THE WORLD AS AN ORGANIC WHOLE:

RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

BY

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This essay is one component of a larger project, which includes an online dual-language reader of Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity* and music inspired by those lectures. They can be accessed here.

Contents

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Note on transliteration:

I have aimed for transliterations that would be easiest for native English speakers to pronounce. For example, -ий at the end of names becomes -y, ё becomes yo, я becomes ya, and for a name like Киреевский, I have inserted a “y” between the double-e to aid with pronunciation. At times, my transliterations differ from the ones used in cited works, such as Kireyevsky vs Kireevsky, or Yakov vs. Iakov. In these cases, I have preserved the translator’s transliterations within the citations.

Aside from names, I generally avoid transliteration, instead preferring to use the original cyrillic.

Introduction

Russian literature is known for its deep philosophical inquiry: *Crime and Punishment* engages with nihilism, utilitarianism, and rationalism; *War and Peace* reflects on free will and the meaning of life; *Fathers and Children* dramatizes the generational-philosophical divide between Nihilists and Slavophiles. The renown of Russian philosophical literature stands in contrast to the disregard of "actual" Russian philosophy: in contrast to, say, the French and German traditions, which have similarly distinguished literary and philosophical canons,[1] the Russian tradition does not have an analogously-renowned philosophical canon to match its literary one. Russian philosophy is basically disregarded within the field of philosophy (Sutton 536), and it is rarely mentioned within literary studies, even though Russian literature itself is deeply philosophical. Why does such an imbalance exist?

Scholars have speculated as to why the Russian philosophical tradition has been overlooked (Horujy, S. Frank, Mjør, Sutton). For one, universities appeared relatively late in Russia, with the first, Moscow University, being founded in 1755 – compare this to the University of Paris being established around 1200, or Heidelberg University being established in 1386 (S. Frank 2). The first century of philosophy produced in these Russian universities contained little of value or originality (Lopatin 426), and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century, in the 80s and 90s, that a more original Russian philosophy began to emerge in universities as part of a religious-philosophical renaissance (Horujy 272).

[1] For example: the Germans have figures like Kant, Nietzsche, and Hegel to match their Goethe, Mann, and Hesse; France has figures like Descartes, Derrida, and Foucault for their Proust, Flaubert, and Baudelaire.

This original philosophy, although borrowing much from the systematic philosophy developing in Western Europe,[2] also took seriously the "original motifs" of the Russian national mentality (S. Frank 4). One such motif was Eastern Christian theology, which deeply influenced key Russian philosophers like Vladimir Solovyov, Pavel Florensky, and Nikolai Berdyaev. Unfortunately, government persecution in post-revolutionary Russia would interrupt the development of this nascent philosophy: Florensky was exiled and executed in 1937, Berdyaev was arrested multiple times before being exiled in 1922, and Solovyov would have likely faced a similar fate, had he not died in 1900 (Burgess 295; Zernov 284; Lopatin 28). The philosophical renaissance was extinguished nearly as quickly as it had been born, with most texts not being rediscovered until after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Horujy 272-3).

In addition to the challenges surrounding the late birth and subsequent repression of philosophy in Russia, there is the fact that contemporary academics may be skeptical of Russian philosophy's ties to religion and nationalism. The former raises questions regarding sound methodology, and the latter raises pressing moral questions, especially in the wake of contemporary Russian nationalism (Sutton 539).[3] This may further explain why there have not been concerted efforts to revive Russian philosophy in the same way that there have been efforts to revive lost Russian literature.

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[2] Russian philosophers were particularly interested in German idealism, as expressed in the philosophy of Schelling and Hegel (Lopatin 427-9). For example, Ivan Kireyevsky writes, "the development of reason was to begin with the system of Schelling and Hegel" («развитие разума должно было только начаться в системе Шеллинга и Гегела») (Kireevsky 268 / Киреевский 326). The primary text of this essay, Vladimir Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, contains numerous references to Hegel.

[3] In many ways, the "original" Russian philosophy to which I refer sprung from the Slavophile movement, which was a response to the increasing Westernization of Russia (Lavrin 11). Vladimir Solovyov was influenced by prominent Slavophiles like Khomyakov and Kireyevsky, and Solovyov himself believed that Russia would play a prominent role in leading humanity to universal union (Lopatin 437; Lavrin 18). It is important to note that these early Slavophiles saw national self-realization as a step toward universal communion (Lavrin 16), which is a crucial difference from modern chauvinists who have co-opted this philosophy.

Because of the general obscurity of Russian philosophy, there is a poverty of analysis on the intersection of Russian philosophy and Russian literature, especially in English-language studies. This gap means that the full depth of major Russian literary works is not recognized by many of the top Slavicists in the English-speaking world. Given this state of affairs, the first aim of this project is to draw attention to Russian philosophy by highlighting some of its unique metaphysical and epistemological contributions. I do so by contextualizing these contributions within the contemporary analytic philosophical tradition, with the intent of neutralizing possible tensions surrounding religion or nationalism. The second aim of this project is to show how Russian philosophy is an indispensable part of fully understanding major works of Russian literature. I argue for this point through case studies of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and a selection of Daniil Kharms's works. The structure of this paper is as follows:

In §1, I introduce two key ideas in Russian philosophy: organic unity and intellectual intuition. With a focus on Vladimir Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, I consider how these ideas fit into contemporary analytic philosophy. In §2, I illustrate how Russian philosophy is essential to understanding the ecological themes in *The Brothers Karamazov*. In particular, I use the concepts of iconicity, Creation, and organic unity to contextualize Father Zosima's ecological teachings. In §3, I analyze selected works of Daniil Kharms through the lens of epistemology. I argue that Kharms's absurdism and humor serve an epistemic purpose, which can be seen as a form of the intellectual intuition outlined by philosophers like Solovyov. Finally, in §4, I conclude with a short discussion on how Russian philosophy has influenced Russian artistic

movements, particularly the Russian avant-garde. This serves as a introduction to the musical component of this project.

This paper is only a preliminary examination of how Russian philosophy interacts with Russian literature and art. My hope is that the case studies of *The Brothers Karamazov* and Kharms will show the value in taking Russian philosophy seriously, and motivate further inquiry into the intersection of Russian philosophy and literature.

1. Organic Unity and Intellectual Intuition in Russian Philosophy

In this section, I outline two key ideas in Russian philosophy – organic unity and intellectual intuition – and make connections to developments in contemporary analytic philosophy. By putting Russian philosophy into conversation with analytic philosophy, I aim to do what Jonathan Sutton, a scholar of religious philosophy, proposed as a promising way to integrate Russian philosophy into the general philosophical tradition:

> It may not be an easy task to establish sound claims for 'religious philosophy' in its known nineteenth-and twentieth-century Russian incarnations to be fully admitted to the body of reflection that we know as 'philosophy'. However, if I were to look anywhere at all for people to embark on such a task with a reasonable measure of success, I would turn specifically to that generation of scholars trained to post-doctoral level and beyond in mathematics and the natural sciences, some of whom have now turned their minds to sustained work in the humanities, including theology, religious studies, and philosophy (539-40).

