

УДК 821.161.1.09"18"

## **The Elder Zosima as a Renovation of Orthodox Tradition (K.N. Leontiev and V.V. Rozanov's Polemic about the Novel by F.M. Dostoevsky "The Brothers Karamazov")**

**Alexander A. Medvedev\***

*Tyumen State University  
6 Volodarskogo Str., Tyumen, 625003, Russia*

Received 10.01.2017, received in revised form 02.03.2018, accepted 12.03.2018

---

*The article deals with the analysis of the image of the elder Zosima as a key image in Dostoevsky's works. The image of Zosima is considered in the context of "small time" (from the point of view of his modern prototypes and the Dispute of K. Leontiev and Rozanov about "Pink Christianity") and the "great time" (M.M. Bakhtin) – through the perspective of the early Christian tradition. The author reveals prototypes of Zosima and new intertextual layers of his image – allusions and quotations to the Optina hagiography (Macarius of Optina, Father Palladius), to the pilgrimage literature (monk Parthenius), to the Orthodox hagiographic tradition (St. Sergius of Radonezh), to the Patristics (Abba Isaiah, Theodore the Studite, St. Isaac the Syrian, etc.) and to the Franciscan texts. These images allowed Dostoevsky to create the composite image of the "pure and perfect Christian", a new type of Christianity performing social service in the world. Extensive cultural genealogy of the image of Zosima as well as the Dispute of Leontiev and Rozanov about him demonstrate that Dostoevsky expressed deep renewal of Orthodox tradition in the elder Zosima.*

*Keywords: Dostoevsky, the elder Zosima, prototypes, Rozanov, Leontiev, "Pink Christianity", "great time", Christian tradition.*

*DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0234.*

*Research area: philology.*

---

### **Introduction**

The problem of interpreting the image of Zosima is a key one to understanding of not only the final and topmost novel by F.M. Dostoevsky, but Russian culture in general as well, since this image became a symbol of Russian spirituality. Although a lot of researches in Dostoevsky studies have been devoted to the image of Zosima, nevertheless the problem of

interpreting his image remains open – both from the point of view, using the terminology of M.M. Bakhtin "small time" (specific prototypes) and "great time" (disclosure of the image in historical and cultural contexts). This is evidenced by the appeal of researchers to this problem both in the modern Russian Dostoevsky studies (Budanova, 2011: 51-132), and in the modern Slavic studies (Salvestroni,

---

© Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

\* Corresponding author E-mail address: amedvl@yandex.ru

2001: 124, 139-145; Capilupi, 2013: 143-211, Williams, 2013: 237-238).

### Statement of the problem

The problem of interpretation of Zosima arises already in the famous polemic of K.N.Leontiev with F.M.Dostoevsky on “pink Christianity” in the pamphlet “Our New Christians: F.M.Dostoevsky and Count Leo Tolstoy” (1882). This dispute, as we can see post factum, has become one of the core and key points for Russian culture (in this sense, it can be brought into line with the dialogue of Pushkin and Chaadaev, Belinsky and Gogol...). As V.V.Rozanov precisely noted “a deep religious whirlpool of Christianity” started in this dispute: “Its basis was the question: what is the *core* of Christianity: *morality, brotherly kindness* or a kind of *mysticism*, in which ‘brotherly kindness’ is not particularly important?” (Letters of K.N.Leontiev to V.V.Rozanov, 2001: 358).

By “pink Christianity”, for which Leontiev criticizes the novel “The Brothers Karamazov” and Dostoevsky’s “Pushkin Speech”, as well as Tolstoy’s “Folktales”, he means the writers aspiration to humanize Christianity. In his another article Leontiev formulated the core of this humanization more precisely from the standpoint of the unity of the state and the church, the church as a state institution and an attribute of monarchical power: “Humanitarian pseudo-Christianity only with its meaningless absolutism, with its cosmopolitanism, without a clear dogma; with the sermon of love, without the sermon of ‘the fear of God and the Faith’; without rituals that vividly describe us the very essence of the correct teaching ... <...> – such Christianity is one and the same *revolution*, no matter how sweet it tastes; with such a Christianity you can neither fight, nor rule the State; and there is no need to pray to God ... <...> Such Christianity can only accelerate total destruction. It is criminal

in its meekness” (Leontiev, 2007: 289). From the point of view of Leontiev’s theory of “triune development”, humanistic Christianity inevitably leads to the bourgeois spirit decay.

