

# Russia's Two Enlightenments: The *Philokalia* and the Accommodation of Reason in Ivan Kireevskii and Pavel Florenskii

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THIS article explores the response of two Russian religious thinkers to a fundamental tension within Russian Orthodoxy of the modern period, a tension that arises from Russia's engagement with modernity from the late seventeenth century onwards, and that is fundamentally about Orthodoxy's response to modernity. In the broadest terms it can be characterized as the tension between reason and faith, but this alone is insufficient. The question of the relationship between reason and faith has been posed since the dawn of Christianity. Given the historical context, it is more productive to view this tension as existing between two diametrically opposed conceptions of enlightenment, as first highlighted by the semioticians Lotman and Uspenskii:

The determining significance for eighteenth-century culture of the words 'enlightenment' and 'enlightener' [*prosveshchenie* and *prosvetitel'*] is well known. These two words were the basis for the most fundamental ideas of the 'Age of Reason.' However, they were not neologisms — they were known in pre-Petrine Russia. 'To enlighten [*prosveshchati*] means: to christen, to consider worthy of Holy Baptism.' It is in this sense that the word *prosvetitel'* is used in the church canticle addressed to St Vladimir: 'O teacher of Orthodoxy and enlightener of all Rus, you have enlightened all of us with baptism.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ju. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspenskij, 'The Role of Dual Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (up to the End of the Eighteenth Century)', in *The Semiotics*

Lotman and Uspenskii draw our attention to the fact that both the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment and the Eastern Orthodox Church privilege light as a metaphor for truth whilst at the same time entertaining very different conceptions as to the nature of 'truth', its source and content. My purpose in this article is to explore the differences between Russia's two Enlightenments in the context of Russian religious-intellectual culture of the imperial period, and specifically in light of emerging research into the relationship of the Church *intelligentsia* to the European Enlightenment. I will argue that the principal intellectual alternative to the values and aspirations of the Western religious Enlightenment, an alternative that I will term the Orthodox Enlightenment, arose in the nineteenth century in the form of the discourse of contemplative monasticism: the ascetical writings of the *Philokalia*. I will then analyse how the religious philosophers Ivan Kireevskii (1806–56) and Pavel Florenskii (1882–1937) draw on Philokalic theology in an effort to articulate the Orthodox Enlightenment for their respective generations. I will suggest that two factors in particular have a bearing on the effectiveness of that effort. The first is the nature of the two philosophers' relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church: whilst Kireevskii, notwithstanding his intensive engagement with the Greek Fathers and his relationship with prominent contemporary spiritual elders, remained a layman in fact and in spirit, Florenskii entered the Church as a priest in 1911 and taught in the Moscow Spiritual Academy; he became an 'insider', and his philosophical

*of Russian Culture*, ed. Ann Shukman, Ann Arbor, MI, 1984, p. 19. G. Diachenko's *Polnyi tserkovno-slavianskii slovar'* of 1899 gives for the entry 'Prosveshchenie': 'Svet, osvshchenie, prosveshchenie', and also 'Kreshchenie' ('baptism'), as found in the *ekten'ia* for the Feast of Epiphany (which in the Orthodox rite celebrates the baptism of Christ). Earlier dictionaries confirm the association with baptism. Shishkov's brainchild, the *Slovar' tserkovno-slavianskago i russkago iazyka*, compiled between 1827 and 1847 and published in 1847, gives alongside the neutral 'Osianie svetom' and 'Obogashcheniia uma poznaniami', 'Prazdnik Bogoiavleniia' and 'Kreshchenie'. The *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi* of 1789–94 gives 'Prazdnik Bogoiavleniia' as the third meaning after 'Osianie', and 'Nastavlenie; ochishchenie razuma ot lozhnykh predosuditel'nykh poniatii, zakliuchenii. Protivopolagaetsia nevezhestvu'. Interestingly, despite the Enlightenment ring to this latter definition, the quotation used to illustrate it is from 2. Tim. 1:10: 'Iavl'sheisia blagodati nyne prosveshcheniem Spasitelia nashego Iisusa Khrista.' The 1806–22 edition retains these three definitions, and adds 'Kreshchenie'. As late as V. Dahl's *Tolkovnyi slovar' zhivago velikoruskago iazyka* (2nd edition of 1882) there is no definition of 'Prosveshchenie' as referring to the age of Enlightenment. This corresponds with the situation in Germany, where it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that it became the norm to understand 'Aufklärung', in the first instance, as the historical epoch of that name (*Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds Otto Brunner, Werner Conzer and Reinhart Koselleck, Stuttgart, 2004 [1972], Band 1, pp. 244, 341).

approach reflects this. The second factor, the intellectual context in which each was writing, is more substantial and more open to textual analysis: despite its rejection, on the level of content, of German metaphysical idealism, on the level of form Kireevskii's essay, 'O neobkhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novykh nachal dlia filosofii' ('On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles in Philosophy', 1856) continues to reflect the conventions of contemporary philosophical discourse. Florenskii, on the other hand, rejected rationalistic discourse on the levels of both content and form. He came to maturity during the flowering of early modernism in Russia, a hallmark of which was the rejection of the nineteenth-century rationalistic-scientific philosophical paradigm and the search for a 'new religious consciousness'.<sup>2</sup> Florenskii's *Stolp i utverzhdanie Istiny* (*The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 1914), is a modernist text that exploits the conventions of modernist prose to open up new approaches to the religious discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church. Whilst I aim to place the Philokalic tradition, the related tradition of spiritual eldership (*starchestvo*) and Kireevskii's and Florenskii's relationship with these on a sound historical footing, my primary approach, in this essay, is to explore the conceptual relationship between the term 'enlightenment', the theological framework shared by the Philokalic texts<sup>3</sup> and the conceptual framework employed by Kireevskii and Florenskii respectively in their advocacy of the Orthodox Enlightenment, with a view to establishing the intellectual historical importance of the *Philokalia* to these important representatives of modern Russian religious thought.<sup>4</sup>

### *Two Enlightenment*

Both parts of Lotman and Uspenskii's formulation require further comment. The eighteenth century is known as the 'siècle des Lumières'. For the ideologues of the Enlightenment, the French *philosophes*, the term

<sup>2</sup> For a recent overview of the so-called Russian religious renaissance in the early modernist period, see Ruth Coates, 'Religious Renaissance in the Silver Age', in *A History of Russian Thought*, eds W. Leatherbarrow and D. Offord, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 169–93.

<sup>3</sup> See note 30, below.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Louth makes a useful distinction between the material and the 'noetic' reception of the *Philokalia*, commenting that the latter 'is a much more subjective matter; in exploring what is meant by noetic reception we shall encounter claims that really constitute challenges to what we consider Orthodoxy to be, what we consider theology to be'. Andrew Louth, 'The Influence of the *Philokalia* in the Orthodox World', in *The 'Philokalia': A Classic Text of Orthodox Spirituality*, eds Brock Bingham and Bradley Nassif, New York, 2012, p. 50. My attempt to relate Kireevskii's and Florenskii's thought to Philokalic theology can I think be seen as an exercise in exploring the *Philokalia's* noetic reception.

'lumières' had become synonymous with 'connaissances' (knowledge, commonly rendered in the plural in French). Jacques Roger has adduced evidence that the plural 'lumières' originally came into use in deliberate contradistinction to the singular 'la lumière', which until the beginning of the eighteenth century denoted the divine light proceeding from God. Roger observes that the biblical source text for this concept is the prologue to John's gospel: 'In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. [...] The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world' (John 1: 4–5; 9). Later in the eighteenth century the singular 'lumière' was recouped, in polemical usurpation of its theological meaning, to convey the light of ideal Reason, by means of which the *raisonneurs* struggled against the forces of darkness, that is: ignorance, prejudice, superstition and fanaticism ('enthusiasm').<sup>5</sup> In relation to Christianity, this meant the principled opposition to such 'irrational' aspects of belief and practice as the sacraments, the priestly hierarchy, dogma, ritual and mysticism.<sup>6</sup>

Citing John's gospel, Roger omits to point out that the divine light there described is Christ, the Word of God:<sup>7</sup> this is an essential point for Orthodoxy.<sup>8</sup> From an Orthodox point of view, the Enlightenment ideologues were substituting Reason for Christ as the source of truth. Whilst they understood enlightenment to mean liberation from prejudice and superstition through the exercise of discursive reason, Orthodox

<sup>5</sup> Jaques Roger, 'La lumière et les lumières', *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 20, 1968, pp. 167–77.

<sup>6</sup> According to Horst Stuke, the German term 'Aufklärung' was used up to the end of the seventeenth century in a primarily meteorological sense as a translation of the Latin *serenitas* ('fair weather'). Over the course of the eighteenth century, first the verbal form (by 1720) and later the noun (from the 1760s) became connected with the notion of shedding light on matters previously obscure, and was applied initially to the human mind in general, and subsequently to the reasoning faculty specifically. Stuke surmises that the development was prompted by the need correctly to translate into German the French terms, used by Leibniz, 'éclairer', 'éclaircir' and 'éclaircissement'. Well into the nineteenth century it was used synonymously with 'Erleuchtung' and 'erleuchten'. Stuke points out that Leibniz used the terms to refer to 'lumen naturale' and 'lumen divinum' alike. He sees 'the age-old, traditionally rich and multiform matrix of ideas attaching to the religious-metaphysical doctrine of light' as one of two main sources (the other is Cartesian epistemology) of the semantic content of 'Aufklärung', whilst expressing caution about viewing these as exhaustive. 'Aufklärung', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Band 1, pp. 247–49.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. John 8: 12: 'Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."'

