence beyond the grave'.<sup>135</sup> Jewish worship is physical, whereas Orthodox prayer is essentially verbal, and detached from earthly life.

Почему религия должна быть *понятием*, а не фактом? Книга «Бытия», а не книга «рассуждения» – так началось ветхое богословие. «Вначале бе Слово» – так началось богословие новое. Слово и разошлось с бытием, «слово» – у духовенства, а бытие – у общества; и «слово» это бескровно, а бытие это не божественно. Но, повторяем, где же корень этого расхождения?<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Minskii, as well as many others among Rozanov's peers, accused Rozanov of standing 'outside history and philosophy', because Rozanov used the beginning of time as his referential and had no sense of the impending Apocalypse. For many of Rozanov's peers, history only had meaning when it pointed to the eventual coming of the Kingdom of God. See, for example, Minskii's criticism of Rozanov's view of history, in *Zapiski peterburgskikh Religiozno-filosofskikh sobranii*, p. 394.

<sup>131</sup> Bottomley argues that Jewish worship traditionally emphasizes the use of the body. See Bottomley, *Attitudes to the Body in Western Christendom*, pp. 16, 22.

<sup>132</sup> *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. by Bruce M. Metzger, and Michael D. Coogan, p. 295.

<sup>133</sup> Bottomley, p. 30.

<sup>134</sup> 'Judaizm' (November 1903), p. 174.

<sup>135</sup> 'Iz starykh pisem', p. 456.

<sup>136</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O sviashchenstve i "blagodati" sviashchenstva. – Ob osnovnom ideale Tserkvi. – O drevnikh i novykh zhertvakh', in *Okolo tserkovnykh sten*, pp. 470-79 (p. 476). Emphasis in original.

Rozanov decides at this point (1905) that the decision in Christianity to abandon Old Testament rituals, and here he refers especially to animal sacrifice, has resulted in a disembodied religion. He believes that a return to rituals can help reunite word and flesh. However, his fascination with this point leads him to investigate Judaism more closely, where he suspects the secrets of blood are still hidden. The body becomes, quite literally, the battleground for Rozanov's most intense polemics with family and friends (in disgust at Rozanov's later writings on the Beilis case, Rozanov was abandoned by many erstwhile friends, and his step-daughter left home in protest). Rozanov believes that forsaking pre-Christian rituals has resulted in the lack of religious feeling in Russia. Abandoning the ancient practice of sacrifice has led to a detachment from the vital secrets of life. He is astonished by John Chrysostom's dislike of the smell from the blood of sacrificed animals.

Но ведь кровь есть не запах, кровь есть *мистицизм* и *факт*. Златоуст даже не вспомнил слов Писания: «кровь (животного) – не проливай, а закапывай в землю: ибо в крови – душа животного» [...] И сокрушились мы «в духе», т.е. пали, разрушились, потеряв *кровный, родной* путь к Богу в таинственных древних жертвах. Настали бескровные жертвы, водянистые, риторические.<sup>137</sup>

It is this fixation with the body, and the sacrifices which highlight its sanctity, which leads Rozanov down a path from which it becomes impossible to extricate himself. Rozanov convinces himself that blood brings man back to God.

Повторяю и формулирую: кровь есть *жизнь*, кровь есть *растущий* факт, кровь есть *источник сил и сильного*. Религия, взявшая кровь в нить соединения своего с Богом – и была *жизненна, растуща и реальна*.<sup>138</sup>

Rozanov is sure that blood, and the sacrificial acts which make real its sanctity, holds the secret of man's relations with God. In order to understand these secrets, Rozanov turns to Jewish beliefs, in which he believes blood is the dominant symbol.<sup>139</sup> In his rejection of abstraction in religion, Rozanov cannot see the Blood Accusation as anything other than a reality.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 477. Emphasis in original.

<sup>139</sup> Hoffmann, p. 91.

## 6. The Body of Evidence: Rozanov and Iushchinskii

On 19<sup>th</sup> March 1911 (O.S.), the body of a young Christian boy was found in a cave near a brick factory just outside Kiev. Thirteen-year-old Andrei Iushchinskii had been brutally murdered just over a week earlier. He had been beaten and stabbed to death, and curious marks had been left on his face and torso. His funeral became an opportunity for nationalist groups to revive anti-Jewish sentiment which had long festered in this most holy of Russian cities. Brochures attacking Jews were distributed at Iushchinskii's funeral, re-invoking the ancient myth that Jews performed the ritual sacrifice of Christian children and used their blood for their Passover meal.<sup>140</sup> Some four months after Iushchinskii's death, the authorities arrested the factory's manager, Mendel' Beilis, and charged him with the young boy's murder. Beilis was a Jewish Ukrainian, though a non-practising Jew, and by no means a religious fanatic. However, the initial charge against him quickly became one of ritual murder. Of the 47 stab marks to Iushchinskii's body, 13 stab wounds had supposedly been caused to deliberately draw blood from the body, and traces of semen were found close to the body.<sup>141</sup>

Unlike the Dreyfus affair some two decades previously, the case against Beilis was initially motivated not by public opinion, but by nationalist figures among the Russian authorities. Although many officials were complicit in moving against Beilis, perhaps most prominent was Minister of Justice Ivan Shcheglovitov, who believed that he could win favour from the Tsar by prosecuting a Jew for the murder of a Christian child. However, just like the Dreyfus Affair, the Beilis affair quickly became an issue of immense national and international importance. The journalist Vladimir Korolenko, who observed the trial, wrote that, 'never has a trial attracted [...] to so great a degree [...] the attention of the broad masses'.<sup>142</sup> But, as Katsis notes, the Beilis affair was not just an intellectual or religious debate, but had real significance in the embittered social conflict between Jews and Christians.<sup>143</sup>

Many leading Russian writers and thinkers of the time signed a manifesto claiming Beilis' innocence, including Merezhkovskii, Gippius, Aleksei Tolstoi, Viacheslav Ivanov, Sologub, and Remizov. Prominent liberal politicians, including Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, also openly supported Beilis' innocence. Across Europe the most significant figures of the time joined their names to the petition. In England the manifesto was signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster, the Speaker of the House of Commons, politicians

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<sup>140</sup> The best historical account in English of the Beilis Affair is in Lindemann, especially pp. 129-93.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>142</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>143</sup> Katsis, "Delo Beilisa" v kontekste "Serebrianogo veka", in *Delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager, p. 414.

such as Ramsey MacDonald, and writers of the stature of Shaw, Hardy, H.G. Wells and Conan Doyle. Elsewhere in Europe figures such as Mann, Ernst Mach, and de Régnier all pledged their support.<sup>144</sup>

It quickly became obvious that there was no hard evidence against Beilis, save the testimony of local children who had claimed to have seen a bearded man leave the cave on the day of Iushchinskii's murder. Beilis had witnesses to prove that he had been at work on the day of the killing (which was the Jewish Sabbath, further suggesting his lack of real religious zeal). The most likely perpetrator of the crime was a notorious local criminal, Vera Cheberiak, whose son Evgenii was a friend of Iushchinskii's. It is most probable that Iushchinskii discovered the criminal activities of his comrade's mother, who consequently sent her gang to kill the young boy before he could inform the authorities.<sup>145</sup> It is also possible that the group intended to frame a Jewish person for ritual murder, and thereby provoke a riot against the Jewish community; the gang had previously profited from looting during pogroms. The Cheberiak group probably killed Iushchinskii when he came to visit Zhenia and then mutilated his dead body to create the impression of a sacrificial killing.

The authorities' case hinged on the claim that the ritual sacrifice of humans was widespread among the Jewish population. The prosecutors called the notorious Professor Emeritus of Kiev University, Ivan Sikorskii, to insist that the Blood Accusation was a common event. When the case drew to a close in 1913, Beilis was acquitted by the jury of committing the crime. However, the twelve men did conclude that Iushchinskii had indeed been the victim of a ritual murder. This was a decision which held some appeal for both groups. Supporters of Beilis were pleased with his acquittal, but Beilis himself was understandably unsettled. He was never able to come to terms with his ordeal, and could no longer live in the Russian Empire. After publishing a book on the affair, he emigrated to Palestine and then America. On the other hand, anti-Jewish groups were also vindicated in that, even if it had not been proven that Beilis himself was responsible, it had been shown that Jewish people did murder Christians and use their blood in their paschal feast.

Rozanov, however, was bitterly disappointed by Beilis' acquittal. He was deeply traumatized by Iushchinskii's killing, and dedicated much of his post-1911 work to the boy's death. In this way, Rozanov's writing on Iushchinskii became a kind of prayer for the young boy's soul. Rozanov even insisted that the Russians should educate the Jews on the importance of Christological and pneumatological aspects of worship. Rozanov was initially convinced that Beilis had killed Iushchinskii for his blood. After the verdict, Rozanov altered his stance slightly, and insisted that it was not important who actually killed the boy. The issue for him

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<sup>144</sup> *The Kieff Ritual Murder Accusation and the Beilis Case: Protests from Leading Christians in Europe*, compiled by Jewish Chronicle and Jewish World (London: Jewish Chronicle and Jewish World, 1913). Rozanov's name is absent from this petition.

<sup>145</sup> Lindemann, pp. 182-83.

was that the thirst for blood was an integral part of Judaism, and even if Beilis himself was innocent, Jewish people did sacrifice Christian children.

In Rozanov's work around the time of the Beilis affair, he was influenced by Evgeniia Apostolupolo, a conservative landowner whom he befriended at the Religious-Philosophical Meetings. It appears that his time spent with Apostolupolo encouraged Rozanov to express more aggressive sentiments towards the Jews. In the summer of 1913, accompanied by his wife and his daughter Vera, Rozanov visited Sakharna, Apostolupolo's estate in Bessarabia which would lend its name to one of Rozanov's most tendentious works. Whilst there, Rozanov wrote the three pamphlets which would make up *Sakharna*, a book compiled in the *Opavshelistika* style. In this book, Rozanov exposes his fear over the potency of Jewish blood ties, to which he attributes their enduring sense of community. The threat to Russian culture is posed by the strength of the Jewish body and its ties with God. The Jews are joined as a community through their communal blood ('edinokrovnost'), and constitute one body with 14 million arms and legs.<sup>146</sup> This physical unity is something Rozanov fears is lacking among the Russians.

*Отечество евреев в крови их. Ибо кровь их (в отличии от других народов) имеет выпущенные из себя корешки, и они зацепливаются (родственно) с корешками крови соседа (не родственника), и так они все на всей земле соединены кровными корешками, кровною паутиною, и собственно эта колыхающаяся, нежная, волнуемая и невидимая паутина – слой (кровяной) и образует их отечество. Так что они «отечество» имеют, и даже прочнее нашего. Еврей Америки чувствует еврея русского.*<sup>147</sup>

Rozanov claims that the Jews are intent on destroying the Russian fatherland and uprooting the Russians from their own soil. This is very close to the clichéd conservative view, as propagated by people such as Dostoevskii and later by Shulgin, that the Jews are responsible for socialism and want to dismantle the traditional forms of the Russian state, such as the Church and the Tsar.<sup>148</sup> Rozanov also accuses the Jews of wishing to destroy Russian literature, for him one of the most important expressions of national spirituality. Rozanov believes that the Jewish threat can be combated by establishing a correspondence of the Russian book and the Russian body.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 202.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. Emphasis in original.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>149</sup> Mondry also remarks that Rozanov sees a coincidence of the book and the body. Mondri, 'Vasilii Rozanov, evrei i russkaia literatura', pp. 222, 224.

Literature becomes as much as the body the battleground for Rozanov's increasingly open attacks on the Jews. As well as noting their overbearing fecundity, in *Sakharna* he frequently expresses his fear of Jewish publishing houses and their control over Russian books. Russian literary culture requires protection from Jewish control. He argues that, when he started writing in the 1880s, there was no such thing as the 'Jew in literature', other than the translator Petr Weinberg (1831-1908). However by 1911, he continues, the Jews had taken over all aspects of Russian literature, not just its creation. Their economic dominance of Russian literature has proved too powerful for anybody to counteract.<sup>150</sup> Rozanov believes that the Jews are trying to disrupt the holy element of literature, preventing Russian works from being used as a form of cultural transmission; the Russians are no longer at home in their own books.

*Sakharna* does not only function as a treatise on Jewish worship, but also as an act of worship in its own right. *Sakharna* is a prayer created by Rozanov for Russia and her people, and also Iushchinskii's soul. He wants to take Iushchinskii's corpse into his arms and carry it around the country so that the Russians can weep over it.<sup>151</sup> Rozanov draws comparisons between Iushchinskii's dead body and the corpse of Russia, which only he can understand. Rozanov also stresses the importance of spiritual matters in religion, for which he uses the word 'spiritualisticheskii', rather than the more Russian variant 'dukhovnyi'.<sup>152</sup> This is striking, as it is uncommon for Rozanov to privilege the spiritual over the physical. However, in *Sakharna* Rozanov attaches great significance to prayers for the dead: he feels an extra responsibility towards Iushchinskii, because the Church neglected its obligations to the dead boy. Not one metropolitan attended Iushchinskii's funeral, but despite this, Rozanov insists that the boy did go to Heaven and is now with Christ.<sup>153</sup>

Rozanov examines the body of Iushchinskii more closely in *Oboniatel' noe i osiazatel' noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*.<sup>154</sup> In his attempts to reveal the enigma at the heart of Jewish worship, Rozanov turns in the first article to the secrets he believes are deliberately hidden in the Hebrew alphabet ('Iudeiskaia tainopis'). Noting

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<sup>150</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 65.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202. In Orthodox theology, prayers for the dead are extremely important, as there is no concept of purgatory, and the dead enter a state of limbo to pay penance for their sins on Earth. Rozanov is very close here to traditional Orthodox thinking.

<sup>154</sup> Recent scholarship has demonstrated that parts of the book were in fact written by Florenskii, who persuaded Rozanov to publish the work under his own name. There is much debate as to why Rozanov agreed to Florenskii's request. In Rozanov's later years he spent much time with the priest, who became a close family friend. The two men discussed their ideas on Jewish worship, and there can be little doubt that Rozanov was influenced by Florenskii's ideas. The fact that Rozanov included Florenskii's letters as his own does suggest that Rozanov did not disagree with their content, though Rozanov was suspicious of the Jews and had a very close interest in their worship before he met Florenskii. As with all other aspects of Rozanov's assessment of Jewish culture and religion, there is still much scholarly work which needs to be performed in this area, although some academics have tackled the issue. See, for example, Clowes, pp. 176-81.

that the Hebrew language does not contain vowels, he argues that the Jews have deliberately mistranslated the Bible in order to conceal its true meaning from Christians. He compares various translations of Scripture, including Bishop Atonin's, the Jewish text itself, the Greek translation from 70 A.D., and the Russian version of the Greek text. Rozanov writes that as soon as the Jews realized that other peoples had taken an interest in their Scriptures, they deliberately kept sections concealed to hide the true nature of their religion.<sup>155</sup> Whereas Rozanov had earlier expressed respect for Judaic esotericism, here he displays a deep animosity to the exclusivity of their religion. Whereas Christianity is a religion of Revelation ('Otkrovenie'), Judaism is dominated by secrecy ('sokrovenie').<sup>156</sup> Unlike Orthodox churches, which are open to all, non-Jews are not permitted into the Temple.

Rozanov turns to blood and its ties with the Jewish god. He stresses the ontological meaning of Jewish blood rituals. In *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* Rozanov insists that the Jews do not worship the Christian god, but instead worship Moloch. Using the work of the writer V. Sokolov on Jewish rituals, Rozanov writes that circumcision is a ceremony which affirms Moloch's links with blood. During its performance, the rabbi sucks blood from the child's penis, which is then mixed with wine and used ritually to cleanse the child's face.<sup>157</sup> Although Rozanov had started his explorations of Jewish worship in order to find a way of injecting some degree of physicality into Orthodoxy, he is startled, and to some degree confounded, by his conclusions, and finds it impossible to reconcile Christianity and Judaism.

Вина евреев против И. Христа была ли феноменальная или ноуменальная? Т.е. только «эта толпа» «не могла понять», и главное, «теперь» – ну, «при исходе времен»? Или – от корня, издревле, от Моисея и даже Авраама? Было ли больно все, от *истока* начиная, или – только в *устье*? В последнем случае, т.е. если только «нравы» и сейчас, – не для чего было отменять обрезания и всего жертвенного культа, и суббот, и храма.

В этом случае была бы у христиан сохранена библейская семья; сохранено бы было живое и животное чувство Библии, а не то, что «иногда читаем». Не было бы ужасного для сердец наших противопоставления Евангелии и Ветхого Завета.

Ничего не понимаю. О, если бы кто-нибудь объяснил.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>155</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Otkuda neskhdstvo grecheskogo i evreiskogo tekstov Sv. Pisaniia?', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 289-93 (p. 291).

<sup>156</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Iudeiskaia tainopis'', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 276-80 (p. 278).

<sup>157</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Vazhnyi istoricheskii vopros', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 293-300 (p. 297). Rozanov takes his information from *Obrezanie u evreev. Istoriko-bogoslovskoe issledovanie* (Kazan: Tipografiia imperatorskogo universiteta, 1892).

<sup>158</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 18. Emphasis in original.

This is a rare case where Rozanov concedes some degree of uncertainty. However, he is aware that his conclusions could have far-reaching consequences. In searching for meaning in the Old Testament, he has to consider that the Jews misuse ancient rituals. These rituals have become formalized among the Jews, who have neglected the content of their rites, their capacity for creativity, and consider only their physical dimension. Consequently, Rozanov's criticism of Jewish worship is similar to his rejection of the over-formal and ritualized nature of Orthodox practices.

Собственно *религии* как духовного состояния, как идеального состояния – у евреев вовсе нет, а есть необозримый *ежедневный обряд*: как мыться, как кушать, как торговать. У них *место религии* занимает *материальный обряд, материальные церемонии, материальные традиции* («священство вещей»).<sup>159</sup>

Siding with Florenskii, Rozanov states that it is the duty of the Russians to educate the Jews into the spiritual side of religion. The Christians have left behind their 'medieval superstitions', and they should teach Russian Jews to do the same.<sup>160</sup> Instead of perceiving the unity of the thing and its idea, he now states that the Jews have completely neglected the noumenal. Rozanov reverts to aspects of Gnostic thought, which suppose that the Old Testament Jews worshipped the evil demiurge, who was only overcome by the arrival of the true God's Son.<sup>161</sup> Rozanov praises the manner in which Christ rejected the Jewish focus on blood and sacrifice, and introduced a spiritual form of worship. By donating his own blood and flesh, Jesus stopped the Jewish need for sacrifice and the desire for human blood.<sup>162</sup> But Rozanov insists that not only did the Jews practise sacrifice in their pre-history, but they also continue to do so in modern times; blood was, and remains, a Jewish fetish.<sup>163</sup> Rozanov locates this Jewish preoccupation with the bodily and the physical in the ceremony of circumcision, and the fact that, unlike the Christians, the Jews ignored Christ's teachings.

Да и понятно: все началось с обрезания – чисто телесного акта, – и завершилось в необозримое множество обязательных телесно-вещных мелочей.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ob odnom prieme zashchity evreistva', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 317-19 (p. 318). Emphasis in original.