It was that absence of the fear of God, mysticism and the ceremonial side that Leontiev accused Zosima in, believing his image to be inconsistent with the Byzantine ascetic tradition: “In ‘The Brothers Karamazov’ the monks say not completely what, or, to be more precise, *completely not what* the *very good monks* actually say here, as well as at Mount Athos, both Russian, Greek, and Bulgarian monks. However, even here, a little is said about worship and monastic obedience; not a single church service, not a single prayer service...” (Leontiev, 2014: 208). At the same time Leontiev referred to the expert opinion of the Optina monks, about which he wrote to V.V.Rozanov on 8 May 1891 from the Optina Pustyn: “In Optina ‘The Brothers Karamazov’ *is not recognized as a truthful orth.<odox> writing, and the elder Zosima does not at all look like Ambrose of Optina, neither in his doctrine nor in his character.* Dostoevsky described only his appearance, but he made him *speak quite differently* from what he was saying, and not in *the style* of Ambrose manner of speaking. Father Ambrose put strictly *church mysticism above all*, and only then followed applied morality. As for Father Zosima (though the mouth of which Fyod. <or> Mikh<ailovich> speaks himself!), puts morality, ‘love’, ‘love’, etc. above all, and mysticism, indeed, is *very weak*” (Letters of K.N.Leontiev to V.V.Rozanov, 2001: 337). It is important to note that nevertheless, in this negative Leontiev’s perception of Zosima, the key features of his asceticism, which do not fit into the traditional notions of monasticism – the priority of Love and Faith over the rite, “miracle”, “authority” and “secret” (mysticism), are revealed. In contrast to Leontiev, Dostoevsky was deeply convinced that in Russian Orthodoxy,

*humanism* (the ethics of the love for mankind) is more important than the church hierarchy, ritual and mysticism, as he wrote in A Writer's Diary in September 1876: "In Russian Christianity – real Russian Christianity – there is not even a trace of mysticism; there is only love for humanity and the image of Christ; those are the essentials, at least" (Dostoevsky, 1993: 631).

### Rozanov versus Leontiev

Rozanov was engaged in a controversy with Leontiev about "pink Christianity" in 1903, when already after Leontiev's death he published his correspondence with him in "Russkiy Vestnik" (1903, No. 4-6), accompanying it with comments. And the main subject in this his already indirect dispute with Leontiev is the image of the elder Zosima. On Leontiev's accusation in the letter dated April 13, 1891, from the Optina Pustyn ("His [Dostoevsky's – A.M.] monasticism is authored. And Father Zosima's doctrine is false; and the whole style of his conversations is false" (Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov, 2001: 329)), emphasizing the key Christian concepts – mercy and tenderness in Zosima's image Rozanov answers: "What other style if not merciful? All Russia was amazed and touched by the greatness of Zosima's mercy" (Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov, 2001: 329). Rozanov expressed the same idea of mercy earlier in 1899, perceiving Zosima and Therapont as a struggle between two Christian ideals – the world-accepting and "blessing" (the world is good) and the world-denying and "cursing" (the world is sinful) (Rozanov, 1995: 12-13).

At the same time, as well as Leontiev, Rozanov understands that Zosima does not correspond to the modern ideas about monasticism: "'He is alien to us, alien!' exclaims Leontiev on behalf of the Orthodox monastery. 'An alien, indeed', I reply, taking

Zosima in my arms and carrying him, and all his spiritual wealth with him beyond the walls of the quiet abodes" (Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov, 2001: 329). Rozanov opposes the opinion of the Optina monks to the opinion of the Russian readers who accepted Zosima and believed in the authenticity of his image: "All Russia read his 'The Brothers Karamazov' and *believed* in the image of the elder Zosima. This led to two consequences. The *authority* of monasticism, that hitherto was weak and uninteresting (except for the *specialists*), has risen significantly. 'Russian monk' (the term by Dostoevsky) appeared as a native and a charming image *in the minds of all Russia*, even its non-religious parts" (Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov, 2001: 337). Rozanov emphasizes that in Zosima's image Dostoevsky changed Russian monasticism in social terms, expressing a new type of monasticism in it (secular social service) and a return to the ancient monasticism of the 4<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries: "A new, in a sense, school of monasticism, a new type of it, namely – loving, tender and 'pantheistic' (my term in relation to monasticism) has appeared. For instance, a type of a monk – the rector of the institution, who simply does not have his personal life and personal interests; who literally lives among his disciples, like a father among children, has appeared. If this did not correspond to the type of Russian monasticism of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Leontiev's words), then maybe, and even probably, it corresponded to the type of monasticism of the 4<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries" (Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov, 2001: 337).

Leontiev and Rozanov's polemic about Zosima recognizes the problem of the historical and cultural genealogy of the image, which we turn to in order to answer the question, who is right in his perception of Zosima – Rozanov or Leontiev?