I focus particularly on connections with contemporary philosophy of science and logic, in which most philosophers have advanced training in math and the natural sciences. In bringing together Russian philosophy and analytic philosophy, I do not intend for Russian philosophy to be stripped of its religious context, and I do not even want to minimize the importance of the religious roots of Russian philosophy. I simply hope that by highlighting the philosophical seriousness of the ideas contained in Russian philosophy, it becomes clear that it is a widely applicable and comprehensible tradition beyond the sphere of Eastern Christianity. In fact, I hope that in making this connection, I can help spark interest in the religious context from which Russian philosophy arises.

I focus on Vladimir Solovyov's *Lectures on Divine Humanity* for multiple reasons. Firstly, there is the general view that Solovyov is Russia's most systematic philosopher (Sutton 536, Frank 3, John Mohr 623-24, DeBlasio 20) and that he is the primary source of the core ideas of the Russian religious-philosophical renaissance (Horujy 272). Furthermore, many prominent participants in the Russian literary and artistic scenes attended Solovyov's Lectures, including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy (Jakim vii), so they are a convenient focal point when considering the intersection of Russian philosophy and literature. Throughout this paper, other key Russian philosophers to whom I refer are Pavel Florensky, N. O. Lossky (and his son Vladimir Lossky), Ivan Kireyevsky, Aleksei Khomyakov, and Leonid Ouspensky. Although I do not have space to delve as deeply into their individual philosophies, the work of these philosophers can be seen as an integrated whole; I use Solovyov as a representative of this collective work.

1.a: Organic Unity

The concept of organic unity in Russian philosophy appears in many forms, most commonly as соборность (spiritual unity; associated with Khomyakov) and всеединство (all-unity; all-in-oneness; associated with Solovyov). N. O. Lossky has a book titled «Мир как органическое целое» (*The World as an Organic Whole*); Solovyov often mentions the "абсолютный организм" (absolute organism) as a synonym for all-unity (Соловьев 134 / Solovyov 136).

Organic unity is primarily a metaphysical understanding of Being, though it also has ethical and epistemological implications.[4] The key idea of organic unity is the positing of a fundamental "whole," while at the same time emphatically reaffirming the existence and individuality of each part. That is, unity does not extinguish the significance of each individual part; it is only by affirming the significance of each part that the life of the whole can be reaffirmed. The alternative, where an absolute unity overrides the existence of any individual part, is a "dead," inorganic, non-dynamic unity.

[4] For example, since organic unity emphasizes both our interdependent nature and singular individuality, it naturally instills a sense of reverence for those around us. Epistemologically, the idea of organic unity can support a kind of "organic thinking" (мышление органическое) that aims to internalize the nature of Being (Solovyov 89-90 / Соловьев 91).

Though this idea is intimately tied with the doctrine of the Trinity,[5] Solovyov also presents a separate motivation for this metaphysical picture (see Lectures 4-5). He begins by entertaining the possibility of absolute multiplicity, in which all that exists is an aggregate of individual entities. This picture is implausible to Solovyov, since it seems that entities are infinitely divisible, which means there would be no fundamental unit upon which reality could ultimately be recovered. An alternative picture he considers is absolute unity: perhaps all that exists is a single object, which has no parts. This also seems implausible to Solovyov, since life is evidently dynamic and a result of relations between multiple things (consider, for example, the fact that we interact with material surroundings). He concludes:

> If both the postulation of absolute unity and the postulation of the absolute multiplicity of entities lead to negative results and render any intelligent worldview impossible, the truth clearly lies in the unification of the two, in the recognition of a *relative* unity and a *relative* multiplicity…
>
> From this point of view, the many entities do not have genuine being in their separateness or in absolute particularization. Each can exist in itself and for

[5] While there are many sections in the *Lectures* that allude to the Trinity, the following passage is representative of how the Trinity is tied to unity-in-multiplicity:

> ...if, on the one hand, there cannot be in the absolute entity three consecutive acts and if, on the other hand, three eternal acts that by definition are mutually exclusive cannot be conceived in a *single* subject, it is necessary to assume for these three eternal acts *three eternal subjects* (*hypostases*).
>
> А если так, если, с одной стороны, в абсолютном существе не может быть трех последовательных актов, друг друга сменяющих, а, с другой стороны, три вечные акта, исключающие друг друга по своему определению, немыслимы в *одном* субъекте, то необходимо для этих трех вечных актов предположить *три вечные субъекта* [*ипостаси*]...
>
> (Solovyov 87-9 / Соловьев 89-90).

> itself only insofar as it, at the same time, interacts with and interpenetrates other entities as inseparable elements of one whole. For the proper quality or character of each entity in its objectivity consists precisely in its determinate relation to the *all* and, consequently, in its determinate interaction with the *all*. But this is clearly only if these entities share an essential commonality, that is, if they are rooted in one common substance that forms the *essential medium* of their interaction, a medium that embraces all of them but is not contained separately in any one of them (56).[6]

In this passage, Solovyov articulates ideas that have been recently argued by prominent philosophers of science (Schaffer 2010, 2007; Ismael 2016; Perry 2017). In particular, Solovyov insists that both parts and the whole exist, but that the whole is prior to the parts, and that the parts only exist as "inseparable elements of one whole." This resembles Schaffer's priority monism as articulated in Schaffer 2010 and 2007, in which his view is precisely that "the whole is prior to its parts" (Schaffer 2010, 31). Indeed, Schaffer's main motivation in proposing priority monism is to articulate a monistic tradition that closely resembles organic unity: He claims that there are three main threads in the monistic tradition, which are 1) the priority of whole to part, 2) the organic unity of

[6] «Если, таким образом, и признание безусловного единства, и признание безусловной множественности существ приводят одинаково к отрицательным результатам и отнимают возможность всякого разумного мировоззрения, то, очевидно, истина лежит в соединении того и другого или в допущении *относительного* единства и *относительной* множественности…

С этой точки зрения многие существа не имеют подлинного бытия в своей отдельности или в безусловном обособлении, но каждое из них может существовать в себе и для себя, лишь поскольку оно вместе с тем находится во взаимодействии и взаимопроникновении с другими, как неразрывные элементы одного целого, так как и собственное качество, или характер, каждого существа в своей объективности состоит именно в определенном отношении этого существа ко *всему* и, следовательно, в определенном взаимодействии его со *всем.* Но это, очевидно, возможно лишь в том случае, если эти существа имеют между собою существенную общность, то есть если они коренятся в одной общей субстанции, которая составляет *существенную среду* их взаимодействия, обнимая их все собою и не заключаясь ни в одном из них в отдельности» (Соловьев 58-9).

the whole, and 3) an understanding of the world as an integrated system (Schaffer 2010, 66-8). Schaffer literally uses the phrases "organic unity" and "integrated system," which echo themes of organic unity and integration used by Russian philosophers.