<sup>160</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'K prekrashcheniiu ritual'nogo uboia skota', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 307-09 (p. 308).

<sup>161</sup> It is interesting to note that Rozanov, along with Florenskii, was accused by subsequent thinkers, especially I'lin, of Gnosticism. See Robert Slesinsky, *Pavel Florensky: A Metaphysics of Love* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), p. 46. Katsis remarks that the Russian religious renaissance of Rozanov's period saw a revival of interest in Gnostic beliefs. Katsis, "'Delo Beilisa" v kontekste "Serebriannogo veka"', in *Delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager, p. 414.

<sup>162</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nuzhno perenesti vse delo v druguiu ploskost' (K delu Iushchinskogo)', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 309-17 (p. 311).

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309.

<sup>164</sup> 'Ob odnom prieme zashchity evreistva', p. 318.



Rozanov concludes that the Jews have no spiritual means to cleanse their soul, and therefore have to rely on physical means. Like their rituals, the Jewish body has become detached from its spiritual side; hence their use of Christian blood to wash themselves. As Moloch is intrinsically attracted to human blood, his worshippers are obliged to shed Christian blood for him. However, Rozanov, in an innovative take on the Blood Accusation, insists that the Jews do not drink the blood or use it in food. Instead, they use it as means of washing the sins from their bodies.<sup>165</sup> Although Rozanov had in the past exalted the example of Abraham, he now uses the Agedah as demonstration of the Jewish love of blood.<sup>166</sup>

After laying down his theories on the relationship of Jews to blood, Rozanov turns his attention specifically to the body of Iushchinskii. He investigates the mystical concordance between the wounds inflicted on Iushchinskii's body, the body of God as described in the Kabala, and the Hebrew script. He examines specifically the thirteen stab wounds exacted on the boy's right temple, relying heavily on the medical and psychological evidence presented during the trial (despite the fact that this was discredited by scholars). He also reproduces in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi* several drawings of Iushchinskii's body, as well as diagrams from the Kabala and other studies of Jewish texts. Rozanov even notes that it is irrelevant whether Beilis was guilty: the purpose of his tract is to prove that such ritual killings are commonplace.<sup>167</sup>

Rozanov examines the evidence supplied in court by medical expert Professor Dmitrii Kosorotov, who testifies to the 'defined and systematic manner' in which Iushchinskii was killed. Rozanov argues that this individual case demonstrates that ritual murders are carried out systematically among the Jews.<sup>168</sup> Rozanov also quotes the Roman Catholic priest Iustin Pranaitis, a self-proclaimed expert in the interpretation of Jewish texts who gave evidence at the trial (and whose 'expertise' was proved as extensively flawed by Beilis' lawyers). Pranaitis links the positioning of the thirteen stab-marks with the text of the Zohar. Rozanov concludes that there cannot be any doubt as to the correspondence of Iushchinskii's wounds with Hebrew script.<sup>169</sup> Echoing his earlier attacks on Orthodox culture, Rozanov insists that Jewish religion is experiencing discord between the

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<sup>165</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Ispug i volnenie evreev', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 304-06 (p. 305).

<sup>166</sup> 'Nuzhno perenesti vse delo v druguiu ploskost', p. 316.

<sup>167</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Nasha "koshernaia pechat"', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 321-25 (p. 325).

<sup>168</sup> V.V. Rozanov, "'Ekhad". Trinadtsat' ran Iushchinskogo', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 368-83 (p. 368).

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

values of the word and flesh. In Judaism, Rozanov argues, the word has become too visceral, and has been turned into a weapon with which physical wounds can be inflicted.<sup>170</sup>

Rozanov turns to the Hebrew letter ‘shin’ (שׁ), which he claims is analogous with a group of five marks on Iushchinskii’s forehead which mark out the ‘secret’ character on the youth’s body. Rozanov writes that ‘shin’ corresponds to the lower portion of the ten sefirot described in the Jewish Kabala.<sup>171</sup> He cites Old Testament teachings (Genesis 9. 4), which state that the blood is where the person’s life-force is to be found, and insists that the magic letters were inscribed onto Iushchinskii as they form a mystical link with the Jewish god.<sup>172</sup> He sees these five wounds in particular as a magical invocation, which must be marked onto virgin flesh to have effect.<sup>173</sup> The Hebrew alphabet has magical powers, and particular letters enjoy a correspondence with a specific sefirot. Reading the shape of the wounds on Iushchinskii’s temple, Rozanov concludes that they read in Hebrew: ‘the human was killed with blows to the head and chest, like a sacrificed calf to Jehova’.<sup>174</sup>

The systematic and ritual method by which the wounds were inflicted onto Iushchinskii’s temple clearly demonstrate the religious motives for his murder. But Rozanov has more to say: he notes that the positioning of the wounds marks a downward-pointing triangle, which signifies the effort made by the sacrificer to draw god’s power down to Earth and to tap the life-powers contained in the victim’s blood. As in all his work, Rozanov is concerned over the movement of the divine powers downwards onto Earth. To help him describe this he once more points to the literal and physical properties in particular of the letter ‘shin’.

Поток жизненной силы, изтекшей из *Шин* в тело эфирного воинственного существа, принес с собой и связанное с этою литерой уродливое представление о христианстве. В эфирном теле, таким образом, заключены элементы чисто

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<sup>170</sup> In this instance, it is possible to contextualize Rozanov within Russian understanding of the literal nature of the word. The boundary which exists between verbal and physical activity in Russian culture is often perceived as fluid, as Murav has noted. For example, she discusses the manner in which words were used as weapons to cause physical injury against Siniavskii. See Harriet Murav, ‘The Case against Andrei Siniavskii: The Letter and the Law’, *Russian Review*, 53 (1994), 549-60. More specifically, Murav also discusses the tensions during the Beilis case between the discourse of the philosophers, and the formal language of the inchoate legal environment. See Harriet Murav, ‘The Beilis Ritual Murder Trial and the Culture of Apocalypse’, *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature*, 12 (2000), 243-63. Likewise, Katsis also notes the wider context of ‘Imiaslavie’, and Rozanov’s contemporaries, including Sergii Bulgakov, Florenskii and Ern, who saw ontological value in the Name of God. Katsis, “‘Delo Beilisa” v kontekste “Serebrianogo veka””, in *Delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager, p. 428. The question of the reality of God’s name will be revisited below.

<sup>171</sup> “‘Ekad””, pp. 371-73. Rozanov takes much of his information from *De philosophia Occulta* (Leyden, 1531).

<sup>172</sup> Kornblatt notes that Rozanov starts to understand Jewish sacrifice as a form of black magic. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, ‘Russian Religious Thought and the Jewish Kabbala’, in *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, pp. 75-95 (p. 91).

<sup>173</sup> “‘Ekad””, p. 376.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

астрального типа, сближающие его с существующим, по мнению каббалистов, эфирным гигантом самого мирового христианства.<sup>175</sup>

In the Kabala, 'shin' also points symbolically to Christianity. Such power was initially invoked by the early Jews as they lost faith in Jehova, and expresses the unity of the material and spiritual basis of being which they are striving to capture.<sup>176</sup> This is, Rozanov believes, an eternal mission of the Jewish religion, the need to maintain a physical relationship with the divine.

Rozanov concludes that the Jews have focused on the physical aspect of worship to the detriment of the spiritual side. Rozanov's pursues his investigations into the physicality of Jewish ritual practices to their conclusion, which he finds in human sacrifice, leading him to reinterpret his evaluation of Jewish culture. As a philosopher who shunned abstraction, it is unsurprising that Rozanov took so seriously the myths and legends surrounding Judaism. He was operating in a philosophical culture where the lines between thought and action had traditionally been ambiguous.<sup>177</sup>

The difficulties in studying Rozanov's exploration of Jewish worship arise when it is assumed that Rozanov is attempting an appraisal per se of Judaism. However, as Katsis notes, whenever Rozanov discusses the Jews, he is clearly focused on his project for the Orthodox Church.<sup>178</sup> As has been argued, this admiration also spurs his envy; Rozanov cannot come to terms with the favoured status the Jews accord themselves. His admiration and fear of the Jewish body emerge from what he perceives as its sexual strength. However, Rozanov concludes that the Jews use their sexual potency to produce more Jews, in order to gain economic, religious, and literary supremacy over the Russians. He argues that the Jews have failed to understand the consequences of their inheritance, and instead of the Creation, concentrate their efforts on Zionism and commerce.<sup>179</sup> Rozanov provides a unique distortion to existing stereotypes over the love of money and Jewish reproduction.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Perevod I.Iu. Markova', in *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, pp. 383-91 (p. 390). Emphasis in original.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Hosking describes a culture where people were willing to substitute philosophizing for activity, and argues that German idealism encouraged Russians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to blur 'the distinction between things-in-themselves and things-as-perceived', and to assert that 'the human mind not only interprets reality but also forms it'. See Hosking, p. 269.

<sup>178</sup> Katsis, "Delo Beilisa" v kontekste "Serebrianogo veka", in *Delo Beilisa*, ed. by A.S. Tager, p. 414.

<sup>179</sup> 'Po kanve egipetskikh risunkov', p. 128.

<sup>180</sup> Whereas Rozanov appears to argue that the Jews' greed arises from their procreative forces, Sander Gilman famously argues that stereotypes of the Jews' sexual perversions arose from stereotypes of their avarice: 'The taking of interest, according to Thomas Aquinas, was impossible, for money, not being alive, could not reproduce. Jews, in taking money, treated money as if it were alive, as if it were a sexualized object. The Jew takes money as does the prostitute, as a substitute for higher values, for love and beauty. And thus the Jew

Rozanov's studies of the Jews reveal more about the manner of his engagement with Russian philosophy, and his approach teaches much about the wider development of Russian thought at this time. Although they diverged in their own way from traditional Orthodoxy, Rozanov and his peers shared the conviction that human activity could help bring about the Kingdom of Heaven. These thinkers felt that it played a central role in the battle between good and evil, being played out right now on Russian soil. Bodily activity had a key function in their interpretation of religious life. They were influenced by hesychasm, which, as noted above, proved the reality of salvation within the body. The physical transfiguration of many saints, in which Rozanov fervently believed, including that of Serafim of Sarov, further pressed in their minds the concept of the body as the ultimate symbol of God's truth. Rozanov and his peers also drew on the formalism of the Orthodox Church, and the teaching that religious rituals expressed eternal truths.

Rozanov's focus on the Creation leads him to explore the acts which can restore meaning to contemporary Russian life, but he raises important questions over the compatibility of ancient religious practices and modern-day society, and how he wishes his ideas to be implemented. Rozanov himself confesses the difficulties of introducing circumcision among contemporary Russians.<sup>181</sup> Despite the confidence in his own ideas concerning ancient forms of worship, Rozanov is sometimes less sure as to how to put some of these into practice. Nevertheless, Rozanov was adamant that childbirth is a key means of preserving man's links to the pre-Christian world, and this was certainly something he practiced. In addition, there is also a correspondence he draws between the establishment of family life and the processes of writing, which has not yet been explored in depth. The *Opavshelistika* enabled Rozanov to demonstrate the full potential of Russian literature to encourage a spiritual renewal.

The idea of literature as having a religious function is common in Russian culture, although many saw this function as eschatological. Texts were understood by many as pointing to the end of time, but also able to help transfigure society and bring about this endpoint. Such views were especially prominent in the Silver Age. Many of Rozanov's peers believed that all art, especially literature, assumes a higher ethical value as time progresses. The closer Russian society is to its telos, the better its art becomes. Such a view is widespread in diverse religious thinkers such as Solov'ev and Tolstoi, to radicals such as Plekhanov and Lenin.

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becomes the representative of the deviant genitalia, the genitalia not under the control of the moral, rational conscience'. Quoted in Allison Pease, *Modernism, Mass Culture, and the Aesthetics of Obscenity* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2000), p. 86. The correspondence Rozanov constructs between childbirth and financial relations will be examined more closely in Chapter 4.

<sup>181</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Kul'turno-religioznye voprosy', in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 74-78 (p. 77).

Understanding literature as having a religious function, Rozanov subverts the eschatological trends in Russian writing. The Creation has significant implications for Rozanov's interpretation of the manner in which texts should operate within the framework of Russian religious life. He does not assume that literature should bear testimony to increasingly higher levels of piety, but must reconcile the Creation with a cultural environment which is increasingly detached from paradise. In this, Rozanov places special emphasis on creativity and the production of texts. He identifies the writing process itself as a vital means of bringing about a spiritual revival in Russia, and this forms the subject of the final chapter.

## Chapter Four

### Rozanov, the Creation and Literary Creativity: Theology as Aesthetics

#### 1. The Religious Dimension of Russian Literature

In requiring that philosophy should have a practical relevance, Rozanov extends the same demands to literature, blurring the distinction between the two fields. He is not alone among Russian cultural figures in attaching a significance to literature exceeding the purely aesthetic. Many thinkers, idealist and materialist, have seen in literature the potential to bring about a transformation in society. The previous chapter examined Rozanov's attempts to preserve the religious significance of the Creation in modern Russian society. Artistic creation stands at the centre of Rozanov's efforts to overcome these problems. Rozanov is close to the formalist tradition, which seeks to circumvent the stultification of culture by making the old new through artistic creativity. At the same time, he believes that art can make the modern ancient, by reaffirming the connection between the present and early civilization.

Rozanov's theories on artistic creativity apply to a wide range of forms. Throughout his career, he critiqued not only literary works, but also painting, music, and architecture. He prefigures formalist thinking by asserting that the same rules can be applied to different forms of artistic expression.<sup>1</sup> Rozanov draws a concordance between artistic productivity and the production of children. He believes that all art has a special role in Russian spiritual life; nevertheless, he directs the majority of his critical attention to literature, and therefore this chapter will examine his interpretation of written texts and their religious function.

The suggestion that literature might have a higher function in Russian culture has been made often (although by no means can this be applied to all cases, as there is also a tradition in Russia of producing art for its own sake). There is a prominent tradition which, following the Johanne Gospel, identifies the word with the Word of God, and identifies any type of writing with sacredness.<sup>2</sup> This has permitted the sacralization of

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<sup>1</sup> The formalists helped dismantle the boundaries separating different art forms. Jakobson writes, 'we can refer to the possibility of transferring *Wuthering Heights* into a motion picture, medieval legends into frescoes and miniatures, or *L'Après-midi d'un faune* into music, ballet, and graphic art [...] The question of whether W.B. Yeats was right in affirming that William Blake was "the one perfectly fit illustrator for the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*" is a proof that different arts are comparable'. Roman Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', in *Language in Literature*, ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Massachusetts/London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 62-94 (p. 63).

<sup>2</sup> Lotman and Piatigorskii examine the function of texts within a given cultural environment. They make the point that, certainly in medieval Russia, writing was identified with sacredness. They also argue that all texts are by definition true, as a false piece of writing cannot be admitted as a text. This leads them to conclude that there are two types of culture as regards the function of texts, which emerge from opposing interpretations of history.

written texts which stand outside the domain of the official Church. For example, Avvakum's *Zhitie* has a definite religious function, although it is not part of the official ecclesiastical canon. It subverts formal Church ceremonies by merging prayer with autobiography and trivia, sexual issues with theological and political commentary. It is worth noting, as an example of the way in which Rozanov understands literature's religious role and the cultural context in which he operated, the manner in which Avvakum's text fuses complex religious themes with apparently insignificant and intimate aspects of domestic life, often bypassing formal ecclesiastical issues which Avvakum considered devoid of the true meaning of Russian religious experience.<sup>3</sup> Avvakum understands that, where there is a danger that the Church might become distanced from its people, literature has the potential to bridge the gap between theology and everyday life.

Редко в истории можно встретить религиозного проповедника, для которого религиозное дело было бы настолько конкретно связано с житейским бытом, как это было у Аввакума. Яркое своеобразие человеческой и писательской индивидуальности Аввакума как раз в том и заключается, что у него традиционные формы мышления сочетались с непосредственным выражением практического чувства и живого инстинкта жизни, присущего той среде, выразителем которой был огнепальный протопоп. Отсюда ряд его «еретических» высказываний [...] шедших вразрез с догматикой и установлениями традиционного православия; отсюда и та смелость его литературной манеры, которая делает из него подлинного новатора, разрушающего веками освященные литературные нормы. Новаторство Аввакума сказывается прежде всего в том, что он традиционное «житие» с его стилистическими и тематическими шаблонами реформирует в полемически заостренную автобиографию, в повествование не о каком-либо постороннем угоднике, а о самом себе. Старая литература до Аввакума ничего похожего на это не знала.<sup>4</sup>

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They explain: “Culture of the closed type” sees itself as continuing according to tradition, from the time [...] when there existed “fullness of truth”, i.e., a “full text”; while “history” is the gradual loss of this fullness which lies at the sources of the culture. “Culture of the nonclosed type” sees itself as arising “from zero,” “from nothing,” and as gradually accumulating elements of “truth” whose fullness is believed to lie in the future.’ They conclude that in the former scenario, texts are holy precisely because they are texts, whereas in the second case emphasis is placed on the texts’ function within that culture. Yu.M. Lotman and A.M. Piatigorsky, ‘Text and Function’, trans. by Ann Shukman, *New Literary History*, 9 (1978), 233-44 (pp. 234-36). Rozanov’s understanding of culture should be placed in the former category, opposed to the dominant tradition in contemporary Russian thought.

<sup>3</sup> Rozanov displays a real fondness for Avvakum and a deep regret that the Russian Church was split over the trivial issue, as Rozanov sees it, of Nikon’s reforms. A comparison of Rozanov and Avvakum would be highly profitable, as both writers share a focus on what they consider to be Russian religious values, and both use an innovative, informal style of writing to oppose the leadership of the Church and emphasize domestic life. Siniavskii places Rozanov in the tradition of Avvakum, though this area requires more work. See Siniavskii, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> N.K. Gudzii, ‘Protopop Avvakum kak pisatel’ i kul’turnoe iavlenie’, in *Zhitie Protopopa Avvakuma, im samym napisannoe, i drugie ego sochineniia*, ed. by N.K. Gudzii (Moscow: Academia, 1934), pp. 7-59 (p. 27).

Avvakum uses his writing to express the fleshy aspects of religion, challenging a religious elite which considers discourse of earthly affairs heretical. He uses an innovative form of literature, based on real Russian life, in order to overcome the detachment of an alien church. The subject of his investigations is not Avvakum himself, despite its intimacy and frankness. He takes the example of his and his family's life, and exposes this for the sake of wider spiritual enlightenment.