## Intertextual layers in the image of the elder Zosima

### The “Optina” layer

In the state of exaltation, with a pure heart Zosima contemplates the primeval beauty of the God’s world, the glory of God, poured out with the radiance throughout the creation; this mystical revelation is expressed through the concepts of contemplation, decency (“images”) and meekness: “Look <...> at the horse, that great beast that is so near to man; or the lowly, pensive ox, which feeds him and works for him; look at their faces, what meekness, what devotion to man, who often beats them mercilessly. What gentleness, what confidence and what beauty! It’s touching to know that there’s no sin in them, for all, all except man, is sinless, and Christ has been with them before us” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 372). As an example of the fact that “Christ is with them”, the elder Zosima recalls the “miracle of the bear” from the Life of St. Sergius of Radonezh: “And I told him how once a bear came to a great saint who had taken refuge in a tiny cell in the wood. And the great saint pitied him, went up to him without fear and gave him a piece of bread. ‘Go along,’ said he, ‘Christ be with you,’ and the savage beast walked away meekly and obediently, doing no harm” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 372).

The perception of the spiritual beauty of animals (their deepest humbleness, meekness, love and trustfulness) as a model for a man who, unlike animals, lost his “natural state”, goes back to the ascetic tradition, in particular, to the Reverend Abba Isaiah (the 4<sup>th</sup> century): “Speechless animals have preserved their nature; but man has changed his nature. Now, as livestock obeys to man, thus, every man must obey to his neighbor for God’s sake: for this is what the Lord has done” (The Words of the Reverend Abba Isaiah, 1895: 325).

The Optina elder – hieroschemamonk Macarius of Optina (born Mikhail Nikolayevich

Ivanov, 1788-1860) can be considered as the closest in time prototype of Zosima in his mystical experience of nature and animals. In the “Legend of the Life and Deeds of the Blessed Memory of Elder Macarius the Optina Pustyn Hieroschemamonk” (Moscow, 1861) by Archimandrite Leonid (Kavelin) the elder’s special love for flowers is mentioned: the elder “walked along the monastery flower-lined paths and, going from flower to flower, plunged into the contemplation of the wisdom of the Creator, known by his creatures, humming quietly to himself” (cit. ex.: Hagiography, 1997: 56, 78-81). In the chapter on the spiritual properties and spiritual blessed gifts of the elder Macarius, his words about animals are quoted (“I love everyone: I love birds, I love cows, and I love horses”) and a severe reprimand that he made to a monk, who greatly exhausted horses “by quick riding”, “declaring all the indecency for a monk to treat speechless animals cruelly for the satisfaction of his personal whim or vanity, contrary to the Holy Scripture, that names those, who are also merciful to livestock, blessed” (cit. ex.: Hagiography, 1997: 52). The evidence of his “great compassion for every speechless creature” is the fact that “in winter, feeling sorry for the birds left without food, the elder, as a rule, ordered the cell attendants to put some hemp seeds every day on the board attached to the window of his cell. And quite a lot of titmice, linnets and small gray woodpeckers gathered to enjoy the good deeds of the elder” (cit. ex.: Hagiography, 1997: 53).

The prototype of Zosima in his love for creation was also the modest Optina monk Father Palladius (1782-1861) who marveled at the wisdom of God in creation with childlike purity: “Father Palladius looked at everything from the spiritual side. For example, sometimes he went to the woods: he was surprised by everything, by every bird, insect, grass, leaf and flower. He

might approach a tree, so much talks about it, so much surprise! He was amazed how everything grows unnoticeably by the command of God, how a leaf unfolds, how a flower blossoms” (cit. ex.: Optina Patericon, 2006). Dostoevsky could know about this ordinary monk, who had his work of penance in the Optina as a beekeeper, a sexton and a sacristan (Hagiography, 1997: 381) from the essay of Father Clement (Zedergolm) “Hierodeacon Palladius” (“Dushepoleznoe Chtenie”, 1875, No. 3), as well as from the book of the Archimandrite Leonid (L.A. Kavelin, 1822-1891) “Historical Description of the Kozelskaya Vvedenskaya Optina Pustyn, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised” (M., 1876: 229) that was in the writer’s library (Grossman, 1923: 43). S.I. Fudel was the first one who pointed to this in 1963 (Fudel, 2005: 107) in connection with Zosima’s words (“Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light” (Dostoevsky, 2009: 406).

### **The “pilgrimage” layer**

An important source for the creation of the image of Zosima, as it is known, was the book by the monk Parthenius “Legend of the Pilgrimage and Traveling through Russia, Moldavia, Turkey and the Holy Land of the professed of the Mount Athos” (M., 1855). A man from of the schismatic environment, a pilgrim and a wanderer Parthenius became important to Dostoevsky as a representative of unofficial and popular Orthodoxy.

