

**Title:** The Place of Christ in Dmitry Merezhkovsky's "New Religious Consciousness"  
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In 1901, Dmitry Merezhkovsky and Zinaida Gippius formed the first instantiation of the St. Petersburg Religious/Philosophical Society, a colloquy that aimed to reconcile two segments of Russian society whose historical paths had long ago diverged: the intelligentsia and the Orthodox Church. In a *fin-de-siècle* cultural climate that fostered all brands of esotericism, spiritualism, and mysticism, Merezhkovsky looked to the Church as the locus of an ancient ritual tradition that would inform his theorization of a *novoe religioznoe soznanie*, a religious ontology that posited Greco-Roman religion, and particularly the cult of Dionysus, as a semiotic forebear to Christianity. Though Merezhkovsky (and other contemporaneous theoreticians such as Viacheslav Ivanov) envisioned the *novoe religioznoe soznanie* as a conglomeration of liturgical and ritual elements from pagan antiquity and Christianity, we consistently see Christ accorded a special status in Symbolist religious thought as the culmination of a series of suffering, perishing, and resurrected deities

In this paper, I will examine the role of Christ within Merezhkovsky's syncretically-minded *novoe religioznoe soznanie*. Drawing from his novelistic, poetic, and theoretical texts from the late 1890s and early 1900s, I will attempt to determine, firstly, how Merezhkovsky understands terms such as "Christ", "Dionysus", "Christianity", and "Paganism", and then proceed to analyze the particular significance of Christ within his ontological continuum.

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