Avvakum stands at the head of a tradition which includes works such as Rtsy's *Listopad* and his *Chervotochina istorii*, Dostoevskii's *Dnevnik pisatel'ia*, and the writings of Pobedonostsev, which break down the boundaries between the high-religious and the quotidian. Rozanov's own work was heavily influenced by such writers, and he saw in their writing a value higher than the purely aesthetic. Yet he takes these trends and makes them his own. Rozanov valued the manner in which these books express the sanctity of 'byt'. Rozanov believes that the reality of the Creation is proved through the production and transmission of literature, which relies in turn on an essentially sensual response in the reader.<sup>5</sup>

Rozanov believes that the purpose of literature is to transfer the good from the level of the ideal to the material. In such a way, the production of literature mirrors and perpetuates the divine creative processes. Rozanov rejects formal aesthetic approaches to literature; he looks more to the religious message of its content. However, in addition, Rozanov makes explicit the link between literature and family life by stressing that literature should emerge naturally from the writer's own life, and should be written in the correct manner. This helps ensure that writer and reader share the same experience through literature, an experience which is highly physical. He also emphasizes the processes of literary creation. In underlining the very manner in which his own work was written, Rozanov intensifies the effect his books have on his audience, encouraging the reader to go forth and multiply, and this commandment is mirrored by his insistence that he (the reader) should go forth and write his own fallen leaves.

This chapter has two main arguments. Firstly, Rozanov believes that literature plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual health of the Russian people. He insists that writers should emphasize the importance of family life. However, the influence literature has on the Russian people is highly problematic, because it is open to abuse by those, such as aesthetes, revolutionaries or decadents, who exploit literature in order to spread atheism, celibacy, or radicalism. Secondly, this chapter will demonstrate that the act of writing itself is vital to Rozanov's religious philosophy. Although the content of his own writings highlights the importance of the

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<sup>5</sup> The word aesthetics derives from the ancient Greek term '*aisthesis*', relating to sensual pleasure. Rozanov appreciates art predominantly in terms of its aesthetic activity, and the sensual pleasure evoked in both writer and reader. Rozanov redefines the word 'aesthetics', rejecting the usual reference to Kantian appreciation for form, and instead focuses on the visceral experience.



Creation, the manner in which they are constructed demonstrates the identity of artistic creativity and divine creativity. Writing a book involves the same processes God used in the Creation of the world. He insists that books are not written, but are ‘born into the world’.<sup>6</sup> Therefore this chapter will examine the processes involved in Rozanov’s creation of literature, and also the way he believes it should be accepted by the reader. The complex relationship between creativity and reception, author and reader, is based upon Rozanov’s own understanding of aesthetics. This in turn emerges from his theology and its grounding in the Creation. Although this chapter argues that Rozanov highly values literature for its ability to bring spiritual enlightenment, it is necessary to point out that he had a highly complex attitude towards literary works, which has been examined in scholarship. Rozanov frequently highlights his dislike of literature, and his intention to bring about its end. Yet Rozanov’s ambivalence towards books can perhaps be explained by the fact that literature, especially narrative literature in the European tradition, has essentially eschatological qualities, as it emerges from the eschatological tendencies of the Bible.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most important areas of twentieth-century literary criticism has been the development of studies of the way in which theology shapes literature. In particular, scholars have paid attention to the manner in which the eschatology of Christianity, and the Bible, inform end-focused trends in literature. Narrative literature is typically orientated around the conclusion of its plot. This tradition reveals in turn the curious relationship in Christian thought between the present moment and people’s optimism. All hope is delayed until the conclusion of the novel, which corresponds to the Apocalypse of the Bible, and all moments in the literary work only have value in so far as they point to the end. Meaning is only conferred in the manner in which the conclusion organizes the whole, and the end of the book confers a sense of closure and hopefulness which corresponds to Christian redemption.<sup>8</sup>

In the field of Russian studies, scholarship has also started to examine the relationship between literature and in particular Orthodox theology. Scholars such as Gustafson and Hutchings have provided sophisticated studies into how the works of Tolstoi, Chekhov, and Rozanov, among others, were influenced by Orthodoxy. However, there is much work yet to be done on investigating the way the eschatology of Russian culture has influenced its writing. One of the most influential exponents of religious literature, Dostoevskii, understood that literature could transform society by ushering in the apocalypse it was investigating. Berdiaev

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<sup>6</sup> *Poslednie list’ia*, p. 73. Rozanov also makes a comparison of sexual desire and the urge to write, which in turn corresponds to God’s desire (also in Rozanov’s view a sexual urge) to create. See *Sakharna*, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> A study of how Biblical eschatology shapes European literature is made in Gerald Gillespie, ‘Bible Lessons: The Gospel According to Frye, Girard, Kermode, and Voegelin’, *Comparative Literature*, 38 (1986), 289-97 (pp. 291-92).

<sup>8</sup> Paul S. Fiddes, *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 5.

considered Dostoevskii's prose essentially eschatological, in that it heralded the revelation of man in his final condition in unity with God.<sup>9</sup> Dostoevskii's work is full of apocalyptic themes, from the dreams of Raskol'nikov to Myshkin's arrival in St Petersburg on a train.

The connection between Christian eschatology and post-mythic literature is also made in studies of plot.<sup>10</sup> As Hutchings makes clear, modern prose, although it usually contains elements of plot, or the new, is based on some elements of mythology and the familiar; modern literature, to varying degrees, generally contains elements of both the unprecedented and the repeated.<sup>11</sup> There is a sense that Rozanov's fear of endings, and his focus on beginnings, is reflected more broadly in his rejection of plot, especially in his *Opavshelistika*. However, within the apocalyptic tradition of Russian literature in which Rozanov was operating, there is also a clear counter-tradition, for want of a better term, where Russian writers, such as Pushkin or Lermontov, or later Nabokov, have deliberately rejected conventional notions of plot or storyline.<sup>12</sup> Rozanov rejects conventional ideas of plot, but wishes to reorganize literature around the hearth and the family. His work is born from 'byt' and depicts it, but also preserves the temporal and spatial organization through which family life is framed. His interpretation of Russian literature is based on his desire to preserve the family as the basis for religious life. He attempts to reform Russian literature from within, to bring about a new type of writing which is orientated towards the Creation.

## 2. Aesthetic Infection: Dissemination and Insemination

The suggestion that art might elicit a sensual response in its audience was made by Plato. The Greek philosopher, who did not place a high value on issues of physicality, was concerned that art could corrupt its

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<sup>9</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, 'Otkrovenie o cheloveke v tvorchestve Dostoevskogo', in *Russkaia mysl'* (March-April 1918), pp. 39-61.

<sup>10</sup> Fiddes, p. 49. There is a sense that plot is connected with the idea of this world being separate from God. According to Lotman, linear plots are tied to the theme of the world falling into evil, which is finally redeemed at the plot's climax. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>11</sup> Hutchings writes that 'the variations on the mix are undoubtedly infinite, the manner in which the mix is achieved, a complex matter [...] In each case [the writer] must strive to create *significant* difference – anomalies different enough to rupture the norm in such a way that we see it anew, but not so different as to defy normativity altogether'. Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, p. 17. Emphasis in original.

<sup>12</sup> There has been no serious academic work on the relationship of Rozanov and Nabokov, though this would be an important area of study. Like Rozanov, Nabokov considered the idea of a Russian utopia within human time. Nabokov deliberately subverted denouements in his work. Rozanov knew personally – and frequently criticized – Nabokov's father, Vladimir Dmitrievich, the then minister for justice. V.V. Nabokov went to school with Rozanov's son. Although Nabokov was not Orthodox, his deep attachment for the Russian way of life and his artistic manipulation of 'byt' are close to Rozanov's project, and both in their literature shun conclusions in favour of earthly utopias grounded in cyclical time. In 'Krug', Nabokov expresses this by tying the beginning and ends of the short story together. Nabokov also plays with the relationship between sex as build-up and climax and literature in *Dar*, where he ends the novel prematurely, leaving the expected denouement between Fedor and Zina outside the end of the book, and ensuring that sex cannot be seen as a conclusion. Rozanov's influence on subsequent writers requires much further examination.

audience, by instilling in them the feelings it represents, and encouraging them to lose mental supervision of their emotions.

Our better nature, being with adequate intellectual or moral training, relaxes control over these feelings, on the grounds that it is someone else's sufferings it is watching and that there's nothing to be ashamed of in praising and pitying another man with claims to goodness who shows excessive grief [...] For very few people are capable of realizing that what we must feel for other people must infect what we feel for ourselves, and that if we let our pity for the misfortunes of others grow too strong it will be difficult to restrain our feelings in our own.<sup>13</sup>

Plato posits a division between mind and body, and opposes philosophy to poetry, arguing that the sensual response to art is to be avoided. Plato even likens this physical reaction to that of a lover's passions, a view which re-emerges in Rozanov's sexual interpretation of art. Plato frowns upon all artistic representation, as the physical world art seeks to show is itself just an appearance. All art stands famously 'at third remove from reality'.<sup>14</sup> Plato concludes that poets should be banned from the Republic.

The idea that artists cause their audience to experience the same sensations they themselves have had is crucial to Tolstoi. Tolstoi's interpretation of artistic activity is complex, and has clearly been influenced by platonic ideas, despite his rejection of ancient Greek concepts of aesthetics. Tolstoi, who engages directly with Plato's *Republic*, bemoans the fact that the Greeks did not distinguish between the good and the beautiful, unlike the Jews or the early Christians. And yet, Tolstoi notes, their flawed aesthetics have formed the basis for European theories of art. For Tolstoi, art should have an expressly religious function, founded on the relationship between author and audience. In his treatise on art, Tolstoi sides with Plato in that art can infect its audience with the experiences of the artist. Nevertheless, Tolstoi does not accept that this necessarily means that all art should be banned (though its potential to infect means that it must be used with extreme caution). Tolstoi posits a distinction between truth ('istina') and beauty ('krasota'). The good in art has nothing to do with formal aesthetics, but in the way the artist explicitly 'infects' his audience with his own feelings.

Искусство начинается тогда, когда человек с целью передать другим людям испытанное им чувство снова вызывает его в себе и известными внешними знаками выражает его.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Plato, *Republic*, X, 606a-c.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 597e.

<sup>15</sup> L.N. Tolstoi, *Chto takoe iskusstvo?*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 90 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1964), XXX, pp. 27-203 (p. 64).

In defining good art, Tolstoi attempts to overcome Plato's mind-body divisions, by arguing that the whole person should be infected. However, Tolstoi stresses that art should affect the audience's spiritual feelings, and not merely provide physical pleasure. He directly challenges existing schemes of aesthetics which reduce the role of the senses to a minimum.<sup>16</sup> Tolstoi challenges elitist notions of art, insisting that art should be accessible to all.

*Вызвать с себе раз испытанное чувство и, вызвав его в себе, посредством движений, линий, красок, звуков, образов, выраженных словами, передать это чувство так, чтобы другие испытали то же чувство, – в этом состоит деятельность искусства. Искусство есть деятельность человеческая, состоящая в том, что один человек сознательно известными внешними знаками передает другим испытываемые им чувства, а другие люди заражаются этими чувствами и переживают их.*<sup>17</sup>

Tolstoi believes that art can overcome divisions between the intelligentsia and the masses, and unify the people under God. He challenges high literature's claim for cultural dominance, and insists that a wide variety of aspects of human creativity can be considered artistic, including lullabies, jokes, clothing and household effects.<sup>18</sup> Art should convey 'the higher feelings which emerge from religious consciousness'. However, in contemporary society, he writes, the ruling elite have imposed their own rules on art, ensuring that it gives pleasure ('naslazhdenie') to a select few.<sup>19</sup>

Tolstoi does not explain satisfactorily how he differentiates bad feelings from 'higher and better feelings'. There is also an apparent dualism in his insistence that art, an external expression, is able to convey feelings, which are internal to the artist.<sup>20</sup> Yet for all the ambiguity, it is clear that Tolstoi believes that art should not evoke a sexual response in the audience. Very much the opposite: especially in his later period,

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<sup>16</sup> Pease writes that in Kantian aesthetics, the body is construed by the bourgeoisie as other, and associated with the uncivilized working classes, who are guided only by their senses. See Pease, *Modernism*, p. 77. It is this distinction between high and low culture which Tolstoi seeks to overcome.

<sup>17</sup> Tolstoi, *Что такое искусство?*, p. 65. Emphasis in original.

<sup>18</sup> In this way, Tolstoi is also part of the movement of this time which dismantles formal boundaries between art forms. Tolstoi, *Что такое искусство?*, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> In artistic production, there is surely a role for the intellectual faculties, in the conscious recollection of previously experienced emotions, and the construction of external signs by which these are conveyed; the artist must know what he feels. The problem over the division between feelings and their external expression has been dismissed by some, such as Vincent Tomas, as a 'pseudo-question'; we are meant to assume that there is no division between thoughts and feelings, nor between the artist and his work. Quoted in T.J. Diffey, *Tolstoy's "What is Art?"* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 17. Both Diffey and Tomas take a Cartesian approach to Tolstoi, and separate the art itself from its means of communication. However, it is fair to say that Tolstoi never adequately resolves the nature or extent of emotional involvement in artistic processes, a fact which is probably demonstrative of his own uncertainty over the role of the physical in his own life and thought.

Tolstoi uses his art to discourage all kinds of sexual activity, for example in his 1903 short story ‘Sestry’, in which through mistaken identity a sailor accidentally engages his long-lost sister as a prostitute. In this story, Tolstoi puts forward a point of view clearly in opposition to the celebration of biological ties found in Rozanov, especially in Rozanov’s writings on Oedipus. In many ways, Tolstoi’s work is reminiscent of the Desert Fathers of the *Philokalia*, who in their ascetic writings called on readers to renounce ‘prelest’ and seek spiritual enlightenment instead.

Despite the flaws in Tolstoi’s theories, the examination of his ideas permits a broader understanding of the manner in which his contemporaries interpreted the religious role of literature. Rozanov, despite dissimilarities, shares the same views as Tolstoi concerning the infectiousness of art, and in its religious function. Rozanov believes in the special place writers enjoyed in Russian society, expressing concern that this was neglected in the pervading atmosphere of religious indifference. This comes out in Rozanov’s formative years, in a letter written to Rozanov in 1890 by Strakhov.

А что у нас писатели имели роль учителей, наставников – издавна, испокон веков, – также несомненно и не есть новость. Скорее, это значение начинает теряться.<sup>21</sup>

In his footnotes, Rozanov fully agrees with his mentor’s views, and it would appear that he took these on in his own writing. In his commentary on Dostoevskii, Rozanov writes that literature should not merely portray ‘external forms’, but should aim also to provide a deeper understanding of the human soul as the ‘hidden protagonist and creator of all visible facts’.<sup>22</sup> In Strakhov’s review of this work, he writes that Rozanov ‘slavophilizes’ (‘slavianofil’stvuet’) literature, drawing in religious themes, and providing a unique interpretation from a native perspective.<sup>23</sup> For Rozanov, the Creation provides the model for the way the good must be translated from the ideal into reality. Rozanov insists that Russian literature, which has the ability to bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to Earth, can achieve this.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, through the very production of literature, man fulfils his religious duties. The writer should make the central tenets of religion relevant to everyday life. Literature should have what Rozanov would consider an aesthetic function upon its reader, but at the same time these aesthetics are ethical. Unlike Tolstoi, Rozanov prioritizes the sensual experience over the

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<sup>21</sup> *Literaturnye izgnanniki*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> *Legenda o Velikom Inkvizitore*, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> N.N. Strakhov, ‘Retsenziia na kn.: V.V. Rozanov, “Legenda o Velikom Inkvizitore F.M. Dostoevskogo. Opyt kriticheskogo kommentariia”, SPb., 1894’, in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 263–69 (p. 267).

<sup>24</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Voprosy russkogo truda (Opyt otveta preosviashchennomu Nikonu)’, in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 100–08 (p. 104).

intellectual in his writing, and relies on a form of infection which is much more explicit in its physicality. Rozanov's work both encourages and justifies all aspects of family life, including sexual intercourse. Yet this is more than a base attempt to arouse the reader's sexuality. Rozanov is careful to combine a physical approach with an explanation of the reasons for man's sexuality, thereby involving both body and mind in his call to the audience.

Sex is vital to Rozanov's interpretation of art. In personal letters to his friends, where he was often highly explicit even by today's standards, and in particular to Gollerbakh, Rozanov frequently describes his own sexual arousal from artistic encounters, especially with phallic drawings and artefacts from the ancient world.<sup>25</sup> Yet Rozanov writes of an overwhelming sense of shame in the Church and in Russian society more generally over questions of sexual activity. More broadly, one notes problems in the way this fundamental human act was treated in Russian literature, and tensions between language and body. Take, for example, the key scene in Tolstoi's *Voskresenie*.

Он схватил ее, как она была, в жесткой суровой рубашке с обнаженными руками,  
поднял ее и понес.

– Ах! Что вы? – шептала она.

Но он не обращал внимания на ее слова, неся ее к себе.

– Ах, не надо, пустите, – говорила она, а сама прижималась к нему.

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Когда она, дрожащая и молчаливая, ничего не отвечая на его слова, ушла от него,  
он вышел на крыльцо и остановился, стараясь сообразить значение всего того,  
что произошло.<sup>26</sup>

Although Nekhliudov does not yet fully understand the implications of his actions, it is very clear to the reader what has occurred in the literary silence between these two paragraphs. Yet the most important event in the novel is omitted. Tolstoi problematizes, through its very absence, an act which for him is already riddled with complexity. In the scene in question, Tolstoi underlines this tension between carnality and its verbal expression through the interaction between the two protagonists. Katiusha appeals to her master's reason by warning him that what they are about to do is wrong. Yet she also reveals the problematics between intellectual and sensual communication, and the manner in which literature should be relied on to express this. Despite her spoken rejection of Nekhliudov, through her physicality she reluctantly communicates to him her unexpressed desire.

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<sup>25</sup> See for example his letter to Gollerbakh dated 8 August 1918, reproduced in *V nashei smute*, p. 359.

<sup>26</sup> L.N. Tolstoi, *Voskresenie*, in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, XXXII, p. 63.

Likewise, he is unreceptive to what she says, but is only able to read the unspoken message conveyed against her will by her body: ‘Я вся твоя’.

In not narrating the sexual act itself, omitting a device which is practically obligatory in today’s writing, Tolstoi deliberately exploits the literary culture of his own time, which did not permit the artistic expression of intimate activity. The resurrection of this novel is a gradual liberation, as displayed in the development of the relationship between Nekhliudov and Katiusha, from a discourse of the body to one of reason; their final exchanges are disembodied, as they both learn to read the Scriptures.<sup>27</sup> Tolstoi relies on written text, which appeals primarily to the mind. However, Tolstoi’s work remains problematic, as seen above, because he encodes the reader’s desired response in physical terminology. Rozanov tries to overcome these tensions through his identification of the book and the body, as he attempts to bypass mental oversight over the physical. The manner in which Rozanov transfers sexual themes to the literary plane works as a broader example for the manner in which the ideal is transferred to the real. Rozanov takes the inadequacies of Russian literature, its abstractions, its silences, and tries to fill these with his own sexual content.

### 3. Rozanov and the Bible as the Literary Ideal

For Rozanov, the Bible is the prime example of how ideas should be expressed in writing. For all his love of literature, nothing compares to the Bible as the ideal literary expression of religious life. This is the principle by which he appraises other writers, and it is this fusion of ideal life and literature which Rozanov also tries to achieve in his own work.<sup>28</sup> The Old Testament is based, for Rozanov, principally on Creation, family and the holy seed. Rozanov neglects the violence and suffering of the Old Testament, and refuses to acknowledge the Old Testament God as vengeful and punitive. Instead, the Old Testament is the highest expression of the way we should live. The Bible is devoid of dirtiness and sinfulness, but is inextricably linked with nature.<sup>29</sup> There is nothing forced or artificial, but everything emerges from the idea of the family. This should be the model for all other literature.