<sup>8</sup> Affirmed in the *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi* of 1789–94 and of 1806–22, which includes in its definitions of 'Svet': 'pridaetsia nazvanie synu Bozhiiu. *Iako svet pride v mir.* Ioan. III. 19. *Ne de toi svet, no da svidetel' stvuet o svete.* Ioan. I. 8.'

believers have always understood it as liberation from sin and death through the revelation of God in Christ. Lotman and Uspenskii's reference to the sacrament of baptism as the means by which Russians were enlightened must be understood in this context. Following the Church Fathers, Orthodoxy understands baptism as the sacrament in which the convert receives the Holy Spirit for the first time, symbolically dying and being resurrected into a new, spiritual life in Christ. This is the first step on the way to the ultimate goal of the Christian life as the Orthodox Church conceives it: deification, or the attainment of holiness, and thus immortality, through the grace of God.<sup>9</sup> Deification becomes possible for humans only after the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, who is the prototype of deified humanity. The deified state is verbally represented through light imagery in the works of the Greek doctors of the Church and the desert Fathers and, through them, in the Orthodox liturgy.

Though light imagery may be found throughout the liturgical corpus,<sup>10</sup> the core text, theologically speaking, is that of the Feast of the Transfiguration.<sup>11</sup> This feast commemorates the event, related in all three

<sup>9</sup> The literature on deification (Gk: *theosis*) is extensive. For an introduction to the subject, see Norman Russell, *Fellow Workers with God: Orthodox Thinking on Theosis*, Crestwood, NY, 2009. On baptism, see pp. 127–29.

<sup>10</sup> Florenskii declared that '[t]he idea of the light that is full of grace is one of the few fundamental ideas of the whole liturgy'. Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, trans. Boris Jakim, Princeton, NJ, 1997, p. 71. He cites 'almost at random': the troparion of St Sergius of Radonezh, 'vselisia v tia Presviatyi Dukh, Ego zhe deistviem svetlo ukrashen esi'; the Christmas troparion, 'Rozhdestvo tvoe Khriste Bozhe nash, vozsiia mirovi svet razuma'; the Sunday canon of the 6th tone, 'Liuboviii ozari, moliusia, videti tia Slove Bozhii'; matins, 1st antiphon of the 2nd tone, 'Na nebo ochi pushchaju moego serdtsa k Tebe Spase, spasi mia Tvoim osiianiem'; St Symeon the New Theologian, Seventh Prayer for Holy Communion, 'Ne ibo est' edin, s toboiu Khriste moi, svetom trisolnechnym, prosveshchaiushchim mir'; the prayer of dismissal, 'Khriste, svete istinnyi, prosveshchai i osviiashchaii vsiakago cheloveka, griadushchago v mir, da znamenuesia na nas svet litsa tvoego, da v nem uzrim svet nepristupnyi'; and the holy martyr Afinogen, evening song to the Son of God, 'Svete tikhii sviatyia slavy, bezsmertnago Ottsa, nebesnago, sviatago blazhennago, Iisuse Khriste: Prishedshe na zapad solntsa, videvshe svet vechernii, poet Ottsa, Syna i Sviatago Dukha Boga. Dostoin esi vo vsia vremena pet' byti glasy prepodobnymi, Syne Bozhii zhivot daiai: tem zhe mir Tia slavit'. P. A. Florenskii, *Stolp i utverzhenie Istiny*, Moscow, 1990 [1914], I (1), pp. 96–97; I (2), p. 659. Henceforth references to this work are to Jakim's translation, with page references given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>11</sup> See Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography*, Crestwood, NY, 2005. The *Slovar' tserkovno-slavianskogo i russkago iazyka* (1847) illustrates the verb 'prosveshchat'sia' with a quotation from Matthew's account of the Transfiguration: 'I prosvetisia litse ego iako solntse' (Matthew 17:2). The *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi* of 1789–94 illustrates the noun 'svet' from the same verse: 'Rizy zhe ego bysha bely, iako svet'.

synoptic gospels, when Jesus takes the disciples Peter, James and John up a mountain (in Orthodox tradition — Mount Tabor) and reveals his divinity to them visually: in Matthew's account '[h]is face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white' (Matthew 17: 2). In the liturgy for the feast, emphasis is laid on this event as the revelation of the prototype of the deified humanity that Jesus is about to make possible through his sacrificial death and resurrection: 'For in his mercy the Saviour of our souls has transfigured disfigured man and made him shine with light upon Mount Tabor'; 'On Mount Tabor He makes bright the weakness of man and bestows enlightenment upon our souls'; 'Today Christ on Mount Tabor has changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with brightness He has made it godlike.'<sup>12</sup>

Truth conceived as light in the Orthodox sense not only differs from the Enlightenment's rationalistic conception: it presents a challenge to reason in several distinct ways which bear brief enumeration. First, truth is lodged in a personality: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life' (John 14: 6), Christ declares of himself. Discursive reason aspires to objectivity and is in principle impersonal in nature. Second, that personality is an embodied entity, a psychosomatic organism, whereas rational thought operates on the formal and abstract plane. Third, access to truth depends on revelation, on the initiative of a transcendent Other: in Christian terminology, on grace. This places human reason in a subordinate attitude of waiting ('waiting on the Lord'). The characterization of reason as 'proud', frequently encountered in Russian religious thought, has to do with its insistence on its autonomy and rejection of this subordinate position. Fourth, truth is revelatory not of some theoretical and axiologically neutral state of affairs, but of one's own debased condition, the correction of which depends not on the reason, but on the will. Finally, truth is disclosed as personally transformative, as the 'darkened nature of Adam' is conformed to the 'godlike'.

The problem, then, for the reasoning mind that has accepted the Orthodox Christ is twofold: on the one hand, how to conceive of itself and its task in light of this truth that appears not to require it, and on the other, how to represent revealed truth rationally to a modern, secular readership. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, secular philosophy strove to liberate itself from the constraints of Christian belief and praxis, and from the material-bodily principle itself, which in sacramental confessions

<sup>12</sup> *The Festal Menaion*, trans. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, South Canaan, PA, 1998, pp. 468; 469.

like Orthodoxy is an essential component of religious expression.<sup>13</sup> How, then, were practising Orthodox intellectuals to negotiate in their own writing between the competing claims of two opposed conceptions of enlightenment? Rather than attempting to theorize this dilemma in all its aspects, I propose to examine how two familiar modern Russian thinkers and Orthodox believers — Kireevskii and Florenskii — wrestled with these questions as they attempted to draw their educated contemporaries into the Church. In their thinking about reason, and their adoption of discursive strategies for accommodating rational thought within an Orthodox world conception, Kireevskii and Florenskii were both inspired by the nineteenth-century revival of contemplative monasticism in Russia. It is hard to exaggerate the importance of this revival for Russian Orthodox culture and religious thought, both lay and ecclesiastical, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present day. More than any other facet of Orthodox culture, it proved capable of challenging the Western religious Enlightenment, both as a practice that embodied all the features of Orthodox enlightenment, and as a ‘philosophy’ for which there was a specific ‘language’, a set of concepts made available to philosophical discourse in the collection of texts on Orthodox mystical-ascetic practice known as the *Philokalia*. Both Kireevskii and Florenskii mined this source, but I will argue that Florenskii did so to greater effect, thanks to the discursive possibilities that opened up to him in the wake of the anti-rationalist turn that Russian high culture took in the late imperial period.

### *Spiritual Eldership and the ‘Philokalia’*

The tension between two interpretations of enlightenment presented the intellectuals of Russian Orthodoxy of the imperial period with a choice between accommodating Russia’s historical confession to Enlightenment ideals, on the one hand, and intellectually defending its ancient mystical-sacramental foundations, on the other.<sup>14</sup> Emerging research on this issue

<sup>13</sup> Precisely those aspects of Orthodoxy that the Enlightenment rejected as irrational were central to the practices of ‘lived Orthodoxy’: the veneration of icons and relics; processions and pilgrimages; confession and participation in the Eucharist; holy foolishness and spiritual eldership, and so on. At the same time, these same practices are united by a common sacramentalism that is central to the Orthodox conception of enlightenment, and that is justified theologically by the patristic understanding of Christ as God incarnate: the saving grace of God is mediated through the material world and deifies that world.