A second point of connection with philosophy of science is in the idea of entities being rooted in a "common substance that forms the essential medium of their interaction." This resembles monistic substantivalism as articulated by (e.g.) Perry 2017 and Ismael 2016: Perry defends a "Space-time Globalism," in which the totality of space-time is the fundamental spatio-temporal entity, with points and non-total regions being derivative entities (224); Ismael defends "quantum holism," which aims to explain the inseparability of nature via a common ground. Ismael and Perry are largely motivated by developments in quantum physics, yet arrive at a similar understanding of space-time to Solovyov's.

These connections to contemporary philosophy of science are likely not accidental, as Solovyov himself was deeply concerned with bridging his ideas with contemporary scientific developments.[7] Of course, science has developed massively since Solovyov was writing in the late nineteenth century – quantum physics was only substantially developed in the 1920s, while Solovyov died in 1900 – which is perhaps why Sutton believed that Russian philosophy could best be revived by those with advanced training in mathematics and science.

[7] While it is true that Solovyov generally emphasizes the limitations of scientific knowledge, it is clear that his skepticism comes from an intimate acquaintance with and understanding of science. This is especially apparent in Lecture 4.

1.b: Intellectual Intuition

As opposed to organic unity, which was a metaphysical view, intellectual intuition (умственное созерцание) is an epistemological idea. It has similarities to Florensky's intuition-discursion (интуиция-дискурсия) and Kireyevsky's integral knowledge (цельное знание).[8] Solovyov also calls this idea "organic thinking" (мышление органическое) (Solovyov 89-90 / Соловьев 91), which illustrates its thematic similarity with organic unity.

For Solovyov, the crux of intellectual intuition is that it transcends the limitations of both abstract thinking and immediate sense perception: it is "the primordial form of true knowledge, a form that is clearly distinguished from sense perception and experience, as well as from rational, or abstract, thinking" (60).[9] While a full explication of Solovyov's argument is beyond the scope of this paper, the general idea is that abstract thinking is limited by its generality, while sense perception is limited by its specificity. For example, when we think of the abstract concept "human being," we necessarily strip away unique identifying features of individual human beings (e.g. a mole on my right cheek), and are left with only the most general features of human beings (e.g. a vague concept of human anatomy). The result is that abstract concepts leave us with only a "skeleton" of reality, from which the particularities of real entities are abstracted. On the other hand, when we perceive an individual human being, we are only familiar with an

[8] For more on Florensky's intuition-discursion, see "Letter Two: Doubt" in his *Pillar* (Florensky 2004, 33 / Флоренский 43). For more on integral knowledge, see Kireyevsky's "On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles in Philosophy" («О необходимости и возможности новых начал для философии»), specifically pp. 259-61 / сс. 318-9. The notion of intellectual intuition is also very prevalent in N.O. Lossky's work, such as in «Чувственная, интеллектуальная и мистическая интуиция» (*Sensual, Intellectual and Mystical Intuition*) (Лосский 1995).

[9] «[Умственное созерцание] составляет первичную форму истинного знания, ясно отличающуюся как от чувственного восприятия и опыта, так и от рассудочного, или отвлеченного, мышления» (Соловьев 62-3).

immediate individual, and are limited in what we can say about human beings as a universal whole. The goal of intellectual intuition is to transcend both of these limitations – it would be like if by saying the word "human being," we could know and experience the total unity of every person who has ever lived, down to the most minute details of their physical features, internal life, etc. It is thus viewed as the only form of "true," complete knowledge.

If the process of intellectual intuition seems vague, Solovyov points to artistic creation as an example of intellectual intuition realized:

> [T]he reality of ideas and of intellectual intuition is indisputably proved by the fact of *artistic creation*. Indeed, those ideal images that artists embody in their works are neither a simple reproduction of observed phenomena in their particular and accidental reality nor general concepts abstracted from that reality… Everyone knows that both abstract rationality and the servile imitation of external reality are deficiencies in artistic creation. Everyone knows that the truly artistic form or type necessarily requires an inner union of perfect individuality with complete generality or universality. A union of this kind constitutes the essential feature or proper determination of an intellectually intuited idea (61-2).[10]

[10] «[Д]ействительность идей и умственного созерцания несомненно доказывается фактом *художественного творчества.* В самом деле, те идеальные образы, которые воплощаются художником в его произведениях, не суть, во-первых, ни простое воспроизведение наблюдаемых явлений в их частной и случайной действительности, ни, во-вторых, – отвлеченные от этой действительности общие понятия…Всякому известно, что отвлеченная рассудочность, так же как и рабское подражание внешней действительности, суть одинаково недостатки в художественном произведении; всякому известно, что для истинно художественного образа или типа безусловно необходимо внутреннее соединение совершенной индивидуальности с совершенною общностью, или универсальностью, а такое соединение и составляет существенный признак или собственное определение умосозерцаемой идеи…» (Соловьев 63).

While intellectual intuition is not explicitly represented in contemporary analytic philosophy, many philosophers at least agree with the limitations of both abstract thinking and immediate sense perception. This is particularly apparent in the contemporary revival of panpsychism within philosophy of mind, which has been significantly motivated by the realization that scientific thinking cannot perceive the "inner life" of entities.[11] For example, many eminent philosophers of science like David Chalmers, David Builes, Galen Strawson, and Hedda Mørch subscribe to a kind of Russellian panpsychism, which is named after mathematician-philosopher Bertrand Russell and intended as a solution to the mind-body problem (Chalmers 2013; Builes 2020; Strawson 2015; Mørch 2019). This school of panpsychism is based off Russell's insights that "we know nothing about the intrinsic quality of physical events except when these are mental events that we directly experience," and that "it is only [physics's] mathematical properties that we can discover. For the rest, our knowledge is negative" (Strawson 171). This clearly parallels Solovyov's views on the limitations of direct experience and abstract thinking, which Solovyov also connects to the unfathomability of intrinsic nature: he writes, "As existing, any entity necessarily has its own inner, subjective aspect, which constitutes the very act of its existence…In this sense, they are impenetrable, or unfathomable, for reason" (92-3).[12]

[11] Panpsychism is the idea that fundamental entities are conscious. Solovyov's metaphysical views can be classified as a kind of panpsychism: he calls the foundational building blocks of reality "entities" (существа), which are meant to synthesize the ideas of "atom" (атом), "living force" (живая сила), and "idea" (идея) (Solovyov 55 / Соловьев 57).

[12] «[Существо] как существующее необходимо имеет свою внутреннюю субъективную сторону, составляющую самый акт его существования, в котором оно есть нечто безусловно единичное и единственное, нечто совершенно невыразимое…в этом смысле [они] непроницаемы или непостижимы для разума» (Соловьев 94).