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<sup>27</sup> However at their parting, once more, Tolstoi ensures their relationship is problematic. Katiusha’s attempts to describe logically her reasons not to go with Nekhliudov are interrupted by her emotions, her words become quieter, and she is unable to enunciate her final plea for forgiveness; this is only communicated by a smile. She presses his hand as she leaves. Yet this fleeting physical exchange only emphasizes Tolstoi’s conclusion, that the two can only be saved through a final renunciation of corporeal relations.

<sup>28</sup> Rozanov points to the unique fusion of the categories of literature and life in Russian culture, for which he is grateful to the ‘family concerns of the Aksakovs’, and to the ‘homelife of the Kireevskii and the Tiutchevs’. V.V. Rozanov, ‘Kul’turnaia khronika russkogo obshchestva’, in *Religiia, filosofii, kul’tura*, p. 73.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Bibleiskaia poeziia’, p. 446.

Конечно, это не поэзия, но выше ее. «Простота» всех знаменитых авторов и знаменитых поэтов (напр. у нас Толстого в народных рассказах), в сущности, силится приблизиться к простоте Библии: но нигде не сохраняет изящества ее рисунка и ее слов [...] Библия [...] «преимущественно книга», книга книг. В ней как бы канон книжности: «Вот как надо писать, вот что пишете.»<sup>30</sup>

The importance of the Bible lies in the manner it conveys the meanings of man's original relationship with God. Rozanov never tires of reading the book, as it refreshes in him in each reading his religious feeling.

Чтение Библии никогда не раздражает, не гневит, не досаждаёт. Оно омывает душу, и никакой занозы в ней не оставляет. Прочитавший страницу никогда не остаётся неудовлетворённым. Такие чувства, как «недоумение», никогда не сопутствуют чтению. Вообще, дух от чтения ее не сдавливается, не искажается, не стесняется. «Прочитал, и стало лучше.» [...]

В точном смысле, научно, этого и нельзя отвергнуть: где Бог и где человек, где кончилось божеское и началось человеческое, или наоборот? Невозможность здесь разграничения Библии указывает в первых же строках, рассказывая о сотворении человека: «и вдунул Бог (в форму из земли) душу бессмертную, душу разумную».<sup>31</sup>

All writers should aspire to have this effect on their readers. In addition, Rozanov points to the manner in which the Bible was written, which writers should also attempt to imitate. He writes that the Old Testament is the best example of the way in which the ideas of God are expressed in words, as he believes that it was dictated directly by God to its author, Moses.<sup>32</sup> Rozanov largely bypasses the New Testament, though still drawing on Johannine theories on the word made flesh. However, he rejects Christology as the explanation behind this, and instead inserts an ideological foundation based on the Creation.

Debates on the nature of the word became particularly intense among Rozanov's contemporaries, ranging from Sergii Bulgakov, to Mandelstam, and to Bakhtin. The dominant paradigm for these thinkers and writers (even non-religious thinkers adapted aspects of these ideas), was that the potency of the word was guaranteed by Johannine theories on incarnation. Discourse repeats the Incarnation of God, and highlights the holiness of matter.<sup>33</sup> Rozanov is typical of Russian religious thinkers in his affection for the Johannine Gospel, and the processes by which the word becomes flesh. But, as noted in the previous chapter, he worries over the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 449.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 449-50.

<sup>32</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Mater'ialy k resheniiu voprosa', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 195-270 (p. 225).

<sup>33</sup> Alexandar Mihailovic, *Corporeal Words: Mikhail Bakhtin's Theology of Discourse* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1997), pp. 10, 25.



potential for division between the word and the flesh in Russian culture. This is made clear more broadly in Rozanov's interpretation of the relationship between the word and the Creation, and correspondingly in the relationship between the word and matter.<sup>34</sup> For Rozanov, it is essential to insist that word and matter are not prior to one another, but come into being at the same moment. Any suggestion that matter existed before the word would leave the way open for suggestions that the physical world might be essentially unholy and in need of a later transfiguration through the eventual Incarnation of the Logos. Rozanov believes that words came into being with all things at the Creation, guaranteeing equivalence between word and thing.<sup>35</sup> In emphasizing the closeness of word and Creation, Rozanov is very close to the acmeists, and literary trends which focused on the original, Edenic nature of the word. He also shares some similarities with the futurists, and their emphasis on the value of the word in itself, without reference to an independent, higher reality.<sup>36</sup>

Rozanov's understanding of the Bible informs the way he believes literature should be constructed. Scholars have argued that the structure of a text itself forms a utopia which rebels against the reality of everyday existence. Many writers, including Blake, have seen the Bible as the 'Great Code of Art', the ultimate text which 'expresses human desire for the Kingdom of God'.<sup>37</sup> This longing is only redeemed at the end of the Bible, the narrative of the final revelation of God. However, Rozanov does not interpret the Bible in a linear fashion, but cyclically. He can accept the Apocalypse not as a conclusion, but as being intimately linked with the Creation. The Apocalypse of the Bible is tied intrinsically to Genesis, and is not an end, but a rebirth. This rejection of finality has implications for Rozanov's interpretation of literature, and also informs the way he himself writes.

#### **4. Overcoming History Through Literature: Pushkin and Dostoevskii**

Rozanov lays strict criteria for literary criticism, and is quick to condemn the writers and books which he considers harmful to the Russian religious renewal. He identifies two major problems in Russian literature, which both essentially emerge from the same problem. Firstly, he attacks what he interprets as anti-religious

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<sup>34</sup> Recent scholarship has investigated the importance of the word for Rozanov. Dimpleby has investigated the significance of the word for Rozanov in her doctoral thesis. She also pays specific attention to Rozanov's love for archaic hand-written texts (shared with Remizov), and his hatred for printed books, thereby substantiating the argument of this thesis that for Rozanov the process of writing is as important as its content. In addition, Crone has written on the importance of Rozanov's theories of the word for Mandel'shtam. See Crone, 'Mandelstam's Rozanov', pp. 56-71.

<sup>35</sup> 'Ob odnoi osobennoi zaslughe V.I.S. Solov'eva', p. 438.

<sup>36</sup> For example, a discussion of the influence of Rozanov's ideas on the poetry of Maiakovskii can be found in L.F. Katsis, *Vladimir Maiakovskii: Poet v intellektual'nom kontekste epokhi* (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 2004), especially pp. 47-60.

<sup>37</sup> Fiddes, p. 16.

themes. Under this category he interprets people who extolled revolutionary or anti-family ideas in their works, such as Saltykov-Shchedrin or Tolstoi. The second type of writing is that of the God-Seekers, who use their works to explore the construction of a new religion in Russia. However, both these types of literature emerge from the same cause, the lack of attachment to man's beginnings.

In insisting on literature's ability to restore pre-Christian values, Rozanov looks back to the example of Pushkin. In his views on Pushkin, Rozanov was influenced by his friend and one-time *Novoe Vremia* colleague Fedor Shperk. A large part of Shperk's short philosophical career was dedicated to producing universal, speculative schemes of ontology and history, where he investigated the organic development of the cosmos and its seed-like growth.<sup>38</sup> Shperk also developed theories, following in the example of such Slavophile philosophers as Danilevskii, Grigor'ev and Leont'ev, on the organic and historical development of nations, placing the Slavs highest and noting their distinct historical mission.

As well as his production of grand systems of history, Shperk was also able to develop ideas on how these laws affected the individual. He believed that sex provided a link between the universal and the person. Shperk agreed with Rozanov that literature also had a sexual element, as this too reconciled the individual self to the wider development of the cosmos. He insisted that Russian literature lay in the sphere of spiritual life. Here Shperk reserved a special place for Russian literature which he considered, in Savina's words, to have a 'mystical-artistic' quality. The author imitates God by bringing the object of his writing into life, and by loving his work as God loves His children. This was best demonstrated by Russian authors, unlike the Germans, whom Shperk criticized for their abstract and indifferent attitude towards their characters.<sup>39</sup> Shperk believed that the desire to find spatial and temporal harmony with the universe was a profound moral and religious obligation. By entering into a harmonious relationship with the outside world through one's creative activity, the human is able to return to a state of primeval, divine purity; this type of harmony assumes, in Savina's words, a 'moral character' and becomes a distinctly 'ethical category'.<sup>40</sup> Literature is one of the best means of achieving this, in its production, dissemination and consumption.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Fedor Shperk, *Dialektika bytiia: Argumenty i vyvody moei filosofii* (St Petersburg, no given publisher, 1897), pp. 5-7.

<sup>39</sup> T.V. Savina, 'Pamiati Elizavety Gustavovnoi Shperk', in Fedor Eduardovich Shperk, *Literaturnaia kritika*, ed. by T.V. Savina (Novosibirsk: PITs GNU, 1998), pp. 3-15 (p. 8).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> The idea that man could overcome through the medium of literature the religious problems presented by history, became common in Rozanov's time. For example, Christensen argues that for Merezhkovskii, literature was the quintessential manner in which the individual became reconciled to history. See Peter G. Christensen, 'Christ and Antichrist as Historical Novel', *Modern Language Studies*, 20 (1990), 67-77 (p. 72).

Despite their short friendship (Shperk joined *Novoe Vremia* in 1895 and died two years later at the age of 25), Shperk had a large influence on Rozanov. The two writers enjoyed a close personal relationship, and spent much time together discussing philosophy, literature and their intimate (often sexual) experiences. Shperk's ideas on the use of literature to restore harmony between individual and the cosmos, are demonstrated in his work on Pushkin. For Shperk, Pushkin was the greatest Russian writer, as (once he had mastered his art, that is from 1822 and the completion of *Boris Godunov* onwards) he was able to express the harmony of his soul and his emotions with the world.<sup>42</sup> Contrary to a dominant trend in literary criticism, Shperk does not oppose Pushkin with Lermontov, but states that both poets were possessed of the same aim, to find a metaphysical and religious harmony with the world through literature. However, Pushkin was more successful than his counterpart, as he was better able to synthesize word with deed. For Shperk, Lermontov's word remained less effective, as it was not combined with the harmonious activity of the poet, as in Pushkin. Rozanov admired Shperk's critique of Pushkin. For Rozanov, Shperk's biographical insights into Pushkin cannot be detached from Shperk's genius as a literary critic. Rozanov demonstrates his conviction that a writer's output is an essential component of his existence. He examines Pushkin as the central figure in Russian culture, in whom literature is fundamental to the search for religious harmony.<sup>43</sup>

Between 1899 and 1900, Rozanov wrote a series of articles in which he assessed the role of Pushkin and his poetry in Russian religious life, and he would return to this question at various points throughout his life. (The fact that Rozanov wrote articles to mark the anniversary of important events in the life of his favourite writers, such as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pushkin's birth in 1899, or his 1912 article on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pushkin's death, demonstrates that their lives provided a significant marker of time in his worldview and in the production of his own work.) For Rozanov, Pushkin is a pagan writer, who understands the original, Edenic beauty of God's world.

Он – *все*-божник, т.е. идеал его дрожал на каждом листочке Божьего творения; в каждом лице человеческом, поискав, он мог, или, по крайней мере, готов был его найти. Вся его жизнь была каким-то собиранием этих идеалов – прогулкою в Саду Божиим, где он указывал человечеству: «А вот *еще* что можно любить!»<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Savina, pp. 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> The relationship between Rozanov and Pushkin has been neglected so far in Russian and western scholarship, though an influential group of scholars in Moscow is working to remedy this and establish Rozanov's place in the Pushkin canon. Nikoliukin is spearheading efforts in this field. For a discussion of Pushkin's influence on Rozanov as a writer, and for Nikoliukin's comparison of Pushkin and Rozanov's understanding of the Russian writer's role, see Nikoliukin, *Rozanov*, pp. 181-90.

<sup>44</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O Pushkinskoi Akademii', in *Mysli o literature* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1989), pp. 232-39 (pp. 232-33). Emphasis in original.

Like no other Russian writer, Pushkin understood the etymology of the word ‘cosmos’, deriving from the Greek word ‘to make beautiful’. Pushkin is the Russian Homer, who comprehends and synthesizes in his self the history of humanity and then presents this to us anew in his own poetry. No other Russian poet has the ability to make the ideas of God flesh on Earth. Comprehending the original beauty of the world and then expressing this through literature, is one of the best forms of *imitatio Dei*.

Он был серьезен, был вдумчив; ходя по Саду Божию, – он не издал ни одного «аха», но как бы вторично, в уме и поэтическом даре, он насаждал его, повторял дело Божиих рук.<sup>45</sup>

Rozanov sees in Pushkin more than an ability to convey the eternal truths found in paganism: on each occasion that Pushkin speaks, he gives these truths a new meaning. This is more than the repetition of archaic motifs. Each time these eternal ideas are brought forth, they hold new significance, and in this way Pushkin is never monotonous.

«Циклос», «круг» его созданий сам по себе, без отношения к историческому народному движению, вполне способен насытить человека и дать ему прожить собой всю жизнь. Скажем более: если Россия в некоторых исключительных своих душах, составляющих нить исторического вперед ее движения, конечно вечно будет обогащаться исключительностями, – будет искать ударных форм разного в веках, но единичного порознь и в каждую минуту, поэтического и философского монотеизма, – то в заурядных своих частях, которые трудятся, у коих есть практика жизни и теория не стала жизнью, она спокойно и до конца может питаться и жить одним Пушкиным.<sup>46</sup>

Pushkin has the ability to insert archaic significance into each moment of contemporary life, but to give this fresh meaning each time. Pushkin’s gift is his ‘strength for the new’ (*‘sila k novomu’*), and his ‘gift of the eternally new’ (*‘dar vечно novogo’*).<sup>47</sup> Though Pushkin stands above all others, Dostoevskii and Lermontov stand in his tradition by bringing back into contemporary life our pagan roots.

И они все, т.е. эти три писатели, побывали в Дельфах и принесли нам существенное древнее, но вечно новое, каждому поколению нужное, язычество пророчества.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>47</sup> ‘О Pushkinskoi Akademii’, p. 237.

<sup>48</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Zametka o Pushkine’, in *Mysli o literature*, pp. 240-46 (p. 244).

Rozanov is writing in a context where the value of Pushkin was undergoing a profound cultural re-evaluation. Rozanov was one of the many figures who were intent on restoring Pushkin's place in Russia's cultural and literary canon, and who opposed the naturalist interpretations of the 1860s and 1870s, such as those of Pisarev or Dobroliubov.<sup>49</sup> Rozanov was not the only Silver Age writer who revisited the Pushkin myth. These themes occupy a central role in the works of Merezhkovskii, Blok, and Briusov, to name a few. Silver Age figures intended to draw parallels between their time and that of the Golden Age, and to evade history by promoting the idea of mythological time.<sup>50</sup>

However, Rozanov distinguishes himself within this tradition by contesting that ultimate cultural significance is conferred by man's past. For Rozanov, the present moment only has renewed value when it is brought into contact with man's past. Literature helps achieve this. Words have an ancient value, which man is obliged to revive. In this regard, Rozanov's understanding of the symbol is close to that of Lotman. For Lotman, the symbol is more than a sign. Every symbol emerges from our prehistory, and contains archaic and immutable value.<sup>51</sup> However, the symbol is given new meaning each time it is used.

С одной стороны, пронизывая толщу культур, символ реализуется в своей инвариантной сущности. В этом аспекте мы можем наблюдать его повторяемость. Символ будет выступать как нечто неоднородное окружающему его текстовому пространству, как посланец других культурных эпох (= других культур), как напоминание о древних (= «вечных») основах культуры. С другой стороны, символ активно коррелирует с культурным контекстом, трансформируется под его влиянием и сам его трансформирует. Его инвариантная сущность реализуется в вариантах. Именно в тех изменениях, которым подвергается «вечный» смысл символа в данном культурном контексте, контекст этот ярче всего выявляет свою изменяемость.<sup>52</sup>

The symbol can operate as an agent of cultural renewal, and for Rozanov, Pushkin masters this, as his poetry has a revitalizing quality and the ability to renew culture.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Pushkin upholds the individuality of each

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<sup>49</sup> Gasparov, 'Introduction', in *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism*, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Paperno discusses how the heritage of Pushkin was handled among Rozanov's contemporaries. She argues that the mythologization of Pushkin in the Silver Age was an essential means by which writers were able to synthesize historical differences between the two periods, as well as enabling them to overcome the contradictions in Pushkin's life, and to present their idol as the quintessential 'life-creating' poet. Irina Paperno, 'Pushkin v zhizni cheloveka Serebriannogo veka', in *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism*, pp. 19-51 (pp. 22-23).

<sup>51</sup> Iu.M. Lotman, 'Simvol v sisteme kul'tury', in *Izbrannye stat'i v trekh tomakh*, 3 vols (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), I, pp. 191-99 (p. 192).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 192-93.

<sup>53</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Pushkin i Gogol', in *Legenda o Velikom Inkvizitore*, pp. 136-42 (p. 137).

character he creates, avoiding typification. Rozanov considers the use of literary types a distortion of reality, which merges the unique significance of each person into a meaningless mass.

Пушкин есть как бы символ жизни: он – весь в движении, и от этого-то так разнообразно его творчество. Все, что живет, – влечет его, и, подходя ко всему, – он любит его и воплощает. Слова его никогда не остаются без отношения к действительности, они покрывают ее и чрез нее становятся образами, очертаниями. Это он есть истинный основатель *натуральной школы*, всегда верный природе человека, верный и судьбе его. Ничего напряженного в нем нет, никакого болезненного воображения или неправильного чувства.<sup>54</sup>

Rozanov later writes to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pushkin's death that the true spiritual significance of Pushkin's work should be restored not only to the Russian reading elite, but to the Russian home, and to every Russian child as part of their spiritual education.<sup>55</sup>

Мы должны любить его, как люди «потерянного рая» любят и воображают о «возвращенном рае».<sup>56</sup>

One aspect of Pushkin studies which Rozanov found distasteful was the pedantic nature in which 'bibliophiles' poured over every line of his poetry, correcting the text where they felt he had been misprinted, and arguing about superficial details which for Rozanov had nothing to do with the meaning of the texts. Such scholarly squabbles only obscured the true meaning of Pushkin's work, and dissuaded ordinary Russian families from taking Pushkin into their homes, making him particularly inaccessible to the young.<sup>57</sup>

As he understands the family as the basic means of cultural transmission, Rozanov demands that literature expresses the importance of genetic links, and sees the convergence of literary and biological relations. He married his first wife out of a desire to achieve physical proximity to Dostoevskii. There has been little scholarly work on Rozanov's interpretation of Dostoevskii outside the field of Dostoevskii studies, which have typically focused on the *Legenda o Velikom Inkvizitore*. However, Rozanov's most important thoughts on Dostoevskii are not to be found in this book, but in later works, especially in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Vozvrat k Pushkinu (K 75-letiiu dnia ego konchiny)', in *Mysli o literature*, pp. 326-30 (p. 326).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 329-30.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 327. Rozanov's comments on the pedantic squabbling over spelling in publications of Pushkin's works mirror his complaints over religious arguments in Russian history, particularly in his discussions over the seventeenth-century religious reforms. Rozanov finds it ridiculous that the spelling of Jesus' name could have any influence on man's religiosity.