<sup>14</sup> Laura Engelstein, ‘Holy Russia in Modern Times: The Slavophile Quest for a Lost Faith’, in idem, *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia’s Illiberal Path*, Ithaca, NY and London, 2009, pp. 99–124, offers a useful overview of the encounter between religion and modernity in Russia.

is drawing our attention to influential adopters of the former approach. Elise Wirtschafter's work on Metropolitan Platon (Levshin, 1737–1812), Court preacher during the reign of Catherine II, reveals him to have been a religious enlightener whose 'interest in the moral message of Holy Scripture [...] echoed the religious Enlighteners and non-confessional moral philosophers of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, and brought contemporary Enlightenment concepts into the framework of church observance'.<sup>15</sup> In a forthcoming essay, Sean Gillen presents V. D. Kudriavtsev-Platonov (1828–91), professor of philosophy at the Moscow Spiritual Academy, in the same context of the pan-European religious Enlightenment as a defender of rational religion and proponent of a Russian theism that took its cue from Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790) and *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793).<sup>16</sup> Patrick Michelson has analysed the great nineteenth-century project undertaken by the four Spiritual Academies (of Kazan', Kiev, Moscow and St Petersburg) to translate the Church Fathers into Russian in the context of the conscious effort by key Academy figures to promote the very Kantian notions of the moral autonomy and perfectibility of the self in order to meet the needs of modern believers and the modern Russian state.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, not all educated Orthodox embraced the Western religious Enlightenment. Over the course of the nineteenth century, numerous individuals within the priestly hierarchy and the Spiritual Academies, among them significant figures such as Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov), and Bishops Ignatii (Brianchaninov) and Feofan (Govorov), resisted what was seen as the Protestantization of Orthodoxy in the name of what Georges Florovsky, among others, has called a 'theology of the

<sup>15</sup> Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, 'Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Russia: Father Platon at the Court of Catherine II', in Simon Dixon (ed.), *Personality and Place in Russian Culture: Essays in Memory of Lindsey Hughes, Slavonic and East European Review*, 88, 2010, 1–2, pp. 180–203 (p. 183). See also her '20 September 1765: Tsesarevich Paul's Eleventh Birthday and Father Platon's "Sermon on Learning"', in A. Cross (ed.), *Days from the Reigns of Eighteenth-Century Russian Rulers*, Study Group on Eighteenth Century Russia Newsletter, part 2, Cambridge, 2007, and 'Orthodoxy and Enlightenment in Catherinian Russia: The Tsarevich Dimitrii Sermons of Metropolitan Platon', in Patrick Lally Michelson and Judith Deutsch Kornblatt (eds), *Thinking Orthodox in Modern Russia: Culture, History, Context*, forthcoming 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Sean Gillen, 'V. D. Kudriavtsev-Platonov and the Tradition of Theism in Russia', in *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Patrick Lally Michelson, "'The First and Most Sacred Right": Religious Freedom and the Liberation of the Russian Nation, 1825–1905', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007, pp. 29–92.



heart'.<sup>18</sup> According to Florovsky, this 'theology of the heart', introduced in the reforms to the ecclesiastical schools of 1814 in the form of an instruction to educate the "inner man" by imparting a living and well-founded personal conviction in the saving truths of faith'<sup>19</sup> (a departure from the rote-learning favoured in the pre-reform schools), was for some decades coloured by German pietistic and mystical influences. In due course, however, under the influence of the nineteenth-century revival of contemplative monasticism in Russia, this gave way to a focus on the mystical asceticism of the Greek Desert Fathers.<sup>20</sup>

The practice of Eastern Christian mystical asceticism is known as hesychasm (from the Greek *hesychia*: stillness), its practitioners as hesychasts. At its core is devotion to silent 'prayer of the heart',<sup>21</sup> and its sought-for objective is an experience, in this life, of deification, or transfiguration by divine (uncreated) light. Those hesychasts who over many years have achieved spiritual perfection and been rewarded by mystical union in this sense are known as spiritual elders (*starsy*).

The historical context for spiritual eldership in Russia has now been expertly written up in Irina Paert's recent study, which makes full use of pre-existing sources in addition to providing substantial new material from archival research and offering a range of interpretative strategies for understanding the phenomenon.<sup>22</sup> Spiritual eldership is an ancient phenomenon dating back to the earliest desert Fathers. It enjoyed a renaissance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that culminated in the successful theological defence of hesychastic practice from attacks from Byzantine humanist quarters by Gregory Palamas, Bishop of Thessalonica (1296–1359), who was himself a practising hesychast.<sup>23</sup> It was at this time that this mystical type of asceticism was introduced to Russia. Having fallen into abeyance in Russia and elsewhere in the early

<sup>18</sup> Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology: Part One*, Belmont, MA, 1979, p. 220. Florovsky writes of an enduring 'tragic schism in Russian ecclesiastical society' between 'spiritual askesis' and 'moralism': *Ways of Russian Theology: Part Two*, Vaduz, 1987, p. 174 (first published as *Puti russkogo bogosloviia*, 1937).

<sup>19</sup> Florovsky, *Ways*, 1, p. 220.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>21</sup> This consisted of the invocation of the name of Jesus in the Jesus Prayer ('Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'). For the relationship of the Jesus Prayer to the *Philokalia*, see Mary B. Cunningham, 'The Place of the Jesus Prayer in the *Philokalia*', in Bingaman and Nassif, *The 'Philokalia'*, pp. 195–202.

<sup>22</sup> Irina Paert, *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy*, DeKalb, IL, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> See John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, trans. George Lawrence, Crestwood, NY, 1998 (first published as *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, 1959).

modern period, it enjoyed a second revival in the eighteenth century as a result of the efforts of Greek monks to counteract the influence of the Enlightenment on the Orthodox Church (the Kollyvades movement). This revival was driven by the publication in 1782 of a collection of writings on mystical ascetic practice encompassing the fourth to the fifteenth centuries under the title of the *Philokalia*. A shorter collection in Slavonic translation prepared by the Ukrainian elder Paisii Velichkovskii (1722–94) appeared in Moscow in 1793 (the *Dobrotoliubie*). Russian translations followed, the most comprehensive from 1877 by Feofan (Govorov) the Recluse.<sup>24</sup> The *Philokalia* enjoyed far greater influence in Russia than it did in Greece.<sup>25</sup> Its dissemination went hand in hand with the above-mentioned flowering of hesychasm and spiritual eldership in the Russian monasteries which continued to the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>26</sup> In the nineteenth century certain Russian elders, the most famous of which are probably St Seraphim of Sarov (1754/59–1833) and the elders Lev, Makarii and Amvrosii of the Optina Pustyn hermitage, achieved iconic status and attracted the attention of a wide range of figures from the secular elite.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the reception of Philokalic spirituality in Russian monasticism involved change as well as continuity. In Paert's account, a more moderate approach to ascetic discipline than that recommended by Paisii was adopted by the Russian elders, particularly in regard to diet and ritual, and particularly with respect to expectations of lay adopters of the prayer of the heart. They 'advocated the interiorization of spiritual life', possibly echoing the wider early nineteenth-century interest in 'inner Christianity'.<sup>28</sup> As stated above, the Philokalic writings are (together with the Liturgy) the fullest written expression that we have of the Orthodox conception of enlightenment, so their dissemination in the Age of Enlightenment constituted a clear challenge to the burgeoning hegemony of the new rationalism.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For the translation and material reception history of the *Philokalia*, see G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware (trans & eds), *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 1, London, 1979, pp. 11–13; Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, 'The Spirituality of the *Philokalia*', *Sobornost*, 13, 1993, 1, pp. 6–11; Kallistos Ware, 'St. Nikodimos and the *Philokalia*'; John Anthony McGuckin, 'The Making of the *Philokalia*: A Tale of Monks and Manuscripts', and Louth, 'The Influence of the *Philokalia* in the Orthodox World', all in Bingaman and Nassif, *The 'Philokalia'*.

<sup>25</sup> Bishop Kallistos, 'The Spirituality of the *Philokalia*', p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Paert, *Spiritual Elders*, chs 2–5.

<sup>27</sup> Chetverikov notes visits by the writers Iurkevich, Gogol', V. Solov'ev, A. Tolstoi, L. Tolstoi and Dostoevskii, among others. Sergii Chetverikov, *Starets Paisii Velichkovskii*, trans. Vasily Lickwar and Alexander J. Lisenko, Belmont, MA, 1980, p. 313.

<sup>28</sup> Paert, *Spiritual Elders*, pp. 82–90, 85.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Louth, 'The Theology of the *Philokalia*', in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy*

The title-page of the Greek *Philokalia* states that the purpose of the writings it contains is that ‘through ethical philosophy, in accordance with praxis and contemplation, the intellect is purified, illuminated and perfected’.<sup>30</sup> As Louth has pointed out, these words contain ‘a wealth of meaning’.<sup>31</sup> The Philokalic texts constitute a ‘philosophy’, not in the Enlightenment sense of rational enquiry but in the sense of the quest for personal moral perfection. It is an experiential rather than an intellectual philosophy. The role of the ‘intellect’ (*nous*) is at the centre of this experiential philosophy, but not in the modern sense as the faculty of reasoning. In the *Philokalia*, *nous* retains its Platonic meaning of ‘the organ of contemplation [*theoria*]’: it ‘does not function by formulating abstract concepts and then arguing on this basis to a conclusion reached through deductive reasoning, but it understands divine truth by immediate experience, intuition, or “simple cognition”’.<sup>32</sup> In the conceptual framework of the *Philokalia*, *nous* is distinguished from *dianoia*, a term that is closer to the modern concept of ‘reason’ as ‘rational thought’.<sup>33</sup>

The quest for moral perfection is predicated upon the belief that human beings are fallen. By virtue of their fallenness, they are separated from God. Thus, the motivation for the quest is to overcome that separation and experience closeness to God once more, to ‘know’ God in experience. Again following the Platonic model, the Philokalic writings hold that the organ that apprehends God is the intellect, which, in the words of Festugière, ‘aspires to a union where there is total fusion, the interpenetration of two living things’;<sup>34</sup> hence the need for the purification of the intellect through ‘praxis and contemplation’. The intellect is conceived as the higher part

*in the West*, eds John Behr, Andrew Louth, and Dimitri Conomos, Crestwood, NY, 2003, p. 352. Louth points out that Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* appeared within a year of the *Philokalia*, in 1781.