Zosima’s contemplation of the spiritualized nature develops into the thinking about its beauty and wise harmony, which are expressed by the concepts of mystery and a merciful heart burning with love for the creation: “and we talked of the beauty of this world of God’s and of the great mystery of it. Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so marvelously know their path, though they have not intelligence,

they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves. I saw the dear lad’s heart was moved” (Dostoevsky, 2009: 371). The stylistic source of the phrase about the burning heart is not only Reverend Isaac the Nineveh (see below), but also “The Legend” by the monk Parthenius (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., M., 1856) that was in Dostoevsky’s library: “And my heart burned with love for the confessor Arseny” (Parthenius, 2008: 325).

E. Buz’ko notes that the plot about Zosima’s malicious spirit has nothing to do with the text of “The Legend”, and that the writer, in his letter to the co-editor of the “Russkiy Vestnik”, relied on the authority of this book, being in fear of censorship interference into the episode with the posthumous decomposition of the elder: “It is obvious that there is no match of details in the texts by Dostoevsky and Parthenius. It seems that the author of ‘The Brothers Karamazov’ was aware of a possible misunderstanding of his story about embarrassment in the monastery and, turning to the authority of Father Parthenius, wanted, therefore, to prevent the intervention of censorship” (Buz’ko, 2014:000 268-269).

### **The patristic layer**

The most important layer in the image of Zosima and his brother Markel is the patristic one. Thus, in the image of the spring garden, at which dying Markel is looking at (“It was a late Easter, and the days were bright, fine, and full of fragrance” (Dostoevsky, 2009: 362)), there is the motive of the Easter joy of animals, expressed, in particular, by St. Theodore the Studite (the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries), where the Easter joy of animals celebrating the Resurrection of Christ is an example for man: “By the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, any creature, as if setting some deadness and the sad cover of winter aside, grows again and as if comes back to life: the earth is covered with greenery, the tree are

covered with leaves, the animals jump playing, the sea calmed down, and everything turned into a better state” (Our Holy Father Theodore the Studite, 1901: 426).

The invisible is revealed to Zosima in the state of delight – not only the spiritual beauty of animals (“images”), but also the aspiration of a creature to the Logos: “All creation and all creatures, every leaf is striving to the Word, singing glory to God” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 372). Here Dostoyevsky literally expressed the patristic doctrine of the Logos nature of creation (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, Areopagitics): the beautiful Creation created by the Logos of God in harmony and gracefulness inherent to it, bears His “imprint” (Epistle of Paul to the Colossians 1: 15-17); in the created things – reflections of the archetypal “logos” “planted” by God in creation (eternal prototypes, “icons”, paradigms of things), on which the world is based and that are aimed at the divine origin – Logos-Christ (Cyprian (Kern), 1950). Dostoyevsky developed a patristic metaphor about the logos planted in the creation in Zosima’s words about the garden: “God took seeds from different worlds and sowed them on this earth, and His garden grew up and everything came up that could come up, but what grows lives and is alive only through the feeling of its contact with other mysterious worlds» (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 408).

The ascetic gets the vision of creation in its original purity (“directing the logos of the creature”) in the intelligent prayer, contemplating the creation as in a mirror, in its light nature. The heart burning with love sees the Universe permeated with rays and the “energies” of the Logos-Love. The logos nature of the creation is represented in the popular anonymous book of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century “The Way of a Pilgrim”, which is a “guidance” for the “intelligent prayer”: “And when with all this in mind I prayed with my

heart, everything around me seemed delightful and marvelous. The trees, the grass, the birds, the earth, the air, the light seemed to be telling me that they existed for man’s sake, that they witnessed to the love of God for man, that everything proved the love of God for man, that all things prayed to God and sang His praise. Thus it was that I came to understand what The Philokalia calls ‘the knowledge of the speech of all creatures’, and I saw the means by which converse could be held with God’s creatures” (The Way of a Pilgrim, 1991: 22-23). The similarity of the description of the “earthly paradise” in Dostoyevsky with the “description of the prayerful contemplation of the whole earthly and the transformation of the earth into a kind of paradise” in “The Way of a Pilgrim” was first noted by R.V. Pletnev in 1929 (Pletnev, 2007: 156-157).

Zosima’s sermons are full of allusions to “Mystic Treatises” by St. Isaac of Nineveh. “Hymn of Love” of the Elder Zosima (“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” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 406)) goes back to the famous words about a merciful heart: “And what is a merciful heart? <...> The burning of the heart unto the whole creation, man, fowls and beasts, demons and whatever exists; so that by the recollection and the sight of them the eyes shed tears on account of the force of mercy which moves the heart by great compassion” (Mystic Treatises written by Isaac of Nineveh, 1923: 341). Zosima’s thought about sin (“Brothers, have no fear of men’s sin. Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 406)) is close to the following words of Isaac of Nineveh: “Love the sinners but reject their works. Do not despise them because of their shortcomings, lest thou be tempted by the same” (Mystic Treatises written by Isaac of Nineveh, 1923: 54).