<sup>58</sup> This point has also been made by Katsis, to whom I am grateful. From private discussions.

Despite a common view that Rozanov preferred Dostoevskii above all others (along with the Bible, Rozanov kept a copy of *Dnevnik pisatel'ia* by his bed), this view must be qualified. Rozanov realizes that Dostoevskii does not enjoy the same harmonious relationship with the world as Pushkin does. He frequently criticizes Dostoevskii's intolerance to people and his unrelenting obedience to Christ.<sup>59</sup> It is also important to point out that in many investigations of Dostoevskii's characters as expressing the pagan ideal, Rozanov realizes that Dostoevskii himself does not fully understand the significance of his own characters' beliefs and actions. Nevertheless, the way they are brought to life demonstrates the correct reverence for the Creation and nature.

Banerjee writes that, unlike others who try to extract a philosophical system from Dostoevskii, Rozanov investigates him to shed light on his own psychology.<sup>60</sup> However, one must take issue with this point and argue that this is precisely a religious-philosophical investigation. Rozanov sees in Dostoevskii a sensitivity to the processes which connect this world to the divine. The basis for Rozanov's attraction to Dostoevskii is a quote to which he returns again and again, where Father Zosima narrates how God took seeds from other worlds and planted them into this Earth. All religion emerges from the desire to touch these other worlds.<sup>61</sup> Rozanov sees Zosima as close to the ideal Christian, expressing the essence of Christianity ('sut' khristianstva'). But this is not the modern, deformed version of Orthodox Christianity which rests on Christ, but the original natural form of religious behaviour.

Он выражает до-христианский, первоначальный *натурализм*, то «поклонение природе», «поклонение всему» (пантеизм), с проклятия чего начало христианство, что «срубить до *корня*» уже пришел Иоанн Креститель. Нет строя души, более *противоположного христианству*, чем душевный покой и душевная святость Зосимы, исключаяющие нужду во Христе.<sup>62</sup>

Rozanov explores the possibility that Zosima loves all life, without relying on New Testament commandments to express this devotion. Zosima relates to other Christians not in the unforgiving manner of the Russian Orthodox Church, but with warmth and devotion. Rozanov contrasts him with Ferapont, and considers Zosima's

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<sup>59</sup> Rozanov's appraisal of Dostoevskii is highly complex and requires much more scholarship. There is no sense in Rozanov's works that Dostoevskii is the religious thinker or writer whom he admires the most. There are fundamental differences in their views. As Jackson notes, Dostoevskii sees man's duty as transcending the world to strive for an ideal which lies outside his nature. Harmony can only be achieved through a 'lofty spirituality in a quest for form and faith'. By way of contrast, Rozanov locates man's ideal within his nature and with his relationship with the world. See Robert Louis Jackson, *Dialogues with Dostoevsky: The Overwhelming Questions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 179.

<sup>60</sup> Maria Banerjee, 'Rozanov on Dostoevskiy', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 15 (1971), 411-24 (p. 411).

<sup>61</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Russkie mogily', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, pp. 192-252 (p. 202).

<sup>62</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predislovie', in *V temnykh religioznykh luchakh*, pp. 95-100 (p. 98).

relationship with Alesha Karamazov the ideal manner in which a monk should relate to people.<sup>63</sup> Rozanov writes that Zosima's and Alesha's love is based on a real attachment to Russia, and not on the fleshless, bloodless religion demanded in Orthodoxy. In their religious outlook, Rozanov, writes, Christ plays no role.<sup>64</sup> This literary expression of ideal human life, and Dostoevskii's effect on the reader, has implications for Rozanov's interpretation of the writer. Rozanov does not consider Dostoevskii a writer or journalist in the traditional understanding. Nor is Dostoevskii a philosopher in the traditional sense – he is a prophet, whose insight emerges from his attachment not to ideas, but from his striving for unity and a restoration of the primeval relationship with the world. For Rozanov, Dostoevskii's work re-expresses the myths of Egypt, not in an abstract manner, but in a way that has meaning for real Russian experience. Rozanov believes that Dostoevskii understands that Dostoevskii can express the eternal truths of religion and their relevance for the Russians.

«Пророческий» характер Достоевского происходил именно от глубочайшей его преданности к «делу», существу русской жизни, судьбам истории его под углом созерцания вечности.<sup>65</sup>

Dostoevskii exposes for the Russian people the way in which they should resurrect ancient religious truths, and it is through his characters that Dostoevskii embodies his prophetic insight.<sup>66</sup>

## 5. Contemporary Literature and 'Byt'

Rozanov shows a particular affection for literature that emerges from, and expresses the ideal of, 'byt'. This is demonstrated in his examinations of Russian religious thinkers and writers.<sup>67</sup> He believes that there is a close link between a nation's spiritual health and its literature, and the decline of one leads to the decline of the other.<sup>68</sup> In this way, Rozanov stands in the traditions of his literary heroes, especially those who supported traditional Russian ways of life and posited the family as the basis of Russian society. It is worth citing the example of Giliarov-Platonov, and the response to his death by his peers, in order to examine the cultural context in which Rozanov was operating. When Giliarov-Platonov, one of Rozanov's favourite writers, was

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<sup>63</sup> 'Russkie mogily', p. 202.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Pamiati F.M. Dostoevskogo', in *Russkaia mysl'* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2006), pp. 129-38 (p. 130).

<sup>66</sup> Rozanov lauds Dostoevskii for the manner in which he expresses the love of what Rozanov calls the 'pochva', or 'the people ['narod'], the tribe, one's blood and traditions'. Dostoevskii circumvents for Rozanov the rootless, bloodless religion brought by Christ. 'Pamiati F.M. Dostoevskogo', p. 133.

<sup>67</sup> As noted in the Introduction, Rozanov tends to term all religious writers 'slavianofily', and does not tend to make a rigid distinction between the Slavophiles and the 'pochvenniki'.

<sup>68</sup> 'Mater'ialy k resheniiu voprosa', p. 225.



buried in 1887, alongside Sergei Solov'ev and Pogodin in Moscow's Novodevichii Monastery, fellow religious thinker and economist Sergei Sharapov mourned more than the passing of a friend, but was concerned about the broader consequences for Russia of Giliarov-Platonov's death.

Сильней и сильней сгущаются сумерки над русским обществом, над русской литературой [...] Светильники русской мысли гаснут и в наступивших потемках с ужасом спрашиваешь себя: кто же еще на очереди?<sup>69</sup>

This comment suggests the level of influence Russian thinkers are deemed to have on their nation's wellbeing. The death of a writer is posited almost as an apocalyptic event. There is also a wider point to be made about Russian conservatism, which touches on some of the issues discussed in Chapter 3, in that in certain contexts Russian conservatism contains within itself a dimension of apocalypticism. In a philosophical scheme where the preservation of culture lies at the centre of man's religious obligations, any deviation from tradition, including even seemingly insignificant changes, can be seen as having calamitous consequences. This is an aspect of Russian conservatism which Rozanov must overcome, and he takes inspiration from his predecessors.

Giliarov-Platonov and Sharapov belong to a distinct branch of Russian thought which handled these problems by returning to the family hearth and 'byt'. They set themselves apart from formal Slavophilism by attaching themselves not necessarily to the established Church, but predominantly to the Russian people as an organic body. They share many similarities with the 'pochvennichestvo' movement. They believed in the natural development of Russian society, and rejected the programme of Slavophilism, viewing their *a priori* theories as over-schematic and abstract.<sup>70</sup> They were by no means ultra-conservative, and were pragmatic enough to accept that, while human nature remained unchanged since the beginning of time, society would develop. They adopted a pragmatic stance towards technological advancements, welcoming them where they improved social welfare without damaging Russian traditions. Their main concern was how to reconcile the permanent needs of the person with the movement of history and a developing society. Rozanov felt a deep

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<sup>69</sup> *Neopoznannyyi genii: Sbornik statei i materialov, posviashchennykh pamiati N.G. Giliarova-Platonova*, ed. by S. Sharapov (no given place or date of publication), p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Dowler discusses at length the differences between the 'pochvenniki' and the Slavophiles. He examines how the former school were critical of Slavophile theories, attending instead to the natural development of Russian society and the priority of experience. He writes that 'the obvious eclecticism of *pochvennichestvo* permitted it considerable flexibility in the formulation of a program. The whole concept of an integrated culture presupposed an amalgam of widely diverse components [...] The vagueness of *Vremia* [the foremost 'pochvennik' organ] was by no means mitigated by the editors' insistence that only life could determine the course of Russian development. The principles guiding the evolution of a nation could not be known in advance of their revelation in life itself.' Dowler, *Dostoevsky, Grigor'ev and Native Soil Conservatism*, p. 92. Emphasis in original.

attachment to thinkers who stood within this tradition, among whom could be counted Grigor'ev, Strakhov, Giliarov-Platonov, Sharapov, Rtsy, Pobedonostsev, and Filippov.

Of these, the work and personality of Rtsy (Ivan Romanov) also had a particularly deep and lasting influence on Rozanov. The fact that Rtsy lived in St Petersburg was one of the factors in Rozanov's decision to move to the capital (although, as Rozanov got to know him better, he developed a more ambivalent relationship towards the elder writer).<sup>71</sup> However, he deeply admired Rtsy's writing, which he considered misunderstood and undervalued. Rtsy's most famous work, *Listopad*, contains a mix of philosophical musings, childhood reminiscences, political comments, recollections of amusing events from his home and society gatherings. It was an influence for Rozanov's *Opavshie list'ia* in more than title. One aspect which runs through *Listopad* is the author's love for the home, his affection for his childhood, and his desire to find eternal meaning in family life.

Дома у нас все осталось благополучно. Ни одной черной точки на политической горизонте, ни одного острого вопроса, ни одной жгучей злобы дня. Все обстоит благополучно. Едим, пьем, женимся, посягаем – как было во дни Ноя, так и теперь.<sup>72</sup>

However, Rtsy believes that man should not preserve all traditions purely out of dogmatic conservatism. Society should protect only that which is good. He argues that society is not yet at its perfect state, and that there is room for improvement. Therefore he criticizes conservatives who demand adherence to tradition, simply out of tradition's sake. Rtsy is also critical of political liberalism, which teaches that the present is not a basis for social life.<sup>73</sup> Hence Rtsy steers a careful course between conservatism and liberalism. In *Listopad* he extols the value of the present moment, whilst at the same time searching to imbue it with eternal meaning. This desire to find harmony between eternity and the present was a common concern of Rozanov's favourite writers, but such figures were dying out, and their work was being forgotten.

Они звонили в колокольчики, когда в стране шумел набат. Никто их не услышал, никто на них не обращал внимания.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Fateev provides an account of Rozanov's correspondence with the Petersburg conservatives, including Tertii Filippov, Afanasii Vasil'ev, Nikolai Aksakov, and Osip Kablits, in whose circle Rozanov moved in his first years in the capital. Fateev suggests that it was Rozanov's dissatisfaction with these 'undeveloped' Slavophiles which was the main motivating factor in his movement towards the symbolist group of the Merezhkovskii and their allies. Nevertheless, Rozanov harboured a warm relationship with Ivan Romanov, who, Fateev notes, would be forgotten as a writer without Rozanov's intervention in his life. See Fateev, *S russkoi bezdnoi v dushe*, pp. 129-32, 147-50.

<sup>72</sup> Rtsy, *Listopad* (Moscow, no given publisher, 1895), p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>74</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'S vershiny tysiacheletnei piramidy (Razmyshlenie o khode russkoi literatury)', in *Sochineniia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1990), pp. 448-64 (p. 461). Emphasis in original.

The end of their contribution to Russian culture only exacerbated the apocalyptic fervour sweeping across the nation, making the need for a new literature all the more pressing in Rozanov's mind. He insisted that there should be nothing artificial, stylized or indulgent in literature, and quite often rejected the greats of Russian literature in favour of the simple and the homely. For example, one of the writers he admired most was the provincial diarist from Kostroma, Elizaveta Diakonova (1874-1902).<sup>75</sup> He bemoans the fact that unpretentious, domestic literature like this is being forgotten, and that Russia has succumbed to the artificiality and atheism of writers who do not understand the true meaning of Creation.

## 6. Rozanov and Gogol'

The most harmful figure in Russian literature is Gogol', though Rozanov's critique of the Ukrainian is lengthy and complex. Rozanov condemns Gogol' for his atheism and for his un-Russianness, and the way this is manifested through his characters. Rozanov opposes Gogol' to Pushkin in order to demonstrate the way in which authors should understand the life-creating potential of literature. In contrast to Pushkin, Gogol''s work is full of dead souls, grotesque caricatures who walk like zombies through Russian culture. Referring specifically to this novel, Rozanov remarks that Gogol''s language is closed to the possibility of new life.

Всмотримся в течение этой речи – и мы увидим, что оно безжизненно. Это восковой язык, в котором ничего не шевелится, ни одно слово не выдвигается вперед и не хочет сказать больше, чем сказано во всех других. И где бы мы ни открыли книгу, на какую бы смешную сцену ни попали, мы увидим всюду эту же мертвую ткань языка, в которую обернуты все выведенные фигуры, как в свой общий саван. Уже отсюда, как обусловленное и вторичное, вытекает то, что у всех этих фигур мысли не продолжают, впечатления не связываются, но все они стоят неподвижно, с чертами, докуда довел их автор, и не растут далее ни внутри себя, ни в душе читателя, на которого ложится впечатление. Отсюда – неизгладимость этого впечатления [...] Это – мертвая ткань, которая каковою введена была в душу читателя, таковою в ней и останется навсегда.<sup>76</sup>

Whereas Pushkin reflects the true relationship of outer form to inner content, Gogol' is only able to depict externalities. Gogol' has no ability to depict the essence of the human being, but fills his books with fleshless ghosts who despise this world and only look upwards to Heaven. The celibate Gogol' never married, never had

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<sup>75</sup> Rozanov calls Diakonova's diary one of the greatest books of Russian nineteenth-century literature, writing that no other student could write 'so simply, so complexly, so innocently and cleanly'. See his letter to Gollerbakh of February 1916, published in *V nashei smute*, p. 342.

<sup>76</sup> 'Pushkin i Gogol'', p. 139.

children, and therefore cannot write properly. He creates distorted characters which lack real flesh. This flawed method of creating literary characters is reminiscent of Rozanov's critique of the theories of Incarnation propounded by his opponents within the Orthodox Church.

Они все, как и Плюшкин, произошли каким-то особым способом, ничего не имеющим с естественным рождением: они сделаны из какой-то восковой массы слов, и тайну этого художественного делания знал один Гоголь. Мы над ними смеемся: но замечательно, что это не есть живой смех, которым мы отвечаем на то, что́, встретив в жизни, – отрицаем, с чем боремся. Мир Гоголя – чудно отошедший от нас вдаль мир.<sup>77</sup>

Rozanov argues that Gogol' did not give birth to his characters, but created abstract, lifeless puppets. Gogol' devoted his entire life to portraying people but could only reflect their fixed, lifeless forms and outer appearance. Gogol' never understood, and could not describe, the human soul. Consequently, he convinced his readership that this soul did not exist.

И он нам сказал, что этой души нет, и, рисуя мертвые фигуры, делал это с таким искусством, что мы в самом деле на несколько десятилетий поверили, что было целое поколение ходячих мертвецов.<sup>78</sup>

This examination of Gogol' demonstrates the complex relationship between the production and reception of literature within a cultural environment which, for Rozanov, often struggles to reconcile the aesthetic and didactic functions of texts. The religious function of literature puts extra responsibility on writers, as their influence on society is far-reaching. The revolutionary characters which inhabit the works of Saltykov-Shchedrin and Chernyshevskii encourage radicals like Azef to imitate their atheist activities.<sup>79</sup> Rozanov criticizes Tolstoi for introducing into Russian culture figures opposed to the ideal of the happy family. Lavretskii, Karenin and Pozdnyshchev are all 'half-alive', people who, like their creator, live according to the idea of discord and unhappiness within the family.<sup>80</sup> Gogol's stories cannot be seen as trivial fantasies; instead, Russians interpret them as reality. Gogol', who according to Rozanov had no real love for the family, persuades the Russians to likewise shun such relations. In his last days, Rozanov was to decide that Gogol', more than

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>78</sup> *Legenda o Velikom Inkvizitore*, p. 21.

<sup>79</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Mezhdru Azefom i "Vekhami"', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 263-72 (p. 267).

<sup>80</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'K novomu zakonoproekty o razvode', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 140-43 (p. 141).

anyone else, is responsible for atheism in Russia: he concludes that the ‘terrible Ukrainian’ is responsible for the Russian Revolution.<sup>81</sup>

## 7. Rozanov and the Symbolists

Insisting that the artist must create new life, Rozanov is also critical of the artificiality and abstraction of symbolist art. In the Silver Age, rival trends competed for authority over the definition and use of art. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, writers such as Bal'mont or Briusov assimilated religious motifs and appropriated these for artistic means.<sup>82</sup> Many of Rozanov's contemporaries were inspired by the English art-for-art's-sake movement, and in particular by the formal beauty of Oscar Wilde. In contrast, the *Mir Iskusstva* group emphasized the formal aspects of art (though never disregarding completely the value of its content), and particularly valued individual creativity. An important point which Diaghilev made, opposing the dominant trend in religious thought, was that art should be evaluated in detachment from its historical setting. He rejected the view, especially prominent in Solov'ev and Tolstoi, that art in an ethical dimension improved throughout history.

Competing ideas over aesthetics and artistic function battled over the way in which ideas were transferred to the artistic level. Some writers focused on the spiritual function of literature and its use in the construction of a new religion. Others emphasized the aestheticization of religious ideas predominantly for stylistic purposes. However, in practice, similar themes were exploited, and corresponding themes and ideas overlapped. These trends ran concurrently, and it is often difficult to delineate competing tendencies. The defining ideologies of seemingly rival groups were not rigid. In addition, although groups defined their project in opposition to their rivals, in reality opponents often emerged from the same cultural traditions and shared the same artistic theories. Rozanov's own approach highlights this interrelationship of mutual influence and rebellion. He defined his own work in opposition to these movements, while at the same time drawing heavily on their themes and ideas.

Although Rozanov associated with Russia's symbolists and decadents (for him the two terms are synonymous) after his move to Petersburg, he was never a central member of their movement. He sees

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<sup>81</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 24.