So, the main motivator for intellectual intuition, which is the limitation of abstract thinking and sense-perception, is also embraced in contemporary philosophy of science. It is not a surprise that Solovyov and contemporary philosophers end up with similar metaphysical views once they recognize the limitations of empirical experimentation.

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Ultimately, the ideas of organic unity and intellectual intuition represent key metaphysical and epistemological stances in Russian philosophy. Although these ideas are tied to religion within Russian philosophy, they can be readily connected to secular developments in contemporary analytic philosophy.

2. Organic Unity in *The Brothers Karamazov*

In the previous section, I focused on putting Russian philosophy into conversation with contemporary analytic philosophy. Here, the ideas discussed (iconicity, Creation, the Church) are placed within a more theological context. Despite this shift toward a more religious focus, the transition from philosophy to theology is a fluid one, as the theological ideas portrayed in this chapter are drawn from the same philosophical works that inspired the previous section: those of Vladmir Solovyov, Pavel Florensky, Ivan Kireyevsky and Leonid Ouspensky. Organic unity and intellectual intuition, although not explicitly discussed in this section, implicitly underpin the notions of iconicity, Creation, and the Church – for example, the Church is often understood as a spiritual organism, and

icon theology often draws from the same kind of empirical skepticism found in intellectual intuition.[13] My general argument is that misunderstandings of environmental themes in *The Brothers Karamazov* stem from a lack of familiarity with Russian philosophy, under which Eastern Christianity has further-encompassing discourse than is typically acknowledged.

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> "Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day" (Dostoevsky 275).[14]

In Jane Costlow's *Heart-pine Russia*, a seminal text in the environmentalist approach to Slavic studies, she writes that it is "almost surprising, or naive" that an anonymous 19th-century author would claim that poetry and science are not opposed to each other (82-3). Later in the same chapter, when analyzing "Dream of a Ridiculous Man," Costlow attributes Dostoevsky's thoughts on science and the Fall of Man to influences of "European romanticism" and "local animosities between poetic idealism and scientific

[13] For example, see Solovyov 163 / Соловьев 160, where Solovyov equates the Church with a "spiritual body" (духовное тело). For connections between icon theology and intellectual intuition, see Florensky's "Iconostasis" («Иконостас») and "Reverse Perspective" («Обратная перспестива»).

[14] «Любите все создание божие, и целое и каждую песчинку. Каждый листик, каждый луч божий любите. Любите животных, любите растения, любите всякую вещь. Будешь любить всякую вещь и тайну божию постигнешь в вещах. Постигнешь однажды и уже неустанно начнешь ее познавать все далее и более, на всяк день» (Достоевкий 416).

materialism" (114). In both instances, Costlow fails to acknowledge the theological influence behind these environmental perspectives. While this omission sometimes leads to only simple misunderstandings (e.g. viewing the anonymous author as naive), at other times it significantly impoverishes her analysis (e.g. speaking on Dostoevsky's thoughts about science and the Fall without acknowledging theology).

This omission of the theological perspective leads to confusion particularly when analyzing environmental themes in Dostoevsky. For example, most scholarship describes Father Zosima's views on nature as decidedly "un-Christian"; scholars characterize his teachings as "pantheistic" (Leontiev, quoted in Pattison 6), "pagan earth worship" (Cassedy xiii), and "myth" (Anderson 272). Slavicists as prominent as Gary Saul Morson, Joseph Frank, and George Gibian have all questioned the Christian-ness of Father Zosima's teachings (Morson 787; Frank 635; Anderson 272-3). Costlow herself contributes to this perception of "earth worship" in Dostoevsky's works by suggesting that the imperative contained in "Dream of a Ridiculous Man" is to "return to the trees themselves" and that this will "somehow" restore our fallen state (113). Scholars are aware that the non-Christianness of Dostoevsky's most religious characters can pose problems for interpretation, hence Anderson's view that "unity [in Zosima's teachings] is clearest when we depart from a traditional Christian focus" (289), or Morson's attempt to reconcile paradoxical views in his notion of the "mythic prosaic" (787).

While there is nothing wrong with seeing similarities between Zosima's teachings and pantheism, earth worship, or myth, it becomes problematic when the ultimate theological basis of these ideas is omitted. Zosima's teachings are not "clearer when we view [them] from the perspective of myth" (Anderson 273), but are most clarified when

highlighting their ties to the Eastern Christian theology; this also resolves the apparent paradox of non-Christian elements in Zosima. To draw attention to theology is not an arbitrary or ideological move; it the natural direction of inquiry when acknowledging that Dostoevsky grew up in an Eastern Christian environment, professed a deep devotion to Christ, and drew inspiration for Zosima from trips to the Optina Pustyn monastery (Anderson 272). Indeed, it is shocking to notice the evident lack of research into the Eastern patrisitic tradition by scholars writing explicitly about Dostoevsky's religious characters (e.g. Cassedy's *Dostoevsky's Religion*).

Father Zosima's meditations on nature are not "pagan" or "pantheistic"; they are some of the clearest and most succinct illustrations of Orthodox theology in Dostoevsky's oeuvre. Nature, for Dostoevsky, illuminates theology, and in turn theology illuminates nature. In particular, the theological concepts of iconicity, Creation, and the Church are essential to understanding environmental themes in Dostoevsky.

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One argument used to show the ambiguity of Zosima's Christianity is the fact that he "worship[s] the earth and all forms of creation as being endowed with holy meaning" (Anderson 273). However, the idea that all forms of creation are endowed with holy meaning falls firmly within the patrisitic tradition of the Orthodox Church. Take, for example, this narrative from St. Isaac the Syrian, a seventh-century monk who is mentioned several times in *The Brothers Karamazov* and was one of Dostoevsky's favorite writers:

An elder was once asked, "What is a compassionate heart?" He replied:

> "It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons and for all that exists. At the recollection and at the sight of them such a person's eyes overflow with tears owing to the vehemence of the compassion which grips his heart; as a result of his deep mercy his heart shrinks and cannot bear to hear or look on any injury or the slightest suffering of anything in creation" (Foltz 188; 190).