<sup>30</sup> In the delineation of Philokalic ‘philosophy’ that follows, I treat the Philokalic texts as a theologically cohesive whole, notwithstanding the fact that the Greek, Slavonic, Russian and other editions of the *Philokalia* differed to a greater or lesser extent in the number and authorship of texts selected. In doing so I follow contemporary specialists in Orthodox spirituality such as Andrew Louth (‘The Theology of the *Philokalia*’) and, more recently, Rowan Williams (‘The Theological World of the *Philokalia*’, in Bingaman and Nassif, *The ‘Philokalia*’).

<sup>31</sup> Louth, ‘The Theology of the *Philokalia*’, p. 357.

<sup>32</sup> Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *Philokalia*, p. 362. Williams employs ‘intelligence’ for *nous* ‘on the grounds that “intellect” has for most readers a narrower and more conceptually focused sense than “intelligence”’. Williams, ‘The Theological World of the *Philokalia*’, p. 295 (note 7).

<sup>33</sup> Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *Philokalia*, p. 364.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*, 2nd edn, Oxford, 2007, p. xv.

of the soul, as opposed to the passionate lower part. 'Praxis', the ascetic struggle against the passions, is directed at subordinating the lower part of the soul to the higher, to achieve a state of dispassion (*apatheia*) that is the prerequisite for contemplation. Nevertheless, the intellect, too, requires discipline. In its fallen state it is distracted by the world of the senses, and must through prayer be gathered to a state of 'attention' (*prosochi*) or 'watchfulness' (*nipsis*).

In addition to the Platonic notion of 'intellect', the *Philokalia* engages intensively with the Biblical concept of 'heart' (*kardia*). Its usage has little in common with the heart's modern association with the emotions. The 'heart' is 'the spiritual centre of man's being, man as made in the image of God, his deepest and truest self'.<sup>35</sup> Again, 'it is the centre of the human person, the source of everything that we are'.<sup>36</sup> In one sense, the relationship between 'intellect' and 'heart' in the Philokalic texts reflects the uncertain relationship between Platonic and Biblical mysticism in the Greek tradition. In another though, a synthesis is achieved by the idea that the rightful place of residence of the intellect is in the heart, that their separation is a mark of fallenness, and their integration a mark of healing and salvation. Thus, the hesychastic mystics articulated the struggle against distraction as the effort to 'return the mind to the heart'. Palamas describes the relationship in the following way:

Consequently, when we seek to keep watch over and correct our reason by a rigorous sobriety, with what are we to keep watch, if we do not gather together our mind, which has been dissipated abroad by the senses, and lead it back again into the interior, to the selfsame heart which is the seat of the thoughts?<sup>37</sup>

The aim of hesychastic prayer was through the elimination of extraneous thoughts to bring about the 'descent' of the mind into the heart, to achieve 'prayer of the heart', in which the whole person, not just the mind, participates. Consequently, when union with God occurs, it is not merely an intellectual event, but an experience that overwhelms the whole person as a psychosomatic organism.

<sup>35</sup> Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *Philokalia*, p. 361.

<sup>36</sup> Louth, 'The Theology of the *Philokalia*', p. 359. For an extensive survey of the term 'heart' in biblical usage, see P. I. Iurkevich, 'Serdtsse i ego znachenie v dukhovnoi zhizni cheloveka, po ucheniiu slova Bozhiia' (1860), in P. I. Iurkevich, *Filosofskie proizvedeniia*, Moscow, 1990, pp. 69–103.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory Palamas, *The Triads*, ed. John Meyendorff, trans. Nicholas Gendle, Mahwah, NJ, 1983, p. 43.

The Philokalic Fathers are highly reticent about the event of mystical union. St Symeon the New Theologian (tenth century) is a rare exception. What is clear is that the intellect cannot achieve union by its own efforts through contemplation: contemplation, prayer, can only prepare the contemplative to receive God as the latter freely and supernaturally reveals himself (through grace). Furthermore, mystical union is neither a sensory nor an intellectual experience, though it paradoxically engages body and mind. In Palamas's words, it is 'an illumination immaterial and divine, a grace invisibly seen and ignorantly known'.<sup>38</sup> This 'illumination' is *theosis*, or divinization: not knowledge about God, but participation in God. Hence, in the *Philokalia*, knowledge of the truth is an encounter with the personal God. Finally, to return to the metaphor of light, mystical union in the Orthodox tradition is experienced as a 'vision' of the divine light not exteriorly, but as infusing the visionary, who is transfigured as Christ was transfigured in the Gospel narrative: 'For in his mercy the Saviour of our souls has transfigured disfigured man and made him shine with light.'

#### *Kireevskii*

Ivan Kireevskii, who together with Aleksei Khomiakov was the leading exponent of early Slavophilism and the person whose role most nearly approximates that of the movement's philosopher, was introduced to the hesychastic tradition through his wife, whose spiritual confessor was the elder Filaret (1758–1842), a contemporary of Seraphim's who had spent some time at the Sarov hermitage, subsequently moving to Moscow's Novospasskii monastery.<sup>39</sup> Kireevskii paid several visits to Filaret, and is said to have spent 'entire nights' with him as he lay dying.<sup>40</sup> After Filaret's death in 1842, Kireevskii found a new spiritual mentor in another hesychast, the elder Makarii of the Optina Pustyn hermitage. Under his guidance Kireevskii continued the extensive study of Eastern patristic literature that he had begun under Filaret. Moreover, he became Makarii's collaborator in the translation into Russian and publication of a series of patristic works, including key texts on the theology and practice of hesychasm.<sup>41</sup> Needless

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>39</sup> Chetverikov, *Starets Paisii Velichkovskii*, pp. 295–96.

<sup>40</sup> Abbott Gleason, *European and Muscovite: Ivan Kireevsky and the Origins of Slavophilism*, Cambridge, MA, 1972, p. 237. The biographical information on Kireevskii is taken from this work.

<sup>41</sup> The salient figures in Gleason's lists are Paisii Velichkovskii, Nil Sorskii, John Climacus, Isaac the Syrian, Symeon the New Theologian, Maximus the Confessor, Theodore Studite and Gregory of Sinai. *Ibid.*, pp. 237–38 (p. 337, n. 8). Proof of Kireevskii's intimate acquaintance with these authors can be found in his correspondence with Makarii

to say, this work itself contributed to the impact of the hesychast revival on secular Russia.

The question as to how, and to what extent, Kireevskii's interest in patristics and contemplative monasticism informs his mature philosophy is a contentious one due to competing claims as to the degree of influence exercised on it by contemporary European thought.<sup>42</sup> Kireevskii was undoubtedly engaged in a project to rearticulate Orthodoxy in a modern idiom<sup>43</sup> and to this extent was following in the footsteps of the religious enlighteners of the eighteenth century. But the intellectual context in which he was working was that of German Romanticism and metaphysical idealism. As is well known, German conservative Romantic thinkers of the first third of the nineteenth century vigorously contested Enlightenment values, including rationalism. Indeed, by virtue of the polemical stance that they adopted they were instrumental in consolidating and narrowing the very concept of the Enlightenment at a time when no clear consensus as to what this was had yet emerged.<sup>44</sup> As Andrzej Walicki has shown, Kireevskii's ideas bear close comparison with those of figures such as Jacobi, Savigny, Müller, Baader and Friedrich Schlegel.<sup>45</sup> Walicki thinks we should look to Schlegel as the 'leading inspiration' for Kireevskii's 'philosophy of man',<sup>46</sup> and draws our attention to the former's work of 1828, *Philosophie des Lebens (Philosophy of Life)*, in which he argues that the development of rationalism has destroyed the integrity of the psyche, whose rightful focus is the 'thinking and loving soul' that unites all the spiritual faculties.<sup>47</sup> Walicki is persuasive when he argues that the Slavophiles had

between 1846 and 1856, recently republished in Nina Lazareva (ed.), *Ivan Vasil'evich Kireevskii: Razum na puti k istine*, Moscow, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Gleason, *European and Muscovite*, pp. 282–86 and Peter K. Christoff, *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism*, Vol. 2: I. V. Kireevskij, The Hague and Paris, 1972, pp. 146–52, rehearse the spectrum of critical debate on the subject, which ranges from those who see it as doing no more than lend a certain local cultural colour to an ideology which is essentially identical with German Romanticism (e.g., Masaryk, Walicki), to those who maintain that Kireevskii's later thought is no less than a secular restatement and extension of Eastern Orthodox spirituality (e.g., Lanz, Chizhevskii).