<sup>82</sup> Hansen-Love describes how many Silver Age writers took religious themes not for religious purposes, but assumed them for stylistic motives, in effect aestheticizing the religious. Aage A. Hansen-Love, 'Iskusstvo kak religiia: Poeziia rannego simvolizma', in *Russian Literature in Modern Times*, ed. by Boris Gasparov, Robert P. Hughes, Irina Paperno, and Olga Raevsky-Hughes (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 57-111 (pp. 57-58). It is important to note that the exploitation of religious tropes for aesthetic means is also a broader characteristic of literary modernism, witnessed in many European and American writers from Mann to Joyce.

symbolism as a distinctly foreign, specifically French, movement, which has found fertile soil in Russia and spread rapidly. For Rozanov it is not surprising that the homeland of the Marquis de Sade should bring forth poetry which only has an erotic, and unloving, attitude towards its object.<sup>83</sup> Rozanov regards symbolist poetry as superficial, with no regard for the essence of its subject. Moreover, symbolist poetry does not encourage the reader to be creative himself.

Rozanov writes that symbolism's erotic superficiality has engulfed most areas of Russian art. In an 1896 essay on the symbolists, Rozanov discusses Briusov's one-line poem from 1894, *O, zakroi svoi blednye nogi!*.<sup>84</sup> This for Rozanov exemplifies the problems with symbolism. Where art should involve the unified person, the poet only refers to the object's legs, omitting her head. There is no regard for the essence of the heroine of the poem. All that is left is an unloving, purely sexual attitude between author and poet. This eroticism is also reflected in the fine arts. Visiting the 1892 French exhibition in Moscow, Rozanov was confronted not with scenes of the home, but with erotic images of women, with no real love for the object.<sup>85</sup> This type of art excludes family life and the possibility of real closeness between people.<sup>86</sup>

Декаденство – это ultra без того, к чему оно относилось бы; это – ултировка без ултируемого; вычурность в форме при исчезнувшем содержании; без рифм, без размера, однако же и без смысла «поэзии» – вот decadence.<sup>87</sup>

In his work on the symbolists, Rozanov demonstrates further the interrelationship of what it means to be an artist and to have children. Good art can only come from those who properly understand family life. Merezhkovskii, whose writing Rozanov never regarded highly, is compared to a woman 'who is eternally pregnant but cannot give birth'.<sup>88</sup> Belyi is not just incapable of giving birth to good art: he himself was never properly born.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, Rozanov reveals much in these investigations over differing interpretations of cultural history, and over others' attempts to renew Russian society. One of his major criticisms of the symbolists is that they are misguided in their search for a cultural basis for their inspiration. His contemporaries define their period as a type of Renaissance, but Rozanov believes that they did not understand the true meaning

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<sup>83</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'O simvolistakh i dekadentakh', in *Religiia, filosofia, kul'tura*, pp. 125-35 (p. 127).

<sup>84</sup> Valerii Briusov, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, 7 vols (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973), I, p. 36. It is amusing to note the rumours (apparently unfounded), which circulated particularly among the futurists, that Briusov shared the same 'pedestrian' first name as Rozanov, but altered this to the more stylized 'Valerii'. See Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism: A History* (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1969), p. 169.

<sup>85</sup> 'O simvolistakh i dekadentakh', pp. 127-28.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>88</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Predstaviteli "novogo religioznogo soznaniia"', in *Okolo narodnoi dushi*, pp. 355-60 (p. 359).

<sup>89</sup> *Uedinennoe*, p. 194.

of this time in European history. He argues that the Renaissance should be interpreted as a reconnection of man with the Earth, after the strict asceticism of the Middle Ages.<sup>90</sup> The symbolists try to found their work simply on the artistic forms developed in the Renaissance, without understanding the true creative implications of the content of Renaissance art. Consequently, their work is unable to establish a relationship with God.

Это – слишком бескорыстный вид искусства, и между тем новый человек решительно не находится, как, каким способом, через посредство чего он мог бы почувствовать себя бескорыстным. Он все более и более разучается молиться: молитва есть обращение души к Богу: и между тем его душа обращается только к себе.<sup>91</sup>

Rozanov is also aware of the relationship between symbolist writings and Church texts, and the fact that his peers have assumed the style of religious texts, but without infecting the reader with a love of life. Russian literature has assumed religious forms but neglected the content. Rozanov appears to suggest that in ‘stylizing’ religious themes, his contemporaries are feeding off long-standing traditions in European religious writing.

Вот еще грех духовной литературы – нашей и не только нашей, – новой, но и также древней. Она есть вся – стилизация, стилизацией исчерпывается, кроме стилизации, ничего в себе не содержит.

Когда появилась стилизация по мотивам эстетическим, все ужаснулись; восхитились сперва и потом ужаснулись: каким образом Валерий Брюсов или Андрей Белый могут так волшебным и изумительным «стилизовать» в своих новеллах и рассказах и хронику XIII века, и рыцарский роман, и напр., хлыстов. Но не заметили, что это – старое явление в Европе. Именно все проповеди, поучения, апологетика «стилизируют» инде пророка Моисея (Влад. Соловьев), инде Иоанна Златоуста, и т.д., и т.д. Самое воспроизведение в себе «подвигов аскетизма» есть уже стилизация.<sup>92</sup>

The relationship between form and content is revealed in Rozanov’s re-definition of style. In contrast to the artificial literature of his opponents, Rozanov argues that good literature should express ‘style’, that is an attachment to each entity’s original nature, its eternal principle or ‘causa formalis’.

Что такое «стиль»? Законченность вещи – в той особенной цели, особом назначении, ради которого она существует. [...] Стиль есть душа всех вещей: есть идеал в каждой порознь вещи, но не навязанный ей извне, а вышедший из ее природы, из ее собственной породы.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> ‘O simvolistakh i dekadentakh’, p. 131.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>92</sup> *Poslednie list’ia*, p. 128.

<sup>93</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Stil’ veshchei’, in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 392-95 (p. 392).

When discussing an object stylishly, for example, the Tsar or the clergy, the artist should respect tradition and this object's connection to history. As Rozanov writes in an aphorism from *Uedinennoe*, 'style is where God has kissed a thing'.<sup>94</sup> Style must demonstrate and reinforce each entity's enduring links with God.

It is vital that only holy, decent people become writers. A bad person can only write bad literature.<sup>95</sup> Hence Rozanov's ambivalence to the book is grounded in the fact that literary discourse has become the violent battleground between those who express a true religious feeling, and those who have wrongly exploited this medium in order to wage war on Russia and the Russian family. Rozanov insists on reclaiming literature and restoring its original, religious purpose. He demands a rebirth of Russian literature, but this involves bringing the literary environment as it exists to an end.

Мысль моя и была и есть и *останется* взломать литературу. Подрубить те подмости, на которых она пялится и выпячивает брюхо. Явно они также должны давать мне оплеухи.

Верочка Мордвиновна, невинная и прелестная девушка, написала же в частом письме ко мне – «ненавижу Тургенева», а о Толстом я даже испугался: «Лучше бы он повесился». Отчего же мне в свой черед не ненавидеть литературу?

О, я делаю исключения:

Державин  
Жуковский  
Карамзин  
Батюшков  
Крылов  
Пушкин  
Лермонтов  
Кольцов  
Грановский  
С.Т. Аксаков «с сыновьями»  
Никита Гиляров-Платонов  
Катков? Нет – нужно *мне*  
Рцы  
Шперк  
Розанов  
Мордвинова (письма, не напечатаны)  
Дьяконова

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<sup>94</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Opavshie list'ia: Korob vtoroi*, in *Religiia i kul'tura*, pp. 404-632 (p. 629).

<sup>95</sup> 'Perstye temu', p. 136.



Л. Толстой (первая ½)  
Гончаров  
Ал. Толстой  
Лесков  
Тургенев  
Печерский («В лесах»)  
.....  
.....  
.....

Майков  
Полонский  
Фет  
Страхов  
К. Леонтьев  
Н.Я. Данилевский<sup>96</sup>

The complex nature of Rozanov's rejection of Russian writers is revealed by the fact that his 'exceptions' form a fairly comprehensive list of what some might consider the authors behind the Russian classics. However, Rozanov does continue to reiterate that he could never accept Kantemir, Fonvizin, Griboedov, Gogol', the second half of Tolstoi, or the reformist writers of the 1860s, because of their rejection of Russia.<sup>97</sup> Rozanov wishes to reassert the religious authority and patriotic nature of Russian literature. Furthermore, he wishes to show that the means of producing writing must be restored to its intimate, pre-mechanical level. Only family-orientated people should write, and it is the very act of writing itself which underlines the importance of bringing forth new life. In advancing his own definition of aesthetics, Rozanov rejects the disinterested separation of artist and art required in traditional Kantian theories of art, and hence places a specific emphasis on the creative act itself.

### **8. Rozanov and Creative Activity**

In Rozanov's time, many thinkers stressed the importance of artistic creativity, rejecting the contemplative practices of the Church and its abandonment of this world. Rozanov was inspired by Archimandrite Feodor (Aleksandr Bukharev), and his call to the clergy to engage with society. For Feodor, deeply admired by

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<sup>96</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Mimoletnoe*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), pp. 294-95. Emphasis in original.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 295.

Rozanov (and whose widow, unsurprisingly, Rozanov engaged in an intimate correspondence), the fact that the word of God became flesh provided the model by which his colleagues should accept their ministry to this world.<sup>98</sup> Creative work was essential for the Russian Orthodox Church to enter into history. Feodor insisted that the Church was the body of Christ, but her work on Earth was not complete, and had to be brought to fruition through ecclesiastical renewal.<sup>99</sup> Archimandrite Feodor was influential for many creative thinkers during the Russian religious renaissance, including Rozanov, Florenskii and Tareev.<sup>100</sup>

For Rozanov, the idea of creative activity is closely linked to the themes of labour and possessions. A large factor in the Church's rejection of society was its idealization of poverty, and its condemnation of wealth. Questions of the relation of the economy to Russian thought and literature played an important role in pre- and post-revolutionary debates. Many religious thinkers turned to interpretations of the economy as the environment where human activity mediates between God and earth. These themes play an important role in the work of Sergey Sharapov, and in the writings of those thinkers who subsequently drew influence from Rozanov. In one of his letters, Berdiaev writes that property is intrinsically linked with the person's metaphysical aspect, as it regulates his relationship with nature and enables him to act religiously on earth.<sup>101</sup> Sergii Bulgakov defines economy as man's 'humanization of nature' ('ochelovechenie prirody'), the transfiguration of the world through creative activity.<sup>102</sup>

Rozanov attaches a religious significance to work, and places extra religious demands on literature by extending the definition of labour specifically to professional writing. In Rozanov, the categories of the religious and the literary converge principally through the mediation of writing as a creative act. As noted in the previous chapter, he sees the working week as holy, modelled as it is on the six days of God's creative activity and the one day of rest. In addition, parents who work have the means to support their families.<sup>103</sup> Rozanov is highly critical of the Russians' laziness.

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<sup>98</sup> Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Solov'ev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p. 105.

<sup>99</sup> A. Bukharev, *Moia apologiia po povodu kriticheskikh otzyvov o knige: o sovremennykh dukhovnykh potrebnostiakh mysli i zhizni, osobenno russkoi* (Moscow, no given publisher, 1866), p. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Valliere, pp. 99-100.

<sup>101</sup> N.A. Berdiaev, 'Filosofii neravenstva: pis'ma k nedrugam po sotsial'noi filosofii. Pis'mo dvenadtsatoe', in *Russkaia filosofiiia sobstvennosti*, ed. by K. Isupov and I. Savkin (St Petersburg: SP Ganza, 1993), pp. 290-305 (pp. 303-04).

<sup>102</sup> Bulgakov draws attention to the cognates 'khoziaistvo' and 'khoziainin', where we are called upon to master the world and make it divine. S.N. Bulgakov, 'Filosofiiia khoziaistva', in *Sochinenie v dvukh tomakh*, 2 vols (Moscow: Nauka, 1993), I, pp. 49-297 (pp. 84-85). This point is also made by Valliere, who argues that Bulgakov sees economics as an example of human creativity, like art. Valliere, pp. 256-57.

<sup>103</sup> 'Voprosy russkogo truda', p. 100.

Болен ли труд русский? Об этом нечего и спрашивать. Девять десятых русского упадка объясняются именно этою болезнью – исключительно. Невозможно представить себе того поистине «преображения», поистине «воскресения», какое наступило бы в каждом маленьком кусочке русской действительности и, наконец, в картине всей страны, если бы вдруг в русском человеке пробудилась жадность к работе, жажда работы, скука без работы, тоска по работе.<sup>104</sup>

The human has divine energies embedded in him, and the correct use of these would lead to Russia's material and spiritual revival.<sup>105</sup> However, the Russian Orthodox Church has done nothing to help the people, by failing to propagate the ideal of industriousness. Labour is alien to Orthodoxy, unlike in Protestantism (Rozanov also insists that Catholicism is imbued with laziness). Instead, the Church has made poverty an ideal, and considers financial success a sin.<sup>106</sup> Rozanov points as an example back to the hard work of Old Testament figures, such as Job, which was rewarded by God with wealth. He even notes that in Russian, the words 'Bog' and 'bogatstvo' share a common root.<sup>107</sup> Rozanov also draws parallels between laziness and celibacy. Russians should seek work with the same fervour that a groom seeks his bride. Labour and childbirth work in similar ways, in that they affirm the meaningfulness of matter. Family life and work life go hand in hand for Rozanov, the one being conducive to the other.

Here again, Russian literature has played its part in harming society. Writers have deceived the people into believing that somewhere there is an invisible kingdom like Kitezh, filled with 'philosophizing drunks, pure-hearted prostitutes and landowners without estates, working as "unemployed"'.<sup>108</sup> Rozanov points out the dangers in reading Dostoevskii's apology for Orthodoxy, as expressed in the humility of characters such as Sonia Marmeladova. Russian literature fails in its obligation to underline the importance of labour.

Нет, вы мне покажите в литературе: 1) трезвого, 2) трудолюбца, 3) здорового и нормального человека, который был бы опозтизирован, и я зачеркну свои строки. Но от Обломова до нигилистов тургеневской «Нови» – все это инвалидный дом калек, убогих, нищих... «Блаженны нищие... Им Царство небесное». Русская литература широко разработала это «царство», сведя его с неба на землю, перенеся его из Галилеи в Великороссию.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. Rozanov continues to stress the obligation placed on man by God to work, by writing: 'Для здорового именно работа есть норма и идеал, «молитва» и «заповедь».' See 'Voprosy russkogo truda', p. 107.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

Despite frequent insistences that he is lazy, that he came to Earth to observe and not to participate, and despite his expressed desire to return to the womb, Rozanov did work very hard. His output during his career as a professional writer was extremely impressive. Over a sustained period Rozanov wrote three articles a week for *Novoe Vremia* alone, not counting his contributions to other periodicals. In writing, Rozanov opens up a relationship between the content of his writing and the manner in which it is produced. For Rozanov, the religious function of literature is not only revealed in its subject-matter. Perhaps the most potent way this is demonstrated appears at the beginning of *Uedinennoe*.

У меня за стол садится 10 человек, – с прислугой. И все кормятся моим трудом.  
Все около моего труда *нашли место в мире*.<sup>110</sup>

Rozanov's work performs on a variety of different levels. The content of literature enjoys an immense spiritual influence on Russian society. The depiction of happy, loving families encourages the reader to enter into family life. Rozanov's books operate as an organizing principle for the religious behaviour of his own family, and as spiritual education for families all over Russia. His works help the reader to find his place on Earth, by teaching him to enter into a harmonious relationship with matter. In addition, by interpreting writing as a form of labour, Rozanov fulfils his religious duties as head of his household, by earning money for his works, and thereby providing for his family.

There is a metaphysical aspect in his attitude towards money. The acquisition of money to support one's wife and children is not greed, but a religious obligation. The construction of literature, providing that its content is religious, is in itself holy, but the reward for such labour is also sacrosanct. Money becomes a way of affirming man's links with this world and its family values. Critics accused Rozanov of a mercenary attitude towards literature, for the fact that he expressed a myriad of opposing ideas in rival journals, often simultaneously.<sup>111</sup> However, much of the explanation for Rozanov's apparent disloyalty to Suvorin lay in the fact that Rozanov was motivated to earn as much money as possible for his family.

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<sup>110</sup> *Uedinennoe*, p. 164. Emphasis in original.

<sup>111</sup> Many of Rozanov's *Novoe Vremia* colleagues were highly critical of Rozanov's prolific nature, accusing him of writing so many articles purely for the money. Even Suvorin warned Rozanov about selling his soul, but reluctantly refused to forbid Rozanov from writing for rival periodicals. These problems are discussed in a 1903 letter from Suvorin to Rozanov, reprinted in *Priznaki vremeni*, pp. 308-09. Perhaps one of the most notorious critiques of Rozanov's apparent lack of principles was levelled by Trotskii, who cites several instances of Rozanov's shameless vacillating opinion: 'Даже и парадоксальнейшие преувеличения Фрейда куда более значительны и плодотворны, чем размашистые догадки Розанова, который сплошь сбивается на умышленное юродство и прямую болтовню, твердит зады и врет за двух [...] Червеобразный человек и писатель: избивающийся, скользкий, липкий, укорачивается и растягивается по мере нужды – и как червь, противен.' Trotskii, not understanding the metaphysics behind Rozanov, goes on to criticize the manner

Rozanov's positive assessment of money is revealed more specifically in his interest in numismatics, which sheds more light on his love of ancient civilizations, and also by extension on the way in which writing for Rozanov helps restore a connection to the ancient world. In the content and the production of his work, Rozanov establishes a close link between literature and ancient coins. Numismatics was one of Rozanov's great loves, and out of the many subjects discussed in his works, one of the areas where he possessed profound scholarly knowledge. It is no coincidence that Rozanov's interest in ancient coins developed alongside his fascination with ancient Egypt. Both interests mark his attraction to the pre-Christian world. However, as a student Rozanov was unable fully to pursue his interest in either of these topics, and it was only once he had moved permanently to St Petersburg, that he had the sources and finances to pursue these interests. Once established as a publicist, Rozanov devoted much of his earnings to building up a significant coin collection. This contained predominantly coins from the ancient Middle East, and by 1911 comprised around 4500 coins from the ancient Greek world, and around 1300 from the Roman Empire. In Rozanov's collection they were ordered according to their image.<sup>112</sup> Rozanov corresponded with the most prominent collectors in Russia, including A.V. Oreshnikov, Kh.Kh. Gil', A.K. Markov, O.F. Retovskii and I.I. Tolstoi. He also knew and admired Ivan Tsvetaev, and encouraged the head of the Museum of Fine Arts to make annual purchases of coins to exhibit there.<sup>113</sup>

However, Rozanov's interest in numismatics was not limited to a scientific examination. In his collection, Rozanov was certainly keen to know the historical facts behind his coins, such as their dates, and under whose rule they were made. Alongside this, Rozanov maintained a tactile relationship with his collection. He enjoyed fondling them, and carried around in his pocket his three favourite gold coins. Through the coins, it has been suggested that Rozanov constructed a direct and personal connection to ancient peoples.