So, Zosima's imperative to "love all God's creation" has religious precedent in the writings of St. Isaac the Syrian and need not immediately be tied to earth worship. St. Isaac's descriptions of a "heart on fire" and "eyes overflow(ing) with tears" also recall the scene in which Alyosha kisses the earth after Zosima's death – a scene interpreted as earth worship by Cassedy (157): "...he kissed it weeping, sobbing and watering it with his tears, and rapturously vowed to love it, to love it forever and ever" (Dostoevsky 312).[15]

The sanctity of all created matter is not just a peripheral idea in Orthodox theology, but a central tenet, elucidated in the theology of the icon. The characterization of Zosima's teaching as "pagan" reflects similar logic to the iconoclasts during the iconoclasm controversy of the eight and ninth centuries (Ouspensky 121). In responding to the iconoclasts, the Church Fathers carefully explicated the precise nature of the sanctity of matter in order to distinguish the worship of icons from idolatry. While the full extent of their argument is beyond the scope of this paper, one primary argument was that

[15] «...он целовал ее плача, рыдая и обливая своими слезами, и исступленно клялся любить ее, любить во веки веков» (Достоевский 472).

the Incarnation resulted in the sanctification of the "visible, material world," and that to deny the sanctity of matter was to deny the reality of the Incarnation (Ouspensky 146). The other main argument was to emphasize that created matter's sanctity derived from the divine mystery, not from materiality itself. For example, St. John of Damascus clarified to the iconoclasts, "I do not worship matter, I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take His abode in matter, who worked out my salvation through matter" (Ouspensky 129). Similarly, St. Theodore the Studite explained that divine objects are divine "not by virtue of identity of nature, for these objects are not the flesh of God, but by virtue of their relative participation in divinity, for they participate in the grace and in the honor" (Ouspensky 130). So, we see that Costlow's interpretation that Dostoevsky's imperative is to "return to the trees themselves" fails to take into account that from a theological perspective, it is not the trees in and of themselves that spark transformation, but rather the divinity that they point to.

This idea of nature's value deriving from its link to divine mystery is emphasized in Zosima's teachings, as shown in the epigraph to this section and in the following passage:

> Much on earth is hidden from us, but to make up for that we have been given a precious mystic sense of our living bond with the other world…what lives is alive only through the feeling of its contact with other mysterious worlds. If that feeling grows weak or is destroyed in you, the heavenly growth will die away in you. Then you will be indifferent to life and even grow to hate it" (Dostoevsky 276).[16]

[16] «Многое на земле от нас скрыто, но взамен того даровано нам тайное сокровенное ощущение живой связи нашей с миром иным…но взращенное живет и живо лишь чувством соприкосновения своего таинственным мирам иным; если ослабевает или уничтожается в тебе сие чувство, то

Once again, the idea of our environment as a point of contact with divine mystery is a central tenet in the theology of the icon. For example, Florensky describes the iconostasis as "a boundary between the visible and invisible worlds" (Florensky 1996, 62), mirroring the language of "contact with mysterious worlds" in Zosima. Florensky likens an icon to a window, defined by its ability to let in the divine light, not from its physical materiality alone (Florensky 1996, 64-5). A window that does not let in light is "mere wood and glass," and thus the "life" of a thing only exists through its contact with other mysterious worlds, just as Zosima (and the aforementioned Church Fathers) say. Florensky also warns against the destruction of this contact with other worlds: he writes, "As sin possesses a personality, and as the face ceases to be a window through which God's radiance shines…[it] loses its vitality…becoming a chilling mask of possession by the passions" (Florensky 1996, 56).[17] Again mirroring Zosima, the importance of the connection with divine mystery (symbolized in Florensky by the light shining through the window of the face) is emphasized.

In addition to the theology of the icon, the theology of Creation also reaffirms the sanctity of all created things. St. Maximos the Confessor's ideas on Creation illustrate its connection to the theology of the icon, as he writes, "Every created thing has its point of contact with the Godhead; and this point of contact is its idea, reason or logos which is at the same time the end towards which it tends. (...) everything in the created world… the intelligible as well as the sensible…[is] in a perpetual state of becoming" (V. Lossky 98).

умирает и взращенное в тебе. Тогда станешь к жизни равнодушен и даже возненавидишь ее» (Достоевский 418-9).

[17] «По мере того, как грех овладевает личностью, – и лицо перестает быть окном, откуда сияет свет Божий...лицо отщепляется от личности, ее творческого начала, теряет жизнь и цепенеет маскою овладевшей страсти» (Флоренкий 1993, 32).

This idea of "everything in the created world" being in a "perpetual state of becoming" evokes Zosima's words that "Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so amazingly know their path…they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves" (Dostoevsky 254-5).[18] Parallels between Zosima's conception of nature and that of the Church Tradition show that Zosima's reverence of created matter, far from being incompatible with Christianity, reflects the theology of Church Fathers.

Finally, a general understanding of how Russian philosophy conceives the Body of the Church can clarify how the theological content of Dostoevsky's environmentalism fits in with its mythological and philosophical aspects. The Church is seen as a living organism, with particular emphasis on dialogue with the early Fathers, though no voice is singled out as absolute: as Kireyevsky explains, "The sum total of all Christians of all ages, past and present, comprises one indivisible, eternal, living assembly of the faithful" (258).[19] This idea of "unity in diversity," or "all-in-oneness" (expressed commonly by the terms соборность or всеединство), is influential in Kireyevsy's idea of "integral knowledge" (цельное знание), in which truth is comprehended not solely via abstract logical capacity, nor from aesthetic sense, love, or rapture, but from the place where "all [these] separate forces merge into one living and integral vision of the mind" («все отдельные силы сливаются в одно живое и цельное зрение ума») (260 / Киреевский 318). Thus, he explains that Christian philosophy contains within itself pagan philosophy and science (263), and that the dichotomy between faith and reason does not exist for

[18] «Всякая-то травка, всякая-то букашка, муравей, пчелка золотая, все-то до изумления знают путь свой…тайну божию свидетельствуют, беспрерывно совершают ее сами…» (Достоевский 384-5).

[19] «…вся совокупность христиан всех веков, настоящего и прошедших, составляет одно неделимое, вечно для нее живущее собрание верных» (Киреевский 317).

Orthodox theology (257-9) — all these modes of knowledge are integrated into a whole to represent Christian knowledge.[20] So, from an Orthodox theological perspective, it would not be surprising that Costlow's anonymous author wrote that poetry and science don't hinder one another. Furthermore, this means that yes, there *are* elements of myth and paganism in Dostoevsky's writings, but they should not be taken as the sole understandings of his work, especially without considering the theological context. The result of this all-inclusivity is that the theology of the Orthodox Church "never acquires the character of a system" (V. Lossky 104) — that is, the character of a purely rational system — which is seen as a major defining difference between the Eastern Church and the Western Church. Scholarship that sees Zosima's teachings on nature as incongruent or separate from "the more organized teachings of Orthodoxy" (Anderson 278) fail to see how the diversity of thought within Zosima is the essence of всеединство and цельное знание, or the fact that "Orthodox doctrine" is not a static, clearly definable thing.