<sup>43</sup> Patrick Lally Michelson, 'Slavophile Religious Thought and the Dilemma of Russian Modernity, 1830–1860', *Modern Intellectual History*, 7, 2010, 2, pp. 239–67. Michelson argues that it was 'their reconfiguration of Eastern Christianity as a dynamic religion of theocentric freedom and moral progress that made Khomiakov and Kireevskii proponents of a project parallel to currents in contemporary European thought' (p. 246).

<sup>44</sup> 'Aufklärung', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Band 1, pp. 289–90.

<sup>45</sup> Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka, Oxford, 1975, pp. 160–68.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154–55. In this connection it is suggestive that at around the same time

most in common with the pre-Hegelian conservative romantics, but were obliged by the popularity of Hegelianism in Russia to direct their attack on Enlightenment rationalism at Hegel as its latest and most complete incarnation.<sup>48</sup>

There are fewer grounds to assert that Kireevskii's late work was in some way a restatement of Schelling's philosophy. Notwithstanding a youthful engagement with Schelling as part of his participation in the *Obshchestvo liubitelei liubomudriia* (Society of the Lovers of Wisdom), Kireevskii had left him behind by the time he wrote 'On the Necessity'. Schelling was always most inspirational for the early Slavophiles as the critic of Hegelian dialectical reason, in the context of their struggle to articulate a philosophical alternative to the (atheistic) Hegelianism that dominated the discourse of the Russian left during the 1840s. In a recent article, Michelson has suggested that it was Schelling's *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809), with its defence of human freedom as grounded in the absolute freedom of a really existing God, that made the most lasting impact on Kireevskii.<sup>49</sup> However, Christoff has argued that the evidence does not support claims that the Society generally, and Kireevskii in particular, were committed Schellingists,<sup>50</sup> and that by the end of the 1820s Kireevskii was already set on 'working out an indigenous philosophy which could become the foundation of a total Russian culture'.<sup>51</sup> Certainly, Kireevskii's response to hearing Schelling lecture in Munich in 1830 was cool: he wrote home that 'the mountain gave birth to a mouse'.<sup>52</sup> In 'On the Necessity' Kireevskii does not greatly distinguish between the Slavophiles' old enemy, Hegel, and Schelling, referring to 'the Schellingian-Hegelian system' (p. 258).<sup>53</sup>

Schlegel made a conscious attempt to 'rehabilitate' the concept of the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) from a Christian point of view, asserting that 'the true Enlightenment accords with the concept of it put forward to us in holy scripture: namely, that light from the eternal light, which [...] was also originally the life of men, [...] and in which they [...] now once again should find their life'. Cited in 'Aufklärung', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Band 1, p. 312, from Schlegel's *Philosophie der Geschichte* (1829). It raises the possibility that Schlegel and Kireevskii were working from common sources.

<sup>48</sup> Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p. 309.

<sup>49</sup> Michelson, 'Slavophile Religious Thought', pp. 252–55.

<sup>50</sup> Christoff, *I. V. Kireevskij*, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>53</sup> *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii I. V. Kireevskago v dvukh tomakh*, ed. Mikhail Gershenzon, Farnborough, 1970 [facsimile reprint of the original published in Moscow in 1911] (hereafter, *PSS*), vol. 1, pp. 223–64. Page references given in the text in this section are to this edition. I use Christoff's translation of the essay, which is appended to his above-cited study of Kireevskii.

Schelling is credited with being the first Western philosopher to recognize the limitations of reason, but he is damned with faint praise: he 'could the more clearly recognize the limitations of this philosophy because it was his own thought' (p. 260). Ultimately, Kireevskii pities the late Schelling, who, convinced of the need for Divine Revelation, but unable to access this through his native Protestant confession, was forced to create a faith for himself (p. 262): 'Schelling's Christian philosophy was neither Christian nor philosophy' (p. 263).

On the other hand, there is ample evidence in Kireevskii's published work of an increasingly informed understanding of Greek patristic thought as offering an effective alternative to Western rationalism from Aristotle to Hegel and a potential model for a distinctively Russian philosophy. This will be illustrated by an analysis of his last and most conceptual work, 'On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles in Philosophy' (1856), with respect to the theology of hesychasm.<sup>54</sup>

Kireevskii is very conscious of the tension between the two conceptions of truth and enlightenment that we have been discussing. The title of a sister essay — 'O kharaktere prosveshcheniia Evropy i o ego otnoshenii k prosveshcheniiu Rossii' ('On the Character of the European Enlightenment and Its Relationship to the Enlightenment of Russia', 1852) — directly alludes to it.<sup>55</sup> In 'On the Necessity' he is careful to distinguish between them conceptually. He consistently refers to pagan philosophy (Hellenistic thought of the schools of Aristotle and Plato, what Palamas refers to as 'profane philosophy') as *filosofiiia* and to Christian philosophy as *liubomudrie*. The root *mud*, from which *mudrost'* is derived, is certainly intended to suggest that Christian truth — as wisdom — has a dimension lacking in mere philosophy. As is well known, Kireevskii is arguing that Orthodox cultures like Russia's, if they are to express their fundamental values at the highest levels of cultural expression and be true to themselves, would do well to model the Greek Fathers' basic approach to pagan philosophy as they struggle to come to terms with the Western philosophical tradition, and post-Kantian rationalism in particular. This approach was one of 'utilization', 'combination', 'reconciliation': The Fathers

<sup>54</sup> There is epistolary evidence that Kireevskii read Palamas. See Christoff, *I. V. Kireevskij*, pp. 152–54. Christoff agrees that Palamas was an influence on Kireevskii's thought (pp. 159; 166; 183).

<sup>55</sup> Kireevskii, *PSS*, vol. 1, pp. 174–222. An English translation is available in Boris Jakim and Robert Bird (trans & eds), *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader*, Hudson, NY, 1998, pp. 189–232, where the *prosveshchenie* of the title is rendered as 'culture', thus masking the full import of the original. (Neither the Academy dictionaries nor Dahl offer 'culture' as a definition of *prosveshchenie*.)



‘not only were thoroughly versed in ancient philosophy [*filosofiiia*], but also utilized it for the rational [*razumnyi*] construction of the first Christian philosophy [*liubomudrie*], which combined the development of science and reason [*razum*] into one all-embracing vision of faith [*sozertsanie very*]’ (p. 239). Nevertheless, the Fathers’ approach was also that of ‘subordination’ and ‘transformation’: ‘Christianity did not concede reason to [paganism], but, permeating paganism, placed in its own service the whole intellectual activity of the world, past and present’ (p. 239). Again, ‘Christianity did not destroy pagan philosophy [*filosofiiia*], but accepted it and transformed it in accordance with its own superior philosophy [*liubomudrie*]’ (p. 239).

The notion of subordination, were it to be personalized, would take Kireevskii’s analysis into the ethical territory of the *Philokalia*. He is accusing ‘natural’ reason (p. 248) of blind arrogance with regard to its own self-sufficiency. It suffices to replace ‘rational thought’ with ‘the rational thinker’ in the following quotation to be convinced of this:

All false deductions of rational [*ratsional’nyi*] thought result only from its pretension to the highest, complete cognition [*poznanie*] of truth. If it recognized its limitations and saw itself as one of the instruments for the cognition of truth, and not as the only one, it would present its deductions as provisional and referent solely to its limited point of view; it would anticipate other, supreme, and most truthful deductions from another, supreme, and most truthful manner of thinking. (p. 257)

Similarly, if we replaced ‘Divine truth’ with ‘God’, and ‘external reason’ with ‘human reason’, in the following assertion, Kireevskii’s demand would become that humans should surrender their minds to God:

But in order that Divine truth might permeate, inspire, and guide man’s intellectual life, it must subordinate external reason [*vneshnii razum*] to itself and dominate it, not remain outside its sphere of action. (p. 240)

Kireevskii does on occasion use anthropomorphization, as for example when he asserts of ‘philosophical reason’ that ‘an awareness of its limitations would mark a death sentence for its absolute authority. That is why it has always feared this realization, the more so as it has always been close to it. It constantly altered its forms in order to avoid it’ (p. 258). Notwithstanding such passages, however, it is to the point that Kireevskii generally carefully refrains from encroaching on ethical territory, and from using language from the sphere of theology such as ‘sin’, ‘repentance’, ‘asceticism’, and so

forth. His argumentation is rigorously abstract. Ironically, he observes the conventions of the philosophical discourse whose hegemony he is challenging and by virtue of this, one might argue, remains in the trap of the very 'rationalism' which he so strongly feels is proving fatal for Western culture.<sup>56</sup>