И кто из нумизматов когда-либо ставил перед собой и решал вопрос – «Как и почему пришло на ум собирать древние монеты»? А вот Розанову пришло на ум задать себе этот вопрос – по той простой причине, что в древних монетах он ВИДЕЛ историю народа, – видел во всем объеме внутреннее содержание этой истории со всей ее мистикой. И монета в руках Розанова превращалась в ключ, открывавший ему «вход» – через века и тысячелетия в мир ЖИВЫХ теней, с

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in which he sold himself for a coin, subverting Rozanov's own views on prostitution. See Trotskii, *Literatura i revoliutsiia*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>112</sup> A.N. Benua, 'Religiozno-filosofskoe obshchestvo. Kruzhok Merezhkovskikh. Vladimir Rozanov', in *Vasilii Rozanov: pro et contra*, I, pp. 132-42 (p. 141).

<sup>113</sup> See <<http://www.museum.ru/gmii/exh.asp?last=26apr-1june2006>>, last accessed 23 March 2007.

которыми он любил и умел беседовать, глядяваться в них и рассказывать о них.<sup>114</sup>

This description permits comparisons with the manner in which the Orthodox approach their icons. It is possible to argue that the way Rozanov seeks communion with ancient peoples through the coin has certain parallels with the way Orthodox worshippers seek through icons participation in the life of the saints. This study of ancient coins forms an essential component of Rozanov's daily routine, enabling him to re-vitalize the present moment by introducing into it the validity of ancient beliefs. This repeated contact with his coin collection was a major inspiration for his new books. Whilst examining and fondling his coins, he was inspired to write many of the passages in the *Opavshelistika* labelled 'za numizmatikoi'.<sup>115</sup> Rozanov appropriates for the coin and the word similar functions. He uses ancient coins as inspiration for his philosophical writings, which are then exchanged for contemporary money. At *Novoe Vremia* Rozanov is paid by the line, and so he establishes a direct link between the word and the coin. He uses his earnings to fulfil his familial obligations, and also to purchase more ancient coins. Thus the cycle is repeated. The connections between word and coin are contained within Rozanov's idea of the home as the locus for man's religious behaviour. The continual exchange of ancient and contemporary coins appears to demonstrate more broadly Rozanov's desire to restore pre-Christian values in his contemporary setting.<sup>116</sup>

Rozanov's love for the coin demonstrates his desire for personal contact with pre-Christian cultures, and his interest in their social organizations. It is possible to infer that here Rozanov's view can be contextualized within a more general concern in Europe that an increasing abstraction in financial relations was leading to instability in social relations. In European culture, the coin was considered the guarantor of social relations, and its replacement by banknotes brought about 'vanishing frames of reference and floating

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<sup>114</sup> Spasovskii, p. 90. The words in upper case letters are the author's own.

<sup>115</sup> It is interesting to note that many writers have adopted ritual activity in order to create the new. This will be developed below in Section 9.

<sup>116</sup> Rozanov sees economics principally in terms of how religious relationships are structured around the home. Many commentators have noted that the word 'economy' derives from the Greek *oikonomia*, a term referring to the management of a household. Economy does not refer exclusively to the financial transactions of the home, but has wider consequences in the way in which religious activity is structured and perpetuated from generation to generation; it encompasses 'at once house and household, building and family, land and chattels, slaves and domestic animals, hearth and ancestral grave: a psycho-physical community of the living and the dead and the unborn'. John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 83-84. Quoted in Clare Cavanagh, *Osip Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation of Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 335. Cavanagh also provides a useful discussion more broadly of the relationship between currency and literature in Rozanov's time. See Cavanagh, pp. 146-92. The word 'economy' is used in Orthodox theology to refer to the activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit before men on Earth.

signifiers'.<sup>117</sup> Likewise, Shell, following Aristotle, demonstrates that a coin has two values: the 'natural (as stamped art) and unnatural (as monetary tokens)'.<sup>118</sup>

Although Rozanov does not engage directly with the themes discussed by Shell, standing behind Rozanov's work is his concern over abstraction, and a detachment of the word from physical reality. As discussed in previous chapters, Rozanov searches throughout his work to find the means to restore the equivalence of, in his own terminology, word and flesh. As noted above, he sees in old coins a means of preserving ancient relationships. For Rozanov, the connection between language and the coin is not merely understood on a linguistic or political plane, but also on the religious-philosophical. The coin manages the relationship between thing and representation, and this also underpins his understanding of the function of literature; through literature Rozanov wishes to demonstrate the equality of the ideal with the real, and also the permanent relevance of pre-Christian lifestyles. His love for the Edenic word, as it first appeared to man, with its original meanings, is paralleled in his fascination for ancient coins.<sup>119</sup> Rozanov probes the way in which language has become abstract in Russian religious writing in his criticism of (in Rozanov's view pedantic and unnecessary) Nikon's reforms of holy texts. Rozanov contends that there is no real currency standing behind Nikon's purely verbal changes to Russian religious discourse.

Вся эта область – вербальная (verbum = слово), словесная, а – не эссенциальная, не существенная, до вещи, до «religio» относящаяся. Только в пространстве пустом, где вовсе не было «вещи» религии, rei religionis, или, что то же, при явно покинувшем нас Боге, мог возникнуть наш спор о словах. Ну, вещей нет, тогда будем заниматься словами, нет золота, довольствуемся «кредитными знаками». Но страшно, что «кредитные-то знаки» (в поле нашего религиозного сознания) не обеспечивались никаким позади лежащим фондом золота.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Jean-Joseph Goux, *The Coiners of Language*, trans. by Jennifer Curtiss Gage (Norman/London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 82.

<sup>119</sup> In the pre-modern societies to which Rozanov often refers, the coin was melted from a metal whose value was equal to its face value, and therefore guaranteed the permanent equality of thing and its symbol. In European thought, the word and the coin, both deriving from the Greek *sēmē*, have long held corresponding functions in systems of intellectual and economic discourse. The coin has traditionally been used to demonstrate the relationship between ideas and the material world. In similar fashion, in Byzantium, the Eucharist was stamped with Christ's name on it, proving the reality of Christ's incarnation. See Marc Shell, *Money, Language and Thought: Literature and Philosophic Economies from the Medieval through to the Modern Era* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1982), p. 2. Such relationships feed into linguistic theory: Goux argues that there is a 'structural homology' between money and language, and that the crisis of realist literature which swept through Europe towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied by (Goux suggests that it was caused by) a crisis in banking, where coins were replaced by notes which held their value in name only. Goux, *The Coiners of Language*, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> 'Ob odnoi osobennoi zaslugе Vl.S. Solov'eva', p. 438.

Rozanov's arguments over the meaninglessness of mere verbal reforms in Russian spiritual texts are reminiscent of his criticism, noted above, of the pedantry of arguments over misspellings in publications of Pushkin.

It is worth contextualizing Rozanov's emphasis on the permanent meaning of the word, and his concerns over abstraction, within the intellectual and literary currents of his time. He is part of a wider movement which viewed with suspicion developments in Russian literature, where attention was diverted from the reality of this world, especially in its Edenic state, to a supposed higher plane. Rozanov is not alone in seeing language as the means to reaffirm the man's connection with the world, and such arguments were at the centre of the crisis in Russian symbolism in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rozanov was never a fully-fledged member of the symbolist movement, although he was close personally to many members of the first wave of Russian symbolists (and generally resented by the second wave). He was never a member of the Acmeist group, but his views can be contextualized within a broader movement, to renew literature by examining the world anew through fresh eyes. A major broadside in the Acmeist offensive was Gorodetskii's 1913 manifesto, 'Neskol'ko techenii v sovremennoi russkoi kul'ture', where he attacked the abstraction of the symbolists.

Борьба между акмеизмом и символизмом, если это борьба, а не занятие покинутой крепости, есть, прежде всего, борьба за этот мир, звучащий, красочный, имеющий формы, вес и время, за нашу планету Землю. Символизм, в конце концов, заполнив мир «соответствиями», обратил его в фантом, важный лишь постолько, поскольку он сквозит и просвечивает иными мирами, и умалил его высокую самооценку. У акмеистов роза опять стала хороша сама по себе, своими лепестками, запахом и цветом, а не своими мыслимыми подобиями с мистической любовью или чемнибудь еще.<sup>121</sup>

Gorodetskii sees the poet's task as that of a new Adam, to give to all things their own name again. In such a way, the Acmeists see language as mediating between the present moment and eternity. The true poet, Gorodetskii contests, should bring into art the moment which can then be made eternal; this is a subtle difference from the symbolists' desire to use each moment to see into the eternal.<sup>122</sup> Therefore for Gorodetskii, each moment is given its own permanent meaning. Rozanov takes up a similar position, but insists on language's ability to renew society by reinforcing lost values.

In Rozanov's wider view of the value of the word, he is engaging more broadly with the tensions between Acmeism and symbolism. In crude terms, the difference between the two traditions rests in the fact that

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<sup>121</sup> Sergei Gorodetskii, 'Neskol'ko techenii v sovremennoi russkoi kul'ture', *Apollon*, 13 (1913), pp. 46-50 (p. 48).

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.



in the latter, the unity of the physical world is preserved only through a correspondence, forged in the poet's mind, with a higher reality, where the ideal plane bestows ultimate meaning.<sup>123</sup> Rozanov is similar to both the Acmeist and symbolist movements, but yet different, in that he sees ultimate value in this world, but only because this world is Heaven, a parity guaranteed, lost, and potentially restored through man's creative activity. Rozanov's belief that Russian literature should reinforce man's pre-Fall innocence, leads him, like some of the Acmeists and Adamists, to look back to man's Edenic state. However, Rozanov is also drawn specifically to the act of Creation, and there is a sense that the methods Rozanov uses to write confirm that literary work is in itself a form of *imitatio Dei*.<sup>124</sup> Rozanov often privileges the act of writing over the meaning of his work: he characterized this spontaneous type of writing as his 'Otsebiatina'.<sup>125</sup> Rozanov is compelled to put his feelings immediately into words. Sometimes this happens at his desk, as he sits with his left hand on his groin and his right clutching a pen (a position which affirms Rozanov's deliberate link between writing and childbirth). However, such impulses occur at other times as well, in the bath or even the lavatory. All movements of the soul must be uttered out loud.<sup>126</sup> Here too Rozanov anticipates the focus of the formalists on the 'poetic function' of language, rather than on its 'referential function'.<sup>127</sup> However, Rozanov takes this further, and stresses the symbiotic relationship between these roles. For Rozanov, the process of writing is its own message, designed to encourage creativity in his readership.

## 9. The Art of Writing

Chapter 3 highlighted the importance of repeated behaviour in Rozanov's life. The repeated plays an important role in the *Opavshelistika*, not only in its content but also in the way it is constructed. Commentators have paid attention to the fact that writers adopt habitual patterns of behaviour in order to create an environment where they can produce new material. As already noted, Pushkin felt most comfortable writing sat back on his bed with his notepad on his thighs.<sup>128</sup> Dostoevskii maintained a strict writing regime, habitually drinking a set

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<sup>123</sup> Justin Doherty, *The Acmeist Movement in Russian Poetry: Culture and the Word* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 133.

<sup>124</sup> Here, Rozanov shares similarities with some of his peers. Doherty discusses how, for Gorodetskii, the creation of poetry is explicitly likened to the Creation. Doherty also discusses the tactile relationship the Acmeists tried to develop with the world, by comparing the naming of each object to caressing it. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>125</sup> See his letter to Suvorin dated 8 February 1908 (O.S.), reprinted in *Priznaki vremeni*, p. 365. In return, Suvorin appreciated Rozanov for writing not what he knew, but what he felt, although even Suvorin himself often did not understand his employee's articles. See *Priznaki vremeni*, p. 332.

<sup>126</sup> *Uedinennoe*, p. 197. Slobin argues that for Remizov the word cannot remain unspoken, but must always be uttered. Slobin, p. 30.

<sup>127</sup> Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', p. 85.

<sup>128</sup> Binyon describes the routine Pushkin adopted to assist his writing. T.J. Binyon, *Pushkin: A Biography* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), p. 200.

amount of tea each evening before working, shutting himself away to work through the night. The Russophile Anthony Burgess devotes much of his work to themes of habit, thought and its inspiration for literature, and in particular the relationship between sexual and literary activity. Rozanov himself had his own habits when writing. He would sit in his study, re-examining and fondling his coins while he sought inspiration for new work. When he wrote, he would do so with his left hand holding his groin, confirming the association of his reproductive organs with the production of new work.

However, within the framework of the habitual, Rozanov appears motivated by a need continually to create more material as a response to God's creative work. In his *Opavshelistika*, each passage is constructed independently, as a new beginning, elevating Rozanov's fetishism of trivial things to a religious and literary principle. The presentation of each new passage appears to reflect Rozanov's emphasis on new beginnings. Each passage is created naturally, spontaneously, without prior consideration or contemplation.<sup>129</sup> Rozanov had originally intended that each new section would be printed on a fresh page. (Financial restraints prevented his works being published this way in Rozanov's day, and it is only in recent re-publications in Moscow that his intentions have been fulfilled.) Rozanov makes explicit the link between the body and book, by drawing a direct parallel between the Bible, the 'written Book of God', and the human being, the 'unwritten, created, physical book of God'.<sup>130</sup> The implication is that man should write books in the same way that God created man. The correspondence between the book and the person is reinforced in Rozanov's emphasis on the appearance of each new life on Earth.

Собственно, есть *одна книга*, которую человек обязан внимательно прочитать, – это книга его собственной жизни. И, собственно, есть одна книга, которая для него по-настоящему поучительна, – это книга его личной жизни.

Она ему открыта вполне, и – *ему одному*. Собственно, это и есть то *новое, совершенно новое в мире*, ни на что чужое *не похожее*, что он может прочитать, узнать. *Его личная жизнь* – единственный новый факт, который он с собой приносит на землю.<sup>131</sup>

In 1912 Rozanov published *Uedinennoe*, which had a profound effect on the Russian philosophical and literary environment. In response to this book, Berdiaev called Rozanov the 'foremost Russian stylist, a writer with real

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<sup>129</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 24.

<sup>130</sup> 'Psikhologiiia russkogo raskola', p. 47.

<sup>131</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 25. Emphasis in original. There are precedents in European thought for the comparison of philosophical teaching and insemination. In *The Republic*, Socrates plants ideas in his listeners' heads where they grow like children; he also draws parallels between genetic harmony and the ability to see the truth, and insists that illegitimate children can never become philosophers. Plato, *Republic*, VII, 538a.

sparks of genius'.<sup>132</sup> Marina Tsvetaeva gushed with praise after reading *Uedinennoe*.<sup>133</sup> Gor'kii, Rozanov's frequent sparring partner, but someone who deeply respected the philosopher, admitted that on reading *Uedinennoe* he burst into tears with 'the deepest yearning and pain for the Russian person'.<sup>134</sup> *Uedinennoe*, like the other components of the *Opavshelistika*, is presented as a series of passages which discuss home life, his finances, religion, political affairs, as well as philosophy and literature, and the personal lives of prominent Russian figures. Although in style these texts differ from Rozanov's earlier journalistic work and essays on religious and political themes, they carry the same message, that is the obligation to create the kingdom of God on Earth. The *Opavshelistika* must be seen in the broader context of his life work.

After *Uedinennoe*, Rozanov went on to compose several more works of this genre, among them the two bundles of *Opavshie list'ia*, *Sakharna*, *Mimoletnoe* and *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*. The bold aphoristic style of these works, and his fierce criticism of Christ and Christianity, drew inevitable comparisons with Nietzsche – although this appears to have been a stock insult among Russian religious thinkers. There is no evidence to suggest that Rozanov was directly influenced by the German in terms of his ideas or the manner in which they were incarnated. In addition, the style of these works has also been compared to Augustine and Rousseau (though as Nikoliukin indicates, Rozanov has no intention of using these books as a personal confession), as well as Pascal and Freud.<sup>135</sup> As suggested above, Rozanov received greater inspiration from the 'plotless' writings of Giliarov-Platonov and Rtsy. The term *Opavshie list'ia* is taken from Rtsy's *Listopad*. There can be also little doubt that Shperk's *Mysli i refleksy* played a significant role in Rozanov's thought; this 1895 collection of aphorisms discusses the philosophy of ethics, personality, history and sex.<sup>136</sup>

The reasons for Rozanov's adoption of this intensely personal style of writing reveal the complex way in which the production and reception of literature converge. Rozanov is clearly focused on writing to bring about a wider national salvation. Nevertheless, there was certainly an attempt by Rozanov to secure some kind of immortality by ensuring that he would remain read after his death. He considered work some kind of mausoleum, a monument to his own life.<sup>137</sup> The similarity between writing and having children in Rozanov's

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<sup>132</sup> Berdiaev, 'O "vechno bab'em" v russkoi dushe', p. 41.

<sup>133</sup> Tsvetaeva wrote in a letter to Rozanov dated 7 March 1914 (O.S.) that so far she had only read *Uedinennoe*, but that she considered him a genius. Marina Tsvetaeva, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, 7 vols (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 1995), VI, p. 119.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Aleksandr Nikoliukin, 'Miniatiury Vasiliia Rozanova', in Vasiliia Rozanov, *Miniatiury*, ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Progress-Pleiada, 2004), pp. 5-34 (p. 22).

<sup>135</sup> See Nikoliukin's commentary to *Mimoletnoe*, p. 473.

<sup>136</sup> See Shperk, *Mysli i refleksy*, in *Literaturnaia kritika*, pp. 149-64.

<sup>137</sup> *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*, p. 66.

worldview shows that this new writing was part of Rozanov's 'immortality programme'.<sup>138</sup> Just as parents live on in their children, Rozanov hoped to overcome death through the products of his literary activity.

Rozanov's identification of literature and the body has long been established by contemporary and later critics.<sup>139</sup> Berdiaev was sensitive to this fact, and wrote that Rozanov's words are not mere symbols, but living flesh. According to Berdiaev, Rozanov's genius lies in the fact that he imbues his words with a life of their own.

У него нет слов отвлеченных, мертвых, книжных. Все слова – живые, биологические, полнокровные.<sup>140</sup>

Nevertheless, this approach must take into account Rozanov's belief that the creation of literature is not merely an end in itself. The product of literary endeavour should also have further creative potential and produce an environment in which the continuing somatization of the divine ideas can take place. Such an approach focuses on the activity of literature, rather than merely its content. Throughout Rozanov's work, there is a deep suspicion of silence which matches his suspicion of ascetic isolation and celibacy. Contrary to the careful guarding of the heart by the body advocated by the hesychasts, Rozanov places great importance on the uttered word. For Rozanov, to speak is to engage with the world and the word must always be reproductive.<sup>141</sup> The activity of speech often becomes more important than the content, explaining Crone's humorous reference to Rozanov's 'verbal diarrhoea'.<sup>142</sup> Rozanov frequently criticizes Benkendorf for his censorship, and he compares the damage done by the restrictions on Pushkin's works to a monk who advocates celibacy and endangers family life.<sup>143</sup> In presenting the correspondence between literary and sexual activity, silence provokes considerable frustration for Rozanov. It is worth comparing the above quote from Tolstoi's *Voskresenie* (in Chapter 4 Section 2) with the following passage from the *Poslednie list'ia*.

Самое совокупление – кто поверит и даже как возможно? – Но иногда оно было у меня сквозь слезы. Никогда без задумчивости. И никогда, никогда с сытым самоудовольствием.  
ЭТОГО (ужаса) – никогда.  
Всегда это было выражением любви, любования, нежности, чуть-чуть грациозной игры. Всегда и непременно – уважения.  
Как бык и собака – никогда.