### The Franciscan layer

As noted by V.E. Vetlovskaya, Zosima is directly correlated to St. Francis in the final chapter of “The Grand Inquisitor”, where he is called with one of the names of St. Francis by Ivan Karamazov (“Pater Seraphicus” – “Seraphic Father”), and in the “seraphic father” Zosima Alyosha sees the savior from the demonism deployed by Ivan in the poem about the inquisitor: “Here is the hermitage. Yes, yes, that he is, Pater Seraphicus, he will save me – from him and for ever!” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 333).

The Christ-like image of Zosima, his life and teachings were contrasted by Dostoevsky to the Demonic philosophy of the Grand Inquisitor in the “climactic” sixth book (“The Russian Monk”) that Dostoevsky originally named after St. Francis – “Pater Seraphicus”, what he wrote in the letter to the co-editor of “Russkiy Vestnik” N.A. Lyubimov dated July 8, 1879: “But it is important *for me* that this future sixth book (‘Pater Seraphicus’, ‘Death of the Elder’) I consider to be the culmination point of the novel” (Dostoevsky, 1988: 75). Dostoevsky, most likely, refused the Franciscan title of the sixth book because of censorship concerns: the title “The Russian Monk” appears in the writer’s letter to Lyubimov dated August 7 (19), 1879, where he expressed the hope that the sixth book will not be affected by censorship corrections, and mentioned the authoritative representatives of the Orthodox tradition – St. Sergius of Radonezh, Metropolitans Peter and Alexei, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and monk Parthenius as Zosima prototypes (Dostoevsky, 1988: 102-103).

In our opinion, Dostoevsky associated the reference to St. Francis with the purpose of the sixth book, which he formulated in the letter to Lyubimov dated June 11, 1879, as a *general Christian* one, the recognition that “a pure and ideal Christian is not something abstract, but figuratively real, possible and clearly

forthcoming” (Dostoevsky, 1988: 68). This general Christian vision of Zosima by Dostoevsky, which connects Orthodox and Catholic piety, also appears in his cell description, in which the doniconian icon of the Virgin, the Catholic cross with Mater dolorosa embracing it and engravings from the paintings of great Italian artists are mentioned (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 43). Let us also recall Dostoevsky’s famous thought in the Diary of 1880-1881: “You will say that the image of the Savior in the West has faded? No, I will not tell this stupid thing” (Dostoevsky, 1984: 56).

Let us indicate the Franciscan source with which Dostoevsky, with a high degree of probability, was familiar to, is a fragment of “The Canticle of Brother Sun” translated by A.N. Veselovsky (Veselovsky, 1866: 175). Veselovsky’s interpretation of “The Hymn to the Sun” as a “*sentimental*” experience of the nature characteristic typical for Christianity, can be considered one of the sources for the image of Zosima with this sentimentality (tenderness) peculiar to it. The core motive of Zosima’s thought about man’s sinfulness and the *sinlessness* of nature (“all except man, is sinless” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 372)) is also close to Veselovsky’s thoughts about the pre-Christian, “pantheistic” union of man with sinless nature (nature preserved purity, which the man lost after the Fall) and the unity, expressed, according to Veselovsky, in “The Canticle of Brother Sun” (Veselovsky, 1866: 175).

First of all, Zosima and Francis are brought together by such an essential Christian trait as “the joy of spirit” which, as Zosima says, “only vouchsafed to the righteous man” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 410). *Laetitia spiritualis* (‘*joy (gaiety) of spirit*’) is the most important virtue of Franciscanism. Francis “preserved a joyous face in a multitude of afflictions” (The First Life of St. Francis of Assisi, 1996: 208). Zosima’s face is “bright and almost joyful. It wore an expression of gaiety, kindness and cordiality” (Dostoyevsky,

2009: 201). The spiritual joy of both is outpoured on creation. “Having been filled with great joy”, Francis preaches to the birds: “And the birds he addressed, calling them brothers, amazingly expressed their joy” (The First Life of St. Francis of Assisi, 1996: 248). Zosima’s brother, Markel, whose face is “bright and joyous” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 362), as well as Francis in his sermon, begging the birds for forgiveness, addresses them in a diminutive manner (It. *Sirocchie mie uccelli* – lit. ‘My little sisters birds’): “The first birds of spring were flitting in the branches, chirruping and singing at the windows. And looking at them and admiring them, he began suddenly begging their forgiveness too: ‘Birds of heaven, happy birds, forgive me, for I have sinned against you too’” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 364).

V. Guerrier noted that “the joy of spirit” of St. Francis was an expression of a new monastic ideal – if medieval asceticism strived for the kingdom of heaven, believing that “the earthly world is full of evil and wickedness and, therefore, worth only contempt” (Lat. *Contemptus mundi* – ‘contempt of the world’), then “in the person of Francis, asceticism comes to understanding that the earthly world is the world of God and is, therefore, beautiful. Francis <...> admires the elements, flowers and all living creatures” (Guerrier, 1908: 158).