Ultimately, theological context is essential when analyzing environmental themes in Dostoevsky's work. Familiarity with the Church Fathers spells the difference between interpreting Zosima's nature teachings as pagan or wholly Christian. The intention behind showing the connections between Zosima and the Church Fathers is not to provide proof

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[20] Kireyevsky on pagan philosophy in Christianity: "...when Christianity appeared in the midst of pagan civilization…pagan philosophy itself was transformed into an instrument of Christian culture and incorporated into the body of Christian philosophy as a subordinate principle" // «…когда христианство явилось среди образованности языческой...самая философия языческая обратилась в орудие христианского просвещения и, как подчиненное начало, вошла в состав философии христианской» (Kireevsky 263 / Киреевский 322).

On the relationship between faith and reason: "...this is precisely the main distinction of Orthodox thinking, that it seeks not to arrange separate concepts according to the demands of faith, but rather to elevate reason itself above its usual level, thus striving to raise the very source of reason, the very manner of thinking, to the level of sympathetic agreement with faith" // «...в том-то и заключается главное отличие православного мышления, что оно ищет не отдельные понятия устроить сообразно требованиям веры, но самый разум поднять выше своего обыкновенного уровня – стремится самый источник разумения, самый способ мышления возвысить до сочувственного согласия с верою» (Kireevsky 259 / Киреевский 318).

of Zosima's pure Orthodoxy, but rather to show his position within the life of the patrisitic tradition, as one voice in dialogue with those who came before him. The application of iconicity, Creation, and all-unity to Dostoevsky's works elucidates their environmental relevance, explaining the Christian origins of the sanctity of nature and aspiring toward an "integral knowledge" of the text.

3. Intellectual Intuition in Kharms

Dostoevsky is well-known for the religious-philosophical nature of his works, so the connection to Russian philosophy is perhaps unsurprising. A less obvious connection to Russian philosophy can be found in Daniil Kharms's works, which are generally known for their absurdity rather than profundity.

As with Dostoevsky, this connection is under-studied within the English-language literature. Collections of Kharms scholarship typically do not include any essays that mention Russian philosophy (e.g. Cornwell 1991), and scholarship that mentions religious connections (e.g. Neil Carrick's *Daniil Kharms: Theologian of the Absurd*) approach this connection from a Western Christian perspective. While these alternative perspectives are certainly valuable, it is a disservice to neglect the fundamental inspiration that Kharms draws from Russian philosophy, especially since this inspiration is so central to his creative vision.

As with Dostoevsky, this appeal to Russian philosophy is not an arbitrary one. Kharms's spirituality is well-documented in his personal notebooks and in his wife's biography.[21] For example, there is evidence that Kharms viewed his creative works as

[21] See Глоцер 2000, pp. 45-7 for a captivating account of Kharms's fervor in seeing a live performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

God-given: in a piece called “Prayer before Sleep” (Молитва перед сном), Kharms writes, “Lord, enlighten me / through my verses” (провести меня Господи / путем стихов моих) (Хармс 2000, т. 1, 18-9); in a separate diary entry four years later, Kharms writes, “[L]et my heart drink from the source of Your wondrous Words” (напои сердце мое источником дивных Слов Твоих) (Хармс 2000, т. 1, 314). These entries are not exceptions; a quick reading of Kharms’s notebooks will show that he consistently appeals to God throughout his musings.

Here is another entry that displays Kharms’s religiosity, further motivating my reading of Russian philosophy into his work:

> 1. Every human life has but one goal: immortality.
>
> 1-a. Every human life has but one goal: the attainment of immortality.
>
> 2. One person strives towards immortality by continuing his family, another undertakes great deeds on earth to immortalize his name, and only the third leads a righteous and holy life in order to attain immortality as life eternal.
>
> 3. Man has only 2 interests: the earthly — food, drink, warmth, women, rest; and the heavenly, that is, immortality.
>
> 4. Everything earthly bears witness to death.
>
> 5. There is a single line along which all that is earthly lies. And only that which does not lie along this line bears witness to immortality.
>
> 6. And therefore man looks for that which diverges from this earthly line and calls it “the beautiful” or a “thing of genius” (Kharms 2013, 498-9).[22]

[22] 1. Цель всякой человеческой жизни одна: бессмертие.
1-а. Цель всякой человеческой жизни одна: достижение бессмертия.
2. Один [думает дос] стремится к бессмертию продолжением своего рода, другой делает большие земные дела, чтобы обессмертить свое имя, и только третий ведет праведную и святую жизнь, чтобы достигнуть бессмертия как жизнь вечную.
3. У человека есть только два интереса: земной – пища, питье, тепло, женщина и отдых и небесный – бессмертие.
4. Все земное свидетельствует о смерти.

From entries like these, we have good reason to believe that Kharms saw a tight connection between his writing and religious-philosophical ideas. In the above entry in particular, we see similarities between Kharms's thought and the idea of intellectual intuition: he denotes an "earthly line," which we can associate with rational thinking and immediate sense perception, and he claims that things that diverge from the earthly line (i.e. those things accessible via intellectual intuition) are "beautiful" and "genius." This is similar to how Solovyov views artistic creation as transcendence from the limitations of rational thinking and sense perception.

To quell the fear that these philosophical similarities might be mere coincidences, there are even explicit references to Russian philosophers in Kharms's diary: in one entry, he mentions Florensky's book on imaginary numbers, «Мнимости в геометрии» (Kharms 2013, 213 / Хармс 2002, книга 1, 266); in another entry, he reminds himself to "take a look" at a book by N.O. Lossky when he returns to Leningrad (Kharms 2013, 74 / Хармс 2002, книга 1, 42).

Beyond these personal diary entries, another reason to connect Kharms with the Russian philosophical tradition is the activity of the ОБЕРИУ (Union of Real Art) or чинари, a group of artists and philosophers of which Kharms was an active member. One of the core philosophical principles of this group was that it is better to "not construct a system" of philosophy; they spent much of their time attempting to articulate a philosophical method that violated the rational rules of mathematics (Ostashevsky 29). Such thoughts echo the theme of "never acquiring a system" that appears in Russian

5. Есть одна прямая линия на которой лежит все земное. И только то, что не лежит на этой линии, может свидетельствовать о бессмертии.
6. И потому человек ищет отклонение от этой земной линии и называет его прекрасным или гениальным (Хармс 2002, книга 2, 199).

philosophy (e.g. V. Lossky 104) and the desire to transcend rational thinking as expressed in the idea of intellectual intuition. Kharms was particularly interested in “creative logics,” or that which is “logically senseless and incongruous” (Ostashevsky 32-3): his notebooks are filled with musings on numbers and order, and in one entry he reminds himself to "invent a law or a table where numbers would increase by inexplicable nonperiodic intervals" (Ostashevsky 32). As the scholar Ostashevsky writes, when Kharms proposes such endeavors, he is “performing something that looks like mathematics at first glance, but that evades the logical necessity and universality of mathematical structure” (33). This idea of using apparent logical structure to transcend rationality is reflected in his creative works, which I will argue below.