Nevertheless, the essay is clearly influenced by the Philokalic understanding of the mind, and indeed the most famous term that Kireevskii coined — 'integral knowledge' (*tsel'noe znanie*) is indebted to it. By and large, Kireevskii uses the generic *razum* when discussing reason. He is of course aware of the classic distinction in German philosophy between *Vernunft* (*razum*) and *Verstand* (*rassudok*), but utilizes it only in relation to the Western philosophical tradition (pp. 247; 258). Indeed, he presents the fluctuating history of the two terms as evidence of that tradition's efforts to avoid facing up to the limitations of 'philosophical reason' as such (p. 258). Thus, instead of utilizing the terms *rassudok* and *razum* to distinguish between discursive and contemplative reason, as Florenskii will do, Kireevskii resorts to a series of adjectives to qualify the kind of reason he has in mind. One opposition he works with is 'natural reason'/'believing reason', the latter being reason which has subordinated itself to faith. Natural reason is also 'ordinary reason' (p. 251). A second opposition is 'abstract reason' or 'logical argumentation' (*logicheskoe rassuzhdenie*)/'inner wholeness of the mind' (*vnutrenniaia tsel'nost' uma*) (p. 252). A third is 'external reason'/'internal reason' (p. 263). A fourth is 'lower reason'/'higher reason'. These relate to each other thus:

Standing on this highest level of thought, Orthodox believers can easily and harmlessly comprehend all systems of thought that derive from the lower levels of reason; they can see the limitations and the relative truth of those systems. For the lower form of thought, however, the higher form is incomprehensible and appears nonsensical. (p. 251)

The oppositions higher/lower, inner/outer, abstract/whole all connote elements of Philokalic spirituality: the Platonic ascent of the mind to

<sup>56</sup> See Michelson, 'Slavophile Religious Thought': 'Since at least the reign of Catherine the Great, philosophical and scientific terminology broadly determined the appropriate manner in which literate Russia, including elements of officialdom, spoke about itself and examined its country's needs and goals. Khomiakov and Kireevskii were no exception. They never abandoned scientific and philosophical modes of discourse, even when they employed the language of faith, as such an abandonment would have placed their arguments outside the linguistic contours of their day' (p. 259).

God, the gathering of dissipated thought to stillness and attention, and the effort to integrate the mind and the heart. The following passage, in which Kireevskii comes closest to defining what he means by 'integral knowledge', demonstrates Philokalic influence very clearly:

The first condition for the elevation of reason [*vozvysshenie razuma*] is that man should strive to gather into one indivisible whole all his separate forces, which in the ordinary condition of man are in a state of incompleteness and contradiction; that he should not consider his abstract logical capacity as the only organ for the comprehension [*razumenie*] of truth; that he should not consider the voice of enraptured feeling uncoordinated with other forces of the spirit as the faultless guide to truth, that he should not consider the promptings of an isolated aesthetic sense, independent of other concepts, as the true guide to the comprehension of the higher organization of the universe; that he should not consider even the dominant love of his heart, separate from the other demands of the spirit, as the infallible guide to the attainment of the supreme good; but that he should constantly seek in the depth of his soul [*v glubine dushi*] that inner root of understanding [*razumenie*] where all the separate forces merge into one living and whole vision of the mind [*zrenie uma*]. (p. 249)

When Kireevskii writes of the 'shared living centre of all the separate forces of reason' existing 'in the depth of the soul' (p. 250), he is certainly referring to what the Philokalic Fathers understood by 'heart'.

Still, one retains the impression that Kireevskii's essay lacks the multi-dimensionality that is required to capture the full import of the notion of Christian/Orthodox enlightenment. A key difference from Florenskii's strategy in dealing with the problem of reason is that Kireevskii admits no radical discontinuity between 'natural' and 'believing' reason, but sees them as two opposite points on a continuum:

For the form of rational activity changes in accordance with the level to which reason ascends. Although reason is one and its nature is one, its forms of action are different, just as its deductions are different, depending on the level on which it finds itself and on the force that impels and guides it. (p. 263; cf. 257)

There is, as we saw above, only an attenuated sense that rationality is sinful and must be 'crucified' and 'purified' through asceticism in order to become whole.

Furthermore, Kireevskii makes no attempt to incorporate the mystical dimension to the *Philokalia*. The integrated reason is the end point for him, if not in life, then at least in thought. In recommending a philosophical methodology to his fellow Russians, he has no ambition — perhaps he feels it inappropriate — to convey anything of the ultimate ‘knowledge’ that the hesychasts believed could be granted to the one who has achieved a ‘living and whole vision of the mind’. Important though ‘Divine Revelation’ is for him, his articulation of this is restricted to the dogmas and Tradition of the Church. There is evidence that Kireevskii’s reticence may be founded on painful personal experience: Gleason concludes that ‘[h]is study of the Eastern Fathers provided him only with the vague outlines of a spirituality which consistently eluded him on the existential level’.<sup>57</sup> It perhaps betrays the nature of his relationship to the spiritual elders in his life: that of outsider, a scholar, however reverential, of contemplative monasticism, rather than a true neophyte, or spiritual son. In his essay Kireevskii states: ‘For the possibility of the consciousness of man’s basic relationship to God lies in the very core of human reason, and its very nature. Man’s thoughts may hover in abstract oblivion of its basic relationships only if it has broken away from this vital profundity or if it has failed to reach it’ (p. 261). To be conscious of one’s basic relationship to God, however, is not yet to be conscious of God.

### *Florenskii*

Kireevskii’s tendency to treat reason and faith as essentially a single entity, with rationality (discursive reason) and faith (‘higher’ or ‘believing’ reason) located on a continuum, is a reflection of the influence of German metaphysical idealism on his style of thought. By contrast, as Sergei Khoruzhii has pointed out, Florenskii appears essentially uninterested in Hegelian dialectical reason, engaging much more actively and consistently with Kant (and, to a lesser extent, with neo-Kantianism).<sup>58</sup> Florenskii, as it were, ignores developments after the Enlightenment in order to take on Enlightenment rationalism itself, which he sees as the major enemy of

<sup>57</sup> Gleason, *European and Muscovite*, pp. 287–88. See also Laura Engelstein, ‘Orthodox Self-Reflection in a Modernizing Age: The Case of Ivan and Natal’ia Kireevskii’, in *Slavophile Empire*, pp. 125–150.

<sup>58</sup> S. S. Khoruzhii, *Mirosozertsanie Florenskogo*, Tomsk, 1999. Khoruzhii is sharply critical of Florenskii’s neglect of Hegel, which he believes greatly undermines the former’s opposition of ‘rational’ and ‘spiritual’ knowledge. He argues that, as a former scientist, Florenskii is drawn to, and indeed dependent on, Kantian rationality, which is the model of reason best suited to the natural sciences: in seeking to overcome it, he does battle with himself (pp. 74–86).

Orthodoxy. Thus, though he writes in the early twentieth century, his work engages intensively with the eighteenth. He calls the eighteenth century 'the century of the [rationalist] intelligentsia *par excellence*', and Kant 'the greatest representative of the intelligentsia' (p. 215).

In presenting Florenskii as an advocate for Orthodox enlightenment, Christ-centred as this is, I must address the criticism, levelled by Florovsky, and after him Khoruzhii, that Christ is unpardonably absent from the vision of *Pillar and Ground*.<sup>59</sup> Without attempting a detailed refutation of Khoruzhii's argument, which is trenchant and substantial, I would assert that, so far as Florenskii's treatment of reason is concerned, the allegation does not stand. As will become clear from the analysis below, Florenskii fully embraces the idea that the path to true knowledge is through Christ (p. 13), indeed, through the ascetic self-renunciation that is 'co-crucifixion with Christ' (p. 48). Furthermore, his major thesis that Christian truth is antinomical and therefore unacceptable to logic-based rationality rests on the doctrine of the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father, i.e. the presence in Christ of both divine and human natures.<sup>60</sup> Florenskii asserts that this doctrine, when it was first formulated, dealt a 'death blow' to rationality (p. 41). It is hard to reconcile this substantial fact with Khoruzhii's allegation that the Christological theme 'is almost completely absent' from *Pillar and Ground*.<sup>61</sup>

During his student days Florenskii drew a great deal from his relationship with his spiritual father, the uneducated *starets* Isidore of the Gethsemane skete, which was attached to the Trinity-St Sergius monastery and close therefore to the MSA in Sergiev Posad. Pyman suggests Florenskii was motivated in this choice by his growing admiration of the common people as 'the living embodiment of elemental popular culture, creative in a way the disunited, analytically minded intelligentsia could no

<sup>59</sup> Florovsky, *Ways*, 2, pp. 278–80; Khoruzhii, *Mirosozertsanie Florenskogo*, pp. 89–96.

<sup>60</sup> The Council of Nicaea in 325 produced the formulation 'consubstantial [*homoousion*] with the Father' and captured it in the Nicene Creed. See Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, London, 1990, p. 5. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 applied the same adjective to Christ's relationship to humanity: Christ is 'consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity'. It famously acknowledged in Christ 'two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation' (Tanner, *Ecumenical Councils*, p. 86). Khoruzhii correctly points out that the Chalcedonian formula is not mentioned directly by Florenskii (*Mirosozertsanie Florenskogo*, p. 91). But Chalcedon merely clarified the relationship of the divine and human natures in Christ, whilst Nicaea I, which Florenskii makes a great deal of, established the more fundamental position that Christ was both human and divine.