<sup>138</sup> This term is taken from Irene Masing-Delic, *Abolishing Death: A Salvation Myth of Russian Twentieth-Century Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>139</sup> The comparison of literature and the body was a common paradigm among early twentieth-century Russian writers. See Doherty, *The Acmeist Movement in Russian Poetry*, p. 100.

<sup>140</sup> Berdiaev, 'О "vechno bab'em" v russkoi dushe', p. 41.

<sup>141</sup> 'Nechto iz tumana "obrazov" i "podobii"', p. 287.

<sup>142</sup> Crone, 'Remizov's "Kukha"', pp. 210-11.

<sup>143</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'V mire liubvi, zastenчивosti i strakha', in *Staraiia i molodaia Rossiia*, pp. 203-10 (p. 205).

Впрочем, у них – серьезно, но человек, «ходячая пошлость», воображает, будто повторяет их, когда у него «сыто».  
Фу.<sup>144</sup>

Rozanov engages with the silences in Russian literature, and fills them with sexual content. However, this is more complex than a narration of the sexual act, or an aestheticization of sexual attraction as in Briusov's example. When Rozanov describes in detail his attitude towards sexuality, he is trying to encourage a physical response in his reader, but he also provides a reasoned justification for engaging in sexual acts, which is designed to overcome the reticence and shame common in contemporary Russian literature when it comes to such matters.

Rozanov writes that he wants to see the whole world pregnant.<sup>145</sup> This is one of the reasons behind the construction of the *Opavshelistika*. However, in writing this aphorism, it is not just the content itself which has a spiritual effect on the reader, it is the very fact that Rozanov has made his ideas flesh which is intended to encourage the reader to do likewise. Writing is a sexual act. The reader is exposed to Rozanov's ideas on sex, agrees with them, and then has sex himself. The creative act of exposing his ideas for Rozanov comes in fits and bursts of activity which is explicitly likened to sex, conception and birth.

Особым, почти кожным ощущением я чувствую, что «вышел пот из меня», и я устал – сияю и устал – что «родилось», «родил», что «вышло семя из меня» и я буду спать после этого до нового накопления семени.<sup>146</sup>

Rozanov seeks to make reading and writing identical experiences, which bring reader and writer together.<sup>147</sup> The fruit of his labours is designed to encourage others to go out make their ideas fleshy – his books are mixed not with water or ink, but with sperm.<sup>148</sup> Reader and writer are joined through the transmission of writing, in a unity which is intensely physical, and domestic. On the other hand, Rozanov sees the Russian Orthodox Church as presenting a stark choice between the body or the book. He raises serious questions about the compatibility of scriptural study and family life. Scholars isolated in theological research cannot interact with the world. He combats this not only through content but through the revelation of the processes of composition. Rozanov

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<sup>144</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 29.

<sup>145</sup> *Opavshie list'ia I*, p. 336.

<sup>146</sup> *Poslednie list'ia*, p. 87.

<sup>147</sup> This is a common feature of the Russian Silver Age. See Doherty, *The Acmeist Movement in Russian Poetry*, p. 134.

<sup>148</sup> In investigating parallels between money and literature in Rozanov, it is interesting to note that he deliberately set the price of his books high, precisely because they were reproductive words, immersed in his seed. *Opavshie list'ia II*, p. 350.

expects our response to his language not to be just cerebral, but intensely visceral. The reader is meant to share the same physical experiences, the smells, the sounds and the feelings, as Rozanov himself.<sup>149</sup> His work anticipates, and in some cases directly inspired, the type of literature which emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the reader is called upon to cultivate a physical, anti-intellectual response, for example in such writers as D.H. Lawrence or Anais Nin.<sup>150</sup> The reader is called upon not to consider Rozanov's work in a detached manner, but to participate in it. As Siniavskii points out, Rozanov's literature is not only read, but actually becomes 'a part of our life'.<sup>151</sup>

In 1899, Rozanov recollected the fear he had when he had moved from the provinces to the Russian capital six years previously. He had relocated to the most un-Russian of all the Empire's cities with the hope of 'prolonging or maintaining' the ideas of those he deeply loved – Aksakov, Khomiakov, Leont'ev and Giliarov-Platanov.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, he was terrified of Petersburg as the home of revolutionaries. Despite his respect for Peter the Great's reforms, Rozanov never showed any love for the Russian capital, the centre of Russian atheism and terrorism. (It appears that Rozanov gathered his convictions that Petersburg was full of revolutionaries from Dostoevskii's *Besy*.) The city itself was alien to Russian life, built upon 'abstract lines, without a soul, without art, without prayer or memories'.<sup>153</sup> The young men who conspired to bring about the Russian apocalypse were not only godless, but also childless. For Rozanov it was impossible for a family man to be a revolutionary. It was essential for Russia's salvation that this disenfranchised generation was encouraged to settle into family life, and Rozanov took it upon himself to demonstrate most vividly to the socialists the answer to their problems. Rozanov arrived in Petersburg as a kind of anti-Myshkin, not alone but with his young family, and his recollection of the event is remarkable even by his own standards.

Мы, русские, все мечтатели, и вот я приехал в Петербург с мучительною мечтою, что тут – чиновники и нигилисты, с которыми «я буду бороться», и мне хотелось чем-нибудь сейчас же выразить свое *неуважение* к ним; прямо – неуважение к столице Российской Империи. Мечтая, мы бываем как мальчики; и вот я взял

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<sup>149</sup> This in part explains Rozanov's attraction to Dostoevskii: as Boldyrev notes, Rozanov is drawn to Dostoevskii because he believes that Dostoevskii enjoys a unique ability to dismantle the boundaries between writer and reader. See Nikolai Boldyrev, *Semia Ozirisa, ili Vasilii Rozanov kak poslednii vetkhozavetnyi prorok* (Cheliabinsk: Ural L.T.D, 2001), p. 462.

<sup>150</sup> Pease explores the tensions between the intellectual and physical response to modernist literature, and the way writers, especially Lawrence, experiment with these issues. She writes that one of the characteristics of modernist art was the replacement of the content of objects whose form was preserved, so that 'the aesthetic object becomes for its viewer or reader a substitute body', whose objectification means that the physical and irrational [can] be safely transubstantiated into the reflective reason of the aesthetic moment'. Pease, *Modernism*, p. 67.

<sup>151</sup> Siniavskii, p. 113.

<sup>152</sup> 'Sredi liudei "chisto russkogo napravleniia"', p. 196.

<sup>153</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Obidy russkomu cheloveku', in *Terror protiv russkogo natsionalizma*, pp. 160-61 (p. 161).

пятимесячную дочку на руки и понес, а затем я стал носить по зале I класса, перед носом «кушающей» публики; и твердо помню свой внутренний и радостный и неугодующий голос: «Я вас научу».<sup>154</sup>

The two types of production coincide. Rozanov lays out before the Russian people the results of his domestic endeavours. Where in 1893 he exhibited his own daughter to the unmarried, he would devote the next quarter of a century of his family life in bringing forth more children and articles, in which he would exploit the example of Rozanov family life for the nation's enlightenment. Rozanov presents a new form of writing, where his words are flesh and the symbol is full of new content. Abstract thought must be replaced by the family.

«Путь» наш – не философия и не наука, а *ребенок*. Новая «книга» изучений просто есть *чтение* дитяти, т.е. непрестанное *общение* с ним, погружение в его стихию. Он и станет нашим *символом*.<sup>155</sup>

Rozanov rejects the eschatological symbol of his contemporaries, and establishes his own symbol, which points backwards in time. To some degree, creative freedom becomes a religious duty; man is obliged to have children. Only childbirth can hold together the precarious balance between person and universe, history and innovation, philosophy and literature, the mythological and the ritual. This explains Rozanov's decision to use his own person as the subject matter for the *Opavshelistika*, a literary endeavour which has broader meaning for the Russians. Contrary to the commonly-accepted view, the centre of Rozanov's thought is not occupied by Rozanov. His main concern is not his own salvation, but the continued wellbeing of Russia. Rozanov presents his own life as an example to the Russian nation on how to overcome death.

Critics differ in their appreciation of how the tensions between the subjective and the objective in Rozanov can be resolved. Hutchings argues that the tensions between the personal and the universal are resolved through the 'domestication of public discourse'.<sup>156</sup> He argues that iconography provides the key to understanding these tensions, as the icon mediates between the particular and the universal, and 'accommodates' concepts of the divine into everyday life.<sup>157</sup> Hutchings contends that the role of the other is crucial in Rozanov's construction of self, and he qualifies Rozanov's work as 'the circular process of self's alienation from, domestication of, surrender to and re-alienation from the other'.<sup>158</sup> However, Clowes rejects the theory that there can be harmony between the private and the public in Rozanov's later works, and instead writes that in

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<sup>154</sup> V.V. Rozanov, 'Granitsy nashei ery', in *Semeinyi vopros v Rossii*, pp. 53-66 (p. 60). Emphasis in original.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66. Emphasis in original.

<sup>156</sup> Hutchings, 'Breaking the Circle of Self', p. 79.

<sup>157</sup> Hutchings, *Russian Modernism*, p. 37.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

*Uedinennoe* and *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnosheniia evreev k krovi*, 'the gap between religious and secular, and between elite, philosophical discourse and middlebrow, journalistic discourse has never been greater. Indeed, the authenticity of the one breaks down in the face of the other'.<sup>159</sup>

These tensions between the subjective and the objective can only be reconciled by the concept of childbirth as continuing activity. Rozanov attempts to make his own subjective and creative experience a universal category for his readership. This was not appreciated by many of his readers who perhaps did not understand the universal meaning in the expression of a personal religious framework. For example, Tsvetaeva, although having appreciated the genius behind *Uedinennoe*, was critical of the over-subjective nature of *Opavshie list'ia*.

В Розанове есть что-то, что мешает ему стать писателем вполне первоклассным или – по шаблону – великим... Бедна ли вообще душа человека, бедна ли была душа Розанова – как знать? Но когда она все «выболтает» до конца, без остатка, на нее смотришь с жалостью: только-то всего? Розанов – если вдумываться – почти плоский писатель, со своими постоянным «что на уме, то и на языке». Навсегда к нему не привяжешься.<sup>160</sup>

Nevertheless, his desire to overcome ascetic silence leads him to privilege the act of writing over its content. His focus on activity, and the way this is expressed in his aesthetics in the activity of the writer on the reader, means that he is often willing to write anything, despite the fact that it might offend. But for Rozanov, the fact that he writes is the message. The unity in Rozanov's work between physical and mental appreciation, form and content, can only be upheld through creative activity, the demand for a new child.

Rozanov saw his mission as fighting against universal ideas which were stultifying Russian culture, such as positivism, socialism, and general atheism. To combat these, Rozanov entered the literary sphere with a new genre deliberately orientated to reform the reader's relationship to literature. Engelstein characterizes Rozanov's technique as 'literary terrorism designed to disorganize public discourse'.<sup>161</sup> However, Rozanov replaces this with a universal message which rests on man's personal ties with God and the demand to have children. His work abounds in his attempts to take specific events from his life and human history, and his efforts to find wider laws of religion from often highly personal episodes. Rozanov certainly complicates the relationship between personal and communal religion by privileging the former. He writes that God is always

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<sup>159</sup> Clowes, p. 180.

<sup>160</sup> Tsvetaeva, *Sobranie sochinenii*, V, pp. 301-02.

<sup>161</sup> Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness*, p. 314.



‘only my God, and nobody else’s’.<sup>162</sup> Here again Rozanov uses familial terminology to describe how this relationship works in practice. God is father to us all, in a biological sense, and there is a part of God in each one of us. Likewise, Rozanov disingenuously pretends to have no need of a reader. And at the same time he insists on enjoying intimacy with his reader, a relationship which is ontologically based. It is only through the activity of childbirth that Rozanov reconciles the individual with its entry into the whole. This is made clear in one of the essays from Rozanov’s early period, when he concentrated much more on examining the grander schemes which had troubled his predecessors. However, he retained the same conclusions throughout his career.

В течение всей своей жизни одиноко растущая или прихотливо движущаяся особь является уединенною от всех других, свободною от их влияния и с ними не связанною; но в один миг своего существования, первый и самый важный – когда рождается, она примыкает непосредственно к морю органической жизни, разлитой по земле и уже продолжающейся тысячелетия; и в краткие же мгновения своего последующего существования – когда рождает, она соединяется с тою жизнью, которая останется на земле.<sup>163</sup>

Through childbirth, parents and offspring enter into a relationship with the entire cosmos. This activity is mirrored by the author’s own creativity. The book, if written correctly, can be the locus where humans are united. Rozanov has no shame about involving the reader into an intensely close relationship, at work, at home, in his family, and in his sex life with his wife.

Книга, в сущности, – быть *вместе*. Быть «в одном». Пока читатель читает мою книгу, он будет «в одном» со мной, и, пусть верит читатель, я буду «с ним» в его делишках, в его дому, в его ребятках и верно приветливой милой жене. «У него за чаем».<sup>164</sup>

The personal and the universal in Rozanov rest on one another only through childbirth, without which both would collapse on one another. This is clarified by the significance of each passage in his *Opavshelistika*. Each aphorism has its own religious and literary significance which is permanent, and yet this value is only affirmed by its presence within the book as a whole. Each aphorism is grounded on Rozanov’s concept of the child as ultimate symbol of the Creation.

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<sup>162</sup> *Uedinennoe*, p. 200.

<sup>163</sup> V.V. Rozanov, ‘Krasota v prirode i ee smysl’, in *Russkaia mysl’*, pp. 47-120 (p. 56).

<sup>164</sup> *Sakharna*, p. 12. Emphasis in original.

## Conclusion

Rozanov's focus on the Creation is designed to overcome the eschatology and pessimism which he considers pervasive in Russian culture. Having emerged from the woods and waters of the heart of the Russian countryside, his own life encapsulates the fate of his nation's religiosity in the pre-revolutionary years. His transfer to the imperial capital, contact with the incredible technological advances of the rapidly industrialized society, a patriotic and devastating war which he supported, the eschatological fervour, and his own apocalypse at the hands of the Bolsheviks; all these events demonstrate a remarkable convergence of personal and national history in which Rozanov puts his own life on display for the sake of his people's salvation. As he and his family starved in Sergiev Posad, Rozanov retained at times the hope that he could return to his youth, that he stood at the threshold of a new age where man would re-connect to his primeval and physical links with the divine. His attempts in 1917 and 1918 to publish works on ancient Egyptian religion and its focus on family life demonstrate his desire that pre-Christian types of worship can be resurrected in Russia. At the same time, Rozanov embarked on his final and most intense confrontation with the figure most responsible for disrupting man's ties with the Creation and with God; in his *Apokalipsis*, Rozanov launches his most fervent attack on Jesus Christ, His appearance on Earth, and His castration of the Russian man. In his masterpiece, Rozanov sets himself up as an alternative messiah, the true son of God, who insists that Jesus has blasphemed for denying the necessity of reproduction.

Rozanov had an immense knowledge of Russian culture, and of the most important religious, political, literary and philosophical figures behind its developments in the pre-revolutionary period. This deep insight, as well as his first-hand journalistic reporting on events from the parliaments and streets of Petersburg, tells us much about Russian thought and culture at this time. His work also tells us a great deal about the issues facing Russian religious life as the nation defined itself in a rapidly-modernizing world. Rozanov desperately clings to the elements of religion which he cites as the basis for national life, the simple and homely aspects of *byt*, and yet rejects theology as alien to his national culture. He also explores Russian Orthodoxy's engagement with paganism, claiming that the former has lost links to the Creation of the world and to conceptions of God as embodied. In one way, this is strange; anyone who has been fortunate enough to attend a Russian Orthodox service will be well aware of its intense physicality, the importance it places on the building, icons, its smells and sounds. However, Rozanov rips away the theological basis of contemporary Orthodoxy, and replaces this

with his own narrative of a people linked through the generations to Paradise. His myth-making, and willingness to rely on the construction of subjective truths which are given universal relevance, are demonstrative and influential in a philosophical culture which has often defined its purpose in challenging the rationalist approach of the West.

Rozanov reached the peak of his powers as Russia entered a new century, a time where the giant leaps forward in progress were a cause for both intense optimism, among socialist thinkers such as Bloch, and also sheer despair. The pessimists' worst fears were confirmed as Europe plunged into a century of devastating wars and social turmoil. Many thinkers have discussed the crisis of hope pervading our age; mid-way through the 20<sup>th</sup> century Faulkner talked powerfully of a world paralyzed by fear, of man labouring under the curse of grief. To a large degree, these fears appear to be a deficiency of Christianity and its inability – and, historically speaking, often its unwillingness – to reassure its believers of the meaning of earthly existence. In any case, apocalypticism appears to be a dominant trend in human thought, and in particular in the Christian world (as well as in other cultures rooted in the major monotheistic religions). Modern fears over nuclear holocaust, climate change, international terrorism, or the extinction of the bees, only appear to support this view. Western man seems to have an obsession with his own demise to the detriment of his origins. In the context of mankind's morbid fixation, a work such as Vidal's 1981 novel *Creation* (Vidal, like Rozanov, uses the Creation of the world to attack western civilization's reliance on Greek philosophy, and like Rozanov's contemporary Dmitrii Merezhkovskii used Julian the Apostate to attack modern Christianity) brings a very rare message of hope.

Questions of hope are intrinsically linked with interpretations of history. In Russian thought, where interpretations of history have played a dominant role, apocalyptic motifs have been highly prominent. Berdiaev astutely distinguishes active from passive apocalypticism, where man has varying degrees of responsibility in bringing about the end of time. Throughout the history of Russian thought, its protagonists have battled over the varying relationship between history and its endpoint, but Berdiaev identifies Fedorov for changing the character of Russian apocalypticism, from a hope in the eventual transfiguration of matter, to a fearful identification of the end of human time with the victory of the Antichrist. Following on from him, Rozanov likewise separates history from eschatology, focusing his attention on maintaining the links between human activity and this world. Rozanov is an eternal optimist in both senses; he understands the world as essentially good, but also sees in the ever-lasting divinity of matter the basis for hope against the forces which threatened to destroy his country.

It is this intimate relationship between the creative work of God and the activity of man which provides the basis for Rozanov's emphasis on writing. Writing is for Rozanov an essentially sexual act, inseparable from the activities of the home and the juices of the body. Just as the demands of history weighed heavily on Rozanov's Russia, he also understood the vital role literature was playing in turning man away from his origins. Consequently, Rozanov was certain of the need to reconnect literature with the Creation, with family joys, and with love. Despite his destructive engagement with literature, Rozanov was optimistic that he could, phoenix-like, preside over its rebirth. Faulkner also expressed the hope that the poet would secure man's immortality by helping him forget fear, and remember love. Likewise, Rozanov believed that literature would provide a route from despair. Rozanov may have died in tragic circumstances, but, thanks to the rebirth of Russian religious thought, the message of his writings has also been resurrected. It is this simple and undying hopefulness which is Rozanov's greatest contribution to us, his faith in the Creation, his hope in the future, and his assurance that we are loved.

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