With this context in mind, we are open to a new interpretation of Kharms’s works: Kharms's humor is a “deviation from the earthly line,” or at least a way of showing the futility of the earthly line. He does this by developing a “creative logic” within his stories that at face value has the appearance of logic and structure, but eventually disintegrates into absurdity and emptiness. In doing so, his works point toward something transcendent, “beautiful,” “genius.” To illustrate how Kharms does this, it is helpful to examine how his works interact with logic and form. О Пушкине, or “About Pushkin,” is a good example of logic in his stories:

> It’s hard to say anything about Pushkin to someone who doesn’t know anything about him.
>
> Pushkin is a great poet. Napoleon is not as great as Pushkin. Even Bismarck in comparison to Pushkin is nothing. And Alexanders the First, Second, and Third – simply little kids compared to Pushkin. In fact, all people are little kids compared to Pushkin; except compared to Gogol, Pushkin himself is a little kid.
>
> Therefore, instead of writing about Pushkin, it would be better for me to write about Gogol.

However, Gogol is so great, that it's impossible to write anything about him, so I will nevertheless write about Pushkin.

But to write about Pushkin after Gogol is somehow offensive. But it's impossible to write about Gogol. So I'd rather not write anything about anyone.[23]

The text consists of short sentences that read like a mathematical treatise: they are connected by words such as поэтому and потому, meaning "therefore," "thus," "so." Such words indicate some kind of logical sequence. In fact, we can deconstruct the text into facts and logical connections between them: on the one hand, we have facts such as "Pushkin is a great poet" and "compared to Gogol, Pushkin is a little kid." From these facts, we have logical formulas: since Pushkin is a little kid compared to Gogol, it is better to write about Gogol; since Gogol is so great, nothing can be written about him; and so on. Although the facts and their logical connections are a little funny, and the conclusion ("I'd rather not write anything about anyone") seems absurd, the text nevertheless strictly follows its logic.[24]

In addition to logical structure, many of Kharms's works follow a strict form, as in the poem "Ivan Taporyzhkin went on a hunt":[25]

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[23] Трудно сказать что-нибудь о Пушкине тому, кто ничего о нем не знает.
Пушкин великий поэт. Наполеон менее велик, чем Пушкин. И Бисмарк по сравнению с Пушкиным ничто. И Александр I, и II, и III — просто пузыри по сравнению с Пушкиным. Да и все люди по сравнению с Пушкиным пузыри, только по сравнению с Гоголем Пушкин сам пузырь.
А потому вместо того, чтобы писать о Пушкине, я лучше напишу вам о Гоголе.
Хотя Гоголь так велик, что о нем и писать-то ничего нельзя, поэтому я буду все-таки писать о Пушкине.
Но после Гоголя писать о Пушкине как-то обидно. А о Гоголе писать нельзя. Поэтому я уж лучше ни о ком ничего не напишу (Хармс 2000, т. 2., сс. 150-1).

[24] Examples of stories with similar logics are "Blue notebook no. 10" (Голубая тетрадь N 10), "The falling-out old women" (Вываливающиеся старухи), and "A sonnet" (сонет).

[25] The following is a hastily done original translation. Although the meaning is not perfectly preserved (in the Russian, Ivan goes on a *hunt*, and the poodle jumps over a *fence*), I prioritized preserving the meter, rhyme scheme, and cycle of last words. I have also preserved the quirky spelling of "Тапорыжкин" as taken from the Russian in Хармс 2000, т. 3, сс. 9-10.

Иван Тапорыжкин пошел на охоту,	Ivan Taporyzhkin went on a jog,
С ним пудель пошел, перепрыгнув забор,	A poodle with him jumped over the tracks,
Иван, как бревно провалился в болото,	Ivan, like a tree, fell into the bog,
А пудель в реке утонул, как топор.	The poodle then drowned in the lake like an ax.
Иван Тапорыжкин пошел на охоту,	Ivan Taporyzhkin went on a jog,
С ним пудель вприпрыжку пошел, как топор.	A poodle with him was skipping like an ax.
Иван повалился бревном на болото,	Ivan then fell like a tree into the bog,
А пудель в реке перепрыгнул забор.	And the poodle in the lake jumped over the tracks.
Иван Тапорыжкин пошел на охоту,	Ivan Taporyzhkin went on a jog,
С ним пудель в реке провалился в забор.	A poodle in the lake fell into the tracks,
Иван как бревно перепрыгнул болото,	Ivan, like a tree, jumped over the bog,
А пудель вприпрыжку попал на топор.	And the poodle skipped and fell on an ax.

This poem starts out normally enough, but by the last stanza, it devolves into complete absurdity. Throughout its descent into absurdity, however, the poem maintains a strict form: the last words of each line follow the pattern ABCD/ADCB/ABCD; the rhyme scheme is ABAB/ABAB/ABAB; and the poetic meter is consistently iambic tetrameter. These patterns are similar to forms such as villanelles (systematic repetition of lines), sestinas (systematic repetition of last words), ballads (ABAB rhyme scheme), and so on. Of course, in ordinary poetry, strict form poses a challenge for the poet, since it is difficult to follow a strict form and at the same time construct something poetic and meaningful. So, the humor of this poem comes from the fact that Kharms follows strict form, but does not even try to preserve meaning. Just like in “About Pushkin,” humor appears when Kharms follows strict form or logic; these works can be considered parodies of form and logic.

As outlined in the above two examples, many of Kharms's works follow strict logic and form, and nearly all of them devolve into absurdity. This is not absurdity for absurdity's sake, however: Kharms's absurdity plays a crucial epistemological role, in pointing out the limitations of human language and logic. This calls back to the idea of intellectual intuition described in §1, where true knowledge must transcend rational thinking and immediate sense-perception. Logic, form, and language—these lie on the "earthly line," from which it is impossible to observe the true purpose of human life. Through the use of logic and form, Kharms shows how when we strictly follow the earthly line, we come to the point of emptiness and negation ("I'd rather not write anything about anyone"). At the same time, the absurdity of these conclusions are themselves a kind of deviation from the earthly line, and thus a window into an intellectually intuited truth. Thus, Kharms's humor simultaneously shows the insignificance of the earthly line and itself transcends the earthly line.

It is worth noting that Kharms's use of absurdity can also be compared to the more-often-discussed idea of "holy foolishness" (юродство) in Russian culture. The general idea of юродство is that earthly foolishness can point to heavenly wisdom, since our earthly understanding is so limited. An oft-quoted line from St. Athanasius is that "God wants us to become foolish in earthly matters and wise in heavenly matters" (Бог хочет, чтобы люди стали глупы в земных делах и умны в небесных).[26] This theme of "foolishness for Christ's sake" appears plenty in Russian literature, such as in Dostoevsky (Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*) and Gogol (Akaky Akakievich in *The Overcoat*), and thus

[26] Юродство also has scriptural basis in (e.g.) Matthew 11:25 ("At that time Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children") and 1 Corinthians 3:19 ("For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness'").