This joyful experience of nature as the *Kingdom of God on Earth* is inherent in Zosima, and heavenly, primordial beauty of creation and animals is reflected in his pure and *merciful* soul. The world is revealed to him in a paradisiacal transfiguration, taken back to its original purity: “life is paradise”; “life is heaven” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 215, 379). The future elder Zosima, officer Zinovy, who refuses the return fire at the duel, reveals the paradisiacal beauty of the world, which he experiences with delight and affection: “look around you at the gifts of God, the clear sky, the pure air, the tender grass, the birds; nature

is beautiful and sinless, and we, only we, are sinful and foolish, and we don’t understand that life is heaven, for we have only to understand that and it will at once be fulfilled in all its beauty, we shall embrace each other and weep” (Dostoyevsky, 2009: 379). The Franciscan layer appears in “the gifts of God” experienced by Zosima with enthusiasm and affection: the sermon of St. Francis to the birds and “The Canticle of Brother Sun”, where he praises God for the “air” (It. *aere*), “clear weather” (It. *sereno* – literally “clarity”) and herbs (It. *herba*) created by Him (Veselovsky, 1866: 175, Cantico delle Creature, 1965: 535-536). For more details see: (Medvedev, 2015: 222-233).

### Conclusion

Thus, using Bakhtin’s words, the image of Zosima is revealed in “small” and “great” time. In essence, the dispute of Rozanov and Leontiev about Zosima turns out to be the dispute about *humanistic* Christianity and *state* Christianity. On the one hand, in this dispute about Zosima, Leontiev is right, pointing out that Zosima does not align with the traditional ascetic image of the monk, but on the other hand, Rozanov is right, emphasizing that Zosima is a new type of monk who carries out secular social service.

The image of Zosima is not reduced to only one prototype. The contemporary to the writer “Optina” layer (Macarius of Optina, Father Palladius), pilgrimage literature (monk Parthenius, the Pilgrim) as well as the ancient dating back Christian tradition – the hagiographic (St. Sergius of Radonezh), the patristic (St. Theodore the Studite, Isaak the Nineveh, etc.) and the Franciscan layer are combined in it. The core perspective of the ancient Christian tradition is reflected in the image of Zosima directly (quotations and allusions to biblical, patristic and hagiographic sources) and in a reduced form – in the key Christian concepts (pardoning

heart, contemplation, mystery, goodness, joy, tenderness, gentleness, Logos, etc.).

Combining and fusing the images of these righteous people in his literary consciousness, Dostoevsky created a new type of monk—the image of a “pure, ideal Christian” (Dostoevsky, 1988: 68). Most likely, due to the censorship concerns in relation to Zosima, in his correspondence with

the editor, Dostoevsky resorts to the authority of the Orthodox tradition, but in his literary practice he fills it with a renewed spiritual meaning. The context of Leontiev and Rozanov’s polemics about Zosima, as well as the rich historical and cultural genealogy of his image, demonstrate that in Zosima Dostoevsky expressed a profound renewal of the Orthodox tradition.

### References

Budanova, N.F. (2011). *“I svet vo tme svetit...” (k kharakteristike morovozzrenia i tvorchestva pozdnego Dostoevskogo) [“And the Light Shines in the Darkness...” (on the Characteristics of the World View and Creative Work of Late Dostoevsky)]*. SPb., ID “Petropolis”. 424 p.

Buz’ko, E. (2014). Sochinenie Perfenia kak istochnik romanov F.M. Dostoevskogo [Parthenius’ Writing as a Source for F.M. Dostoevsky’s Novels], In *E. Buz’ko “Skazanie” inoka Parfenia v literaturnom kontekste 19 veka [The Legend of the Monk of Parthenia in the Literary Context of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century]*. M., Indrik, 205-278.

Cantico delle Creature (1965). In *Storia della letteratura italiana/diretta da Emilio Cecchi e Natalino Sapegno*. Milano: Garzanti, v. 1, 535-536. Available at: [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantico\\_delle\\_creature](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantico_delle_creature) (accessed 25.11.2016).

Capilupi, S (2013). *“Tragicheskii optimism” khristianstva i problema spaseniia: F.M. Dostoevskii [The “Tagic Optimism” of Christianity and the Problem of Salvation: F.M. Dostoevsky]*. SPb., Aletheia. 288 p.

Cyprian (Kern), Archimandrit (1950). *Anropologiia sv. Grigoriia Palamy. Dissertatsiia na stepen’ doktora tserkovnykh nauk Pravoslavnogo bogoslovskogo instituta v Parizhe [Anthropology of St. Gregory Palamas. Dissertation for the Degree of the Doctor of Church of St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris]*. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1950. Available at: <http://psylib.org.ua/books/kipke01/> (accessed 25.11.2016).