<sup>61</sup> Khoruzhii, *Mirosozertsanie Florenskogo*, p. 90.

longer hope to be'.<sup>62</sup> This bears relation to Florenskii's claim, in *Pillar and Ground*, that the common people are instinctively drawn to the spiritual elders (p. 5). After Isidore's death in 1908, Florenskii wrote a tender memoir of him.<sup>63</sup> The eighth Letter of *Pillar and Ground* is addressed to him, and in the tenth Florenskii says of him: 'Full of grace and made beautiful by grace, he gave me the most solid, the most undeniable, the purest perception of a spiritual person I have had in my entire life' (p. 233).

The image of the Orthodox ascetic is absolutely central to *Pillar and Ground*. The spiritual elder is established at the outset in the preface 'To the Reader' as the exemplar *par excellence* of the work's leading idea, stated in the first line, that '[l]iving religious experience [is] the sole legitimate way to gain knowledge of the dogmas' (p. 5). Introducing his chosen term 'ecclesiality' to convey this experience, Florenskii clearly explicates its connection to asceticism:

But the life of the Church is assimilated and known only through life — not in the abstract, not in a rational way... What is ecclesiality? It is new life, life in the Spirit. What is the criterion of the rightness of this life? Beauty. Yes, there is a special beauty of the spirit, and, ungraspable by logical formulas, it is at the same time the only true path to the definition of what is orthodox and what is not orthodox.

The connoisseurs of this beauty are the spiritual elders, the *startsy*, the masters of the 'art of arts,' as the holy fathers call asceticism... The Orthodox taste, the Orthodox temper, is felt but it is not subject to arithmetical calculation. Orthodoxy is shown, not proved. (pp. 8–9)<sup>64</sup>

On open display here is a life/rationality dichotomy. Orthodox truth transcends the capacity of 'arithmetic' to conceptualize it. With 'ecclesiality', 'the pretensions of the rational mind [*rassudok*] are tamed, [and] great tranquillity descends into our reason [*razum*]' (p. 7). Not logical, but 'biological and aesthetic' criteria most closely approach an adequate conceptualization of the life of the Church (p. 8). The *startsy*, who, to use St Seraphim of Sarov's expression, have through ascetic endeavour 'acquired

<sup>62</sup> Pyman, *Pavel Florensky: A Quiet Genius*, p. 46.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. The memoir, *Sol' zemli* (*Salt of the Earth*), was first published in 1908 and 1909 in the journal *Khristianin*. Now in P. A. Florenskii, *Sochineniia v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1996, pp. 571–637.

<sup>64</sup> Louth ends 'The Influence of the *Philokalia* in the Orthodox World' by quoting this passage, with the comment: 'There we find a succinct statement of the true philokalic tenor of theology; it is in tracing that that we trace the noetic influence of the *Philokalia*' (p. 60).

the Holy Spirit', most fully 'know' this life and realize its beauty. They are saints, *prepodobnye*, who have restored the image of God in man and achieved 'likeness' to Christ. They are the 'lights' of the Church, who show the way for the faithful to follow.

The first six Letters of *Pillar and Ground* are occupied with various aspects of this 'taming' of the 'pretensions of the rational mind' that is demanded by faith and successfully executed by the *starets*, and thus explicitly deal with the relationship between the Enlightenment and the Orthodox concepts of truth.<sup>65</sup> In the first, 'Two Worlds', the problem is announced with reference to the eleventh chapter of the gospel of Matthew as that of 'knowledge, the problem of the insufficiency of rational knowledge [*poznanie rassudochnoe*] and the necessity of spiritual knowledge [*poznanie dukhovnoe*]' (p. 12). True knowledge can be acquired only through and from Jesus Christ, who bids us cast off 'the cruel yoke and hard, unbearable burden of science' (p. 13). In the second, 'Doubt', Florenskii's excursus into the etymology of terms for 'truth' is designed to reinforce the notion of a distinct Orthodox truth, the content of 'spiritual knowledge'. In the Russian understanding, according to Florenskii, the word 'truth' (*istina*), related to the verb 'to be' (*est'*), which itself derives originally from the Sanskrit root denoting the breath, is 'existence that abides, that which lives, living being, that which breathes'. Here as elsewhere in the work Florenskii asserts the congruence of Russian popular belief (lived Orthodoxy) and high philosophical culture: 'Truth as the living being *par excellence*' is a conception shared by the Russian people and Russian philosophy, as the latter's 'distinctive and original feature' (p. 16).

Florenskii's distinction between 'rational' and 'spiritual' knowledge consistently engages a distinction between 'rationality' and 'reason'.<sup>66</sup> Only the first, discursive reason, or *rassudok*, is inimical to the life of the spirit. This is because rationality rejects what does not conform to the norms of

<sup>65</sup> For detailed analysis of Florenskii's philosophical argumentation in these chapters, see Robert Slesinski, *Pavel Florensky: A Metaphysics of Love*, Crestwood, NY, 1984; Frank Haney, *Zwischen exakter Wissenschaft und Orthodoxie: Zur Rationalitätsauffassung Priester Pavel Florenskijs*, Frankfurt am Main, 2001; Frank Haney, 'Gestaltungen des Transzendenten: Pavel Florenskij's Unendlichkeitsbegriff', pp. 127–46; Wolfgang Ullmann, 'Florenskij's Beiträge zu einer Logik der Diskontinuität', pp. 147–60; Ludwig Wenzler, 'Intuition und Diskursivität: Grundvollzüge von Rationalität bei Pavel Florenskij', pp. 107–26, all in *Pavel Florenskij: Tradition und Moderne*, eds Norbert Franz, Michael Hagemeister and Frank Haney, Frankfurt am Main, 2001.

<sup>66</sup> Jakim's excellent translation consistently renders *razum* as 'reason' and *rassudok* as 'rationality', or 'rational mind' (see his footnote *e* in Florenskii, *Pillar and Ground*, p. 7). For this reason I refrain from providing the Russian in the text from this point.

logic and therefore rejects 'life', Orthodox truth, which is in its very essence antinomical.<sup>67</sup> 'Reason' (*razum*), on the other hand, is treated by Florenskii as the neptic Fathers (the ascetic authors of the Philokalic texts) treated *nous*, the intellect, that is, as the higher part of the soul in which the image of God resides.<sup>68</sup> This, once purified, is the organ that contemplates the divine. It is to the *nous* that Florenskii is referring when he argues for the integral connection between reason and being, describing the former as 'an organ of man, his vital activity, his real power, logos' (p. 55). Florenskii sees rationality and reason as implacably opposed to one another:

Life, flowing and non self-identical, might be reasonable; it might be transparent for reason [...] But, precisely for this reason, life would be non-conformable with rationality, opposed to rationality. It would rip apart the limitedness of rationality. And rationality, hostile to life, would in turn rather seek to kill life than agree to receive life into itself (p. 24).

There is no smooth transition between rational knowledge (*episteme*) and spiritual knowledge (*gnosis*). Rather, 'reason must become emancipated from its limitedness within the confines of rationality', and this can only happen by renouncing rationality in an act of intellectual asceticism (*podvig*, p. 45).

Thus, the rational mind is treated by Florenskii as an intrinsic part of the 'flesh', the fallen human being as a psychosomatic organism.<sup>69</sup> It partakes in the egoism, the pretension to autonomy, which according to Paul is the hallmark of atheism in the sense of the rejection of God (Romans 1: 21–22). Florenskii graphically writes of Eunomius's objection to the Cappadocian Fathers that the doctrine of Christ as one Person in two natures was 'impossible' as 'a cry of the flesh, a cry of rationality, a rationality that wanders about the elements of the world and egotistically trembles in fear for its integrity, a rationality that is self-satisfied despite its total inner disintegration, a rationality that dares, in its infinite fear of the smallest pain, to adapt very Truth to itself, to its blind and meaningless

<sup>67</sup> On antinomy in Florenskii see Slesinski, *Metaphysics of Love*, ch. 5. Bethea's summary is helpful: '[Florenskii's] way is to *visualise* two separate and as it were self-canceling categories and then to show, against logic (*rassudok*), how these categories can suddenly occupy the same space in a privileged "crossover zone".' David M. Bethea, 'Florensky and Dante: Revelation, Orthodoxy, and Non-Euclidean Space', in *Russian Religious Thought*, eds Judith Deutsch Kornblatt and Richard F. Gustafson, Madison, WI, 1996, p. 115.

<sup>68</sup> Russell, *Fellow Workers with God*, p. 80.

<sup>69</sup> Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *Philokalia*, p. 361: I have in mind 'flesh' defined as 'fallen and sinful nature in contrast to human nature as originally created and dwelling in God; man when separated from God and in rebellion against Him'.



norms' (p. 46). To this extent rational thought for Florenskii is rather more than the neptic Fathers' *dianoia*, which is regarded neutrally as one of the faculties of the higher soul, though inferior to the *nous*;<sup>70</sup> it is more like the passions which must be overcome in order to achieve the attention necessary for the pursuit of *gnosis*. Like the passions, rational thought, if given its head, leads to the disintegration of the personality, to the madness of scepticism. Remaining within a Pauline framework, Florenskii suggests that rationality has little choice: either it is 'saved' through the asceticism of faith, through self-renunciation, or it perishes: 'Either the Triune Christian God or the dying in insanity' (p. 47). Once sacrificed, however, 'rationality is transformed into a new essence' (p. 47) as it finds its ground in the 'supralogical' (p. 48).