Kharms continues the religious-philosophical tradition inherited from Father Athanasius to Dostoevsky.

Ultimately, this Russian philosophical context lends an indispensable layer of meaning to Kharms's works. While it is true that Kharms's absurdity and humor can be meaningful on their own, an understanding of their spiritual significance gives a deeper appreciation of his artistic vision.

4. Russian philosophy and Russian art

Russian philosophy often explicitly addresses the role of art within its framework: as we saw earlier, Solovyov views artistic creation as the epitome of intellectual intuition; Pavel Florensky similarly ties art to intellectual intuition in "Reverse Perspective" (Обратная перспектива). The connection between Russian philosophy and art goes deeper than these philosophers' individual theories of art, however: Russian philosophy influenced early 20th-century artistic movements that spanned across music, visual art, theater, and poetry, inspiring radical works that may have broken from the "letter" of Russian philosophy but nevertheless reflected major spiritual themes developed within this philosophy. This influence is most easily traced in the Russian Symbolist and Futurist movements (for the latter, specifically within ОБЕРИУ).

The Russian Symbolist movement emerged at the tail end of the 19th century, around the same time Russian philosophy was flourishing. This movement was characterized by a transcendental worldview, in which ordinary descriptive language was not enough to capture reality, and the careful construction of imagery and symbols was

preferred (von Mohrenschildt 1193). While Solovyov himself remained neutral on whether he wanted to be associated with the movement (Stone 374), his influence on key figures of the Symbolist movement is undeniable. He was a direct mentor to Symbolist poets Vyacheslav Ivanov and Aleksandr Blok, the latter of whom is widely regarded as the greatest Symbolist poet (Wachtel 387, von Mohrenschildt 1201). Solovyov himself published a collection of poems in the 90s about his mystical experiences with Sophia (the Divine Wisdom), which is seen by many as a kind of proto-Symbolist poetry (Wachtel 387, von Mohrenschildt 1199). In addition to poets, some other Symbolist artists that may be tied to Russian philosophy are painter Mikhail Nesterov and musician Alexander Scriabin. Nesterov's paintings were primarily religious in subject matter, and one of his paintings is a portrait of Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov. Scriabin was known for his radical compositions and grand, mystical synesthetic performances, the latter of which reflects the idea of transcendence through an "integral" experience.[27]

The connection between Russian philosophy and Russian Futurism may not be as explicit, especially since one of the core ideas of Futurism was a complete rejection of the past. However, within the ОБЕРИУ (Union of Real Art), of which Kharms was a part, there is a more clear connection. This group was a short-lived (1928-30) collective of avant-garde artists, known for bizarre performances of poetry and theater (Cardullo 389). As mentioned in the previous section on Kharms, one of ОБЕРИУ's core philosophical principles was the rejection of systematic thought and mathematical rationality. This reflects a general mindset found in every Russian philosopher discussed so far, ranging from Solovyov to Florensky to N.O. Lossky. ОБЕРИУ's general interest in transcending

[27] For an entertaining article describing the interactions between Scriabin and Florensky, see Sabaneeff 1961.

mathematics, as documented in Eugene Ostashevky's article "Numbers are not Bound By Order," has roots in philosophers like Florensky, who popularized mathematical developments in Russia (Ostashevsky 37). Kharms's explicit interest in Florensky and N.O. Lossky, as mentioned in the previous section, indicate the active exchange of ideas between these philosophical and artistic circles. Additionally, there was direct participation of philosophers within ОБЕРИУ through Leonid Lipavsky and Yakov Druskin.

Given this deep connection between Russian philosophy and art, I thought it would be natural to create a work of art inspired by Russian philosophy as part of this thesis. Since Solovyov views artistic creation as the key to "true" knowledge, it felt like creating art would be a good way to deepen my understanding of these philosophical works. At the same time, in the spirit of other artists who have been inspired by Russian philosophy, I am not over-concerned with sticking to the "letter" of Russian philosophy (if one can even identify a "letter" to go against). Although I draw inspiration from Solovyov and others' aesthetic principles, I do not take any one perspective as gospel.

I have recently been drawn to electronic music, so I have chosen electronic music as the medium. Conceptually, I am inspired by the three modes of Being as outlined in Lecture 6 of Solovyov's *Lectures*:

> We thus have *three relations* or *three positings* of that which absolutely "is" as determining itself with respect to its own content. First, it is posited as possessing this content in immediate, substantial unity, or nondifferentiation, with itself. It is posited as a single substance, which essentially includes all in its absolute power.

> Second, it is posited as manifesting or actualizing its own absolute content, opposing the latter to itself or separating it from itself, by an act of self-determination. Third and last, it is posited as maintaining and asserting itself in its own content or as realizing itself in an actual, mediated, or differentiated unity with this content, or essence, that is, with the all — in other words, as finding itself, as eternally returning to itself and remaining "at home with itself" (83).[28]

I have chosen this passage for its fundamentality in Solovyov's metaphysical worldview: this passage captures what it means for anything to exist at all, and I am drawn to ideas that hold such fundamental importance. In addition, Solovyov views artistic creation as a display of these three modes of Being, so the connection to art comes easily.

Corresponding to the three modes of Being that Solovyov outlines, the composition is divided into three tracks, titled *substance*, *manifestation*, and *return*. I have attempted to capture the essential features of each mode within their corresponding track: *substance* is meant to capture possibility and nondifferentiation; *manifestation* is meant to capture actuality, separation, and pure act; *return* is meant to capture realization and return to oneself. Similarly to how these modes of Being are intended to be understood as a single way of Being, these three tracks join together to form a single

[28] «Итак, мы имеем *три отношения* или *три положения* абсолютно-сущего как определяющего себя относительно своего содержания. *Во-первых,* оно полагается как обладающее этим содержанием в непосредственном субстанциальном единстве или безразличии с собою, – оно полагается как единая субстанция, все существенно заключающая в своей безусловной мощи; *во-вторых,* оно полагается как проявляющееся или осуществляющее свое абсолютное содержание, противополагая его себе или выделяя его из себя актом своего самоопределения; наконец, *в-третьих,* оно полагается как сохраняющее и утверждающее себя в этом своем содержании, или как осуществляющее себя в актуальном, опосредствованном или различенном единстве с этим содержанием или сущностью, то есть со *всем,* – другими словами, как находящее себя в другом или вечно к себе возвращающееся и у себя сущее» (Соловьев 85).

continuous track that loops back into itself at the end. This, of course, is also ties into the three-in-one imagery of the Trinity. Finally, in the spirit of organic unity, I have tried to capture an "organic" sound in the synthesizers used.

While I am sure I have fallen short of Solovyov's standard of true "intellectual intuition" in creating this music, it has been fruitful to keep his philosophy in mind while creating this composition. I am excited to continue creating art in the future that is inspired by his philosophy.

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