Dostoevsky, F.M. (1984). Zapisi literaturno-kriticheskogo i publitsysticheskogo kharaktera iz zapisnoi tetradi 1880–1881 gg. [Records of Literary-Critical and Journalistic Nature from the Diary of 1880–1881], In *Dostoevsky, F.M. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii: v 30 t. [Complete Collected Works in 30 Vol.]*. L., Nauka, 27, 42-87.

Dostoevsky, F.M. (1988). *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii: v 30 t. [Complete Collected Works in 30 Volumes]*. L., Nauka, 30, 1. 451 p.

Dostoevsky, F.M. (1993). *A Writer’s Diary: Volume 1, 1873–1876*, translated by Kenneth Lantz. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 805 p.

Dostoyevsky, F. (2009). *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Constance Garnett. The Lowell Press New York. The Project Gutenberg EBook, 1026 p. Available at: [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28054?msg=welcome\\_stranger](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/28054?msg=welcome_stranger) (accessed 25.11.2016).

Fudel, S.I. (2005). Nasledstvo Dostoevskogo [Dostoevsky’s Legacy], In *Fudel, S.I. Sobranie sochinenii: v 3 t. [Fudel, S.I. Collected Works: in 3 vol.]*. M. Russkii put’, 3. 456 p.

Guerrier, V. (1908). *Frantsisk. Apostol nishchety i liubvi [St. Francis. The Apostle of Poverty and Love]*. M., T-vo “Pechatnia S.P. Yakovleva”. 344 p.

Grossman, L.P. (1923). *Seminarii po Dostoevskomu. Materialy, bibliografiia i kommentarii* [*Seminar on Dostoevsky. Materials, References and Comments*]. M., Pg. 118 p.

Leontiev, K.N. (2014). O vseмирnoi liubvi. Rech' F.M. Dostoevskogo na Pushkinskom prazdnike [On Universal Love. F.M. Dostoyevsky's Speech at Pushkin Celebration], In *Leontiev, K.N. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: v 12 t.* [Complete Collected Works and Letters: in 12 Volumes]. SPb., Vladimir Dal', 9, 186-225.

Leontiev, K.N. (2007). Sud'ba Bismarka i nedomolvki Katkova [The Fate of Bismarck and Katkov's Omissions], In *Leontiev, K.N. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem: v 12 t.* [Complete Collected Works and Letters: in 12 Volumes]. SPb., Vladimir Dal', 8, 1, 280-296.

Medvedev, A. (2015). "Serdtshe miluiushchee": obrazy pravednikov v tvorchestve F.M. Dostoevskogo i sv. Frantsisk Assizskii ["The Heart of Mercy": Images of the Righteous in the Work by F.M. Dostoevsky and St. Francis of Assisi], In *Izvestiia Ural'skogo federal'nogo universiteta. Serii 2: Gumanitarnye nauki* [Ural Federal University Journal. Series 2. Humanities and Arts], 2 (139), 222-233.

*Mystic Treatises written by Isaac of Nineveh* (1923). Translated by Arent Jan Wensinck. Amsterdam, Uitg. der Koninklijke Akad. van Wetenschappen. 400 p.

Parthenius (Ageev), monk. (2008). *Skazanie o stranstvii i puteshestvii po Rossii, Moldavii, Turtsii i Sviatoi Zemle: v 2 t.* [Legend of the Pilgrimage and Traveling through Russia, Moldavia, Turkey and the Holy Land of the professed of the Mount Athos: in 2 vol.]. M., Novospassky Monastery, 1 (1, 2). 424 p.

Pis'ma K.N. Leont'eva k V.V. Rozanovu s kommentariiami Rozanova [Letters of K.N. Leontiev to V.V. Rozanov with Rozanov's comments] (2001). In *Rozanov, V.V. Sobranie sochinenii [v 30 t.]. [T. III]: Literaturnye izgnanniki. N.N. Strakhov. K.N. Leontiev, Pod obshch. red. A.N. Nikoliukina* [Rozanov, V.V. Collected Works [in 30 volumes]. [Vol. 3]: Literary Exiles. N.N. Strakhov. K.N. Leontiev, Ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin]. M., Respublika, pp. 329-394.

Pletnev, R.V. (2007). Zemlia (iz raboty "Priroda v tvorchestve Dostoevskogo") [Earth (From the Work "Nature in the Works by Dostoevsky")], In *Vokrug Dostoevskogo: v 2 t. T. 1: O Dostoevskom: Sb. st. / pod red. A.L. Bema* [Around Dostoevsky: in 2 vol. V. 1: About Dostoevsky: Collected Works. Ed. by A.L. Bem]. M. Russkii put', 2007. 152-158.