The fourth Letter, 'The Light of the Truth', concerns itself with the nature of spiritual knowledge, with the question as to 'how and by virtue of what the philosopher is received by Heaven' (p. 55).<sup>71</sup> Despite remaining with the term 'philosophy', it is clear that Florenskii is now using this in a sense closer to that of the patristic 'theology', that is, as 'active and conscious participation in or perception of the realities of the divine world'.<sup>72</sup> Here, the spiritual elder becomes the true philosopher. As we shall see, in his deliberations Florenskii draws extensively upon the theology disclosed in the spirituality of the *Philokalia*; his understanding of knowledge as union is founded on the hesychasts' experience of mystical union with the personal God, as is demonstrated by the passage on light with which the letter concludes.

Firstly, Florenskii insists on the primacy of the ontological over the purely cognitive in acts of spiritual knowledge, which follows from the integral relationship between reason (*nous*) and being:

the act of knowing is not only a gnoseological but also an ontological act, not only ideal but also real. Knowing is a real *going* of the knower *out* of himself, or (what is the same thing) a real *going* of what is known *into* the knower, a real unification of the knower and what is known. (p. 55).

<sup>70</sup> G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (trans & eds), *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, vol. 2, London, 1981, p. 334.

<sup>71</sup> This is the essay that engages with Philokalic discourse most directly. It is here we find direct evidence of Florenskii's familiarity with the Greek *Philokalia* of 1782, with Feofan's five-volume Russian anthology in four editions (he quotes from the Introduction to the first volume of the fourth edition, of 1905,) as well as with the broader Philokalic tradition as reflected, for example, in the popular work of 1884, *Otkrovennye rasskazy strannika dukhovnomu svoemu otssu* (known in the West as *The Way of a Pilgrim*) and its sequel (p. 472, notes 134 and 135).

<sup>72</sup> Palmer, Sherrard and Ware, *Philokalia* 1, p. 367.

He explicitly traces the roots of this realistic conception of knowledge in ‘the ancient, realistic understanding of life’ (p. 57), advocating it polemically as a Christian — that is, Orthodox and Russian — philosophy of identity (*homoousian* philosophy) in contradistinction to the modern, Western, rationalistic philosophy of similarity (*homoiousian* philosophy) (p. 60). Spiritual knowledge overcomes the law of identity to assert the real merging of subject and object in knowledge. Palamas, the theologian of hesychasm, likewise asserted the real unification of the contemplative with what is contemplated against nominalist adversaries who maintained that only symbolic knowledge of God was possible.<sup>73</sup>

Secondly, spiritual knowledge is knowledge of persons:

Thus, knowing is not the capturing of a dead object by a predatory subject of knowledge, but a living moral communion of persons, each serving for each as both object and subject. Strictly speaking, only a person is known and only by a person. (pp. 55–56)

In the Christian world-view, truth is personal: the living God is Truth (cf.: etymology of *istina*). It follows that ‘[e]ssential knowing of the Truth [is] the real entering into the interior of the Divine Triunity, and not only an ideal touching of the Triunity’s outer form’ (p. 56).

Finally, spiritual knowledge is transformative: to know God is in a very specific sense to become god-like: ‘true knowledge, knowledge of the Truth, is possible only through the transubstantiation of man, through his deification [*obozhenie*], through the acquisition of love as the divine essence’ (p. 56). Here is a clear statement of the Orthodox doctrine of deification as participation in the divine. The only false note is sounded by the word ‘essence’, where Palamite theology would emphasise that only the energies of God are participable, His essence remaining inaccessible. The hesychastic tradition as expressed in the *Philokalia* maintains that the purified intellect may experience union with God in the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, despite the ascetic labour of preparation, such an experience occurs only through the grace of God, and here Florenskii remains

<sup>73</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that Florenskii had read Palamas’s defence of the hesychasts. The evidence for this in *Pillar and Ground* is in Florenskii’s note 128, in which he links the light of Tabor, described in correct Palamite terms as ‘the energy of the Triune Divinity’, to the hesychastic vision. He provides a list of critical treatments of the controversy over hesychasm that include Igumen Modest’s work of 1860, *Sviatoi Grigory Palama, Mitropolit Solynsky, pobornik pravoslavnogo ucheniia o Favorskom svete i o deistviakh Bozhiikh*. He also lists the protagonists in the controversy and refers the reader to the volumes of Migne where their works can be found (pp. 468–69).

orthodox: Spiritual knowledge ‘arises in the soul from the free revelation of Trihypostatic Truth, from the grace-giving visitation of the soul by the Holy Spirit. This visitation begins in a volitional act of faith, which is absolutely impossible for human selfhood and is accomplished through “attraction” by the Father Who is in heaven’ (p. 70; cf. p. 62).

The hesychast experienced union with God as a ‘vision’ of the divine (immaterial) light. Florenskii clearly had this in mind when he entitled his chapter on spiritual knowledge ‘The Light of the Truth’. Nevertheless, he saves the discussion of light to the closing passage of the Letter, where it is treated with an exceptionally high degree of lyricism and constitutes something of a *coda* to the foregoing analysis, a hymn of praise to the Orthodox expression of light mysticism in the liturgy, the writings of the Desert Fathers, and finally the nineteenth-century eye-witness account of the transfiguration of St Seraphim of Sarov. The passage contains all the essential elements of the Orthodox mysticism of light. The spiritual master ‘sees in his heart [*vnutri serdtsa*] the ‘spiritual light’, the ‘light of Tabor’. And he himself becomes spiritual and beautiful’ (p. 70). Thus the saint is transfigured through the indwelling of the divine as Christ was transfigured before the apostles in the gospel story. The end of spiritual knowledge, its fullest expression, is light, which for Florenskii is identical with beauty:

That is why the holy fathers called asceticism, as the activity directed at the contemplation of the ineffable light by means of the Holy Spirit, not a science and not even a moral work, but an art, and not just an art, but art par excellence, the ‘art of arts’. (p. 72)

In this way Florenskii returns to his initial thesis that the criterion for life in the Spirit is beauty.

The coda to ‘The Light of the Truth’, which consists almost entirely of quotation of religious texts, points up an important issue relating to the problematic relationship between philosophical discourse and Christian (Orthodox) truth. It is an issue of which Florenskii appears keenly aware. He starts out by conceding that, though his original intention for *Pillar and Ground* was ‘to use no references, only my own words’, by the end of the project ‘it appeared that I had to discard everything of my own and publish only the works of the Church’ (p. 6). The logic of conversion dictates that the philosopher subordinate his own ideas (and Russian religious philosophy is clear that modern philosophical discourse is profoundly individualistic, despite its claims to objectivity), to the word of the Church, which becomes

internally persuasive for the convert.<sup>74</sup> Thus, an extreme view would be that Florenskii is able to retain his own discourse only to the extent that he has not yet completed his own ascesis. Florovsky harshly indicts Florenskii for subjectivism, claiming that he ‘remained subjective even when he wished to be objective’.<sup>75</sup> Part of what he means by this is that Florenskii speaks for himself rather than the Church. Florovsky is also critical of what we might call the hybridity of *Pillar and Ground*, the influence on it of the romanticism and aestheticism of early Russian modernism.<sup>76</sup> No concession is made to the important point that Florenskii, himself a recent convert, is writing, by his own admission, for ‘catechumens’, those on the threshold of conversion, whose language is still that of the secular world. Florenskii is effectively acting as a guide for outsiders, and an interpreter, attending to each discourse and translating each in terms of the other. This gives him permission to indulge his formidable intellect whilst also drawing on the textual resources of the Orthodox Church. As for the modernist features of the work, it can be argued that it is only by virtue of these that Florenskii is able to challenge Enlightenment rationalism on the level of form in addition to that of content. Remaining within the bounds of nineteenth-century conventions of philosophical discourse, Kireevskii is ultimately unable effectively to express those aspects of the Christian conception of enlightenment that transcend rational argumentation. Florenskii, on the other hand, breaks the rules of that discourse as a deliberate strategy to draw his readers to faith. *Pillar and Ground*’s eclectic mixing of genres and discourses, its adoption of the epistolary form, the “concretely general, symbolically personal” persona of the narrator:<sup>77</sup> all these make a virtue of early modernism’s rejection of ‘positivism’ and embrace of aestheticism in order to overcome the gap between objectivism and subjectivism, theoretical and experiential knowledge, scholarship and the spiritual poetry of the soul in the interests of articulating Orthodox Enlightenment.

<sup>74</sup> See Bakhtin’s discussion of internally persuasive discourse in his essay ‘Discourse in the Novel’, in Michael Holquist (ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin*, Austin, TX, 1988, p. 342 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Florovsky, *Ways*, 2, p. 277.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279–81.

<sup>77</sup> Richard F. Gustafson, ‘Introduction’, in Florenskii, *Pillar and Ground*, p. xii, quoting from Florenskii’s defence of his Master’s dissertation, of which *Pillar and Ground* is the development. Gustafson’s essay offers a good summary of the Symbolist features of the work.