Rozanov, V.V. (1995). Religiiia kak svet i radost' [Religion as Light and Joy], In *Rozanov, V.V. Sobranie sochinenii [v 30 t.]. [T. 5]: Okolo tserkovnykh sten, pod obshch. red. A.N. Nikoliukina* [Rozanov, V.V. Collected Works [in 30 volumes]. [Vol. 5]: Near the Walls of the Church, Ed. by A.N. Nikoliukin]. M., Respublika, 10-20.

Salvestroni, S.M. (2001). *Bibleiskie i sviatootecheskie istochniki romanov Dostoevskogo* [Biblical and Patristic Sources in the Novels of Dostoevsky], translated from Italian. SPb. Akademicheskii prospect. 187 p.

Slova prepodobnogo avvy Isaii k svojim emu uchenikam [The Words of the Reverend Abba Isaiah to his Disciples] (1895), In *Dobrotoliubie v rusском perevode [v 5 t.]* [Philokalia in Russian translation [in 5 vol.]]. M., 1. 638 p.

Sviatogo ottsa nashego Feodora Studita podvizhnicheskie monakhham nastavlenniiia [Of Our Holy Father Theodore the Studite Instructions to the Ascetic Monks] (1901), In *Dobrotoliubie v rusском perevode (v 5 t.)* [Philokalia in Russian Translation (in 5 vol.)]. M., 4. 634 p.

*The Optina Patericon, comp. by nun Yuliania (Samsonova)*. (2006). Saratov: Publishing House of Diocese of Saratov. 551 p. Available at: [http://www.podsosino.prihod.ru/pateriki,zhitija\\_svjatykh/view/id/1126305](http://www.podsosino.prihod.ru/pateriki,zhitija_svjatykh/view/id/1126305) (accessed 25.11.2016).

*The Way of a Pilgrim* (1991). Translated by R.M. French. Harper San Francisco Available at: <http://desertfathers.webs.com/thewayofthepilgrim.htm> (accessed 25.11.2016).

Veselovsky, A. (1866). Dante i simvolocheskaia poezii katolichestva [Dante and Symbolic Poetry of Catholicism], *In Vestnik Evropy [Herald of Europe]*, 4 (December), pp. 152-209.

Williams, R. (2013). *Dostoevskii: iazyk, vera, povestvovanie [Dostoevsky. Language, Faith and Fiction]*. Translated from English by N.M. Pal'tseva. M., Rossiiskaia politicheskaja entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN). 295 p.

Zhitie pervoe sv. Frantsiska Assizskogo, sostavlennoe Fomoi Chelanskim [The First Life of St. Francis of Assisi by Thomas of Celano] (1996). Tr. by L. Summ, *In Istoki frantsiskanstva. Sviatoi Frantsisk Assizskii: pisaniia i biografii [The Origins of Franciscanism. Saint Francis of Assisi: Writings and Biographies]*. M., Spiritual Library, 193-324.

*Zhizneopisanie optinskogo startsa ieroskhimonakha Makariia [Hagiography of Elder Macarius the Optina Hieroschemamonk]* (1997). M., Otchii Dom. 416 p.

## **Старец Зосима как обновление православной традиции (полемика К.Н. Леонтьева и В.В. Розанова о романе Ф.М. Достоевского «Братья Карамазовы»)**

**А.А. Медведев**

*Тюменский государственный университет  
Россия, 625003, Тюмень, ул. Володарского, 6*

---

*Статья посвящена анализу образа старца Зосимы как ключевого образа в творчестве Достоевского, который рассматривается в контексте «малого времени» (с точки зрения его современных прототипов и полемики К. Леонтьева и В. Розанова о «розовом христианстве») и «большого времени» (М.М. Бахтин) – с точки зрения древней христианской традиции. Мы выявляем прототипы Зосимы и новые интертекстуальные слои его образа – аллюзии и цитаты на оптинские жизнеописания (Макарий Оптинский, о. Палладий), паломническую литературу (инок Парфений), православную житийную традицию (преп. Сергей Радонежский), патристику (авва Исайя, Феодор Студит, Исаак Сирин и др.) и францисканские тексты. Соединяя эти образы в своем художественном сознании, Достоевский создал в Зосиме образ «чистого, идеального христианина», новый тип христианства, осуществляющий социальное служение в миру. Богатая историко-культурная генеалогия образа Зосимы, а также полемика Леонтьева и Розанова о нем показывают, что Достоевский выразил в Зосиме глубокое обновление православной традиции.*

*Ключевые слова: Достоевский, старец Зосима, прототипы, Розанов, Леонтьев, «розовое христианство», «большое время», христианская традиция.*

*Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.*

---