



THE

RUSSIAN PROSPERO

THE CREATIVE WORLD OF VIACHESLAV IVANOV

ROBERT BIRD

~ *The Russian Prospero*

❧ *The Russian Prospero*

The Creative Universe of
Viacheslav Ivanov

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F O R M Y

Mother and Father



et sanguine cordis matris meae per lacrimas eius diebus et
noctibus pro me sacrificabatur tibi, et egisti mecum miris modis.

—SAINT AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*

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Preface

Man hat ihn einmal irgendwo befreit
Mit jenem Ruck, mit dem man sich als Jüngling
Ans Große hinriß, weg von jeder Rücksicht.

[Once, somewhere, somehow, you had set him free
with that sharp jolt which as a young man tore you
out of your life and vaulted you to greatness.]

—Rainer Maria Rilke, “Der Geist Ariel” (translated by Stephen Mitchell)

My study of Viacheslav Ivanov is the most comprehensive account to date of the artistic and intellectual universe of this major Russian modernist poet, critic, and religious philosopher. Acknowledging the broad and intricate design of Ivanov’s creative endeavor, I have addressed all of the major fields and periods into which his works are customarily divided. This has allowed me to arrive at an overall interpretation of Ivanov’s oeuvre and to identify its key intersections with contemporary humanistic discourse. Moreover, my interpretation of Ivanov’s work may also prove of interest with regard to other Russian and European thinkers of his day, insofar as Ivanov was the consummate modernist.

It must be admitted at the outset that Ivanov’s protean and elusive creative persona precludes any simple description of his intellectual position. At any given time he was addressing himself to colleagues and rivals in diverse spheres of Russian and European life. In addition, he was often evasive, especially regarding major discontinuities in his personal life (e.g., his marriages, frequent peregrinations, and conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1926), but also with respect to his underlying intellectual allegiances. While one may choose to stress either the static or dynamic aspects of Ivanov’s creative universe, its evolution over time must always be a major issue of contention. In order to achieve a balanced account of Ivanov’s

works, I begin with an analysis of themes in his life and have endeavored throughout to observe the chronology of his ideas, indicating, as the occasion arises, how they changed over time. The major exceptions to this rule are his two books on Dionysian religion, especially *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism* (1923). Ivanov's work on Dionysus reflects a core of ideas that remained with him throughout his creative life, sometimes in tension with other major concerns and even among themselves, insofar as his conception of ancient religion flowed from diverse impulses and was applied to a range of tasks. In addition to analyses of Ivanov's works, I consider his evolving relations with such major contemporaries as Vladimir Solovyov, Nikolai Berdiaev, Aleksandr Scriabin, and Mikhail Bakhtin. Along the way I have found it necessary and useful to clarify Ivanov's views with reference to such figures of continental European thought as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Tzvetan Todorov, and especially Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. I read Ivanov dynamically, both as a representative of important trends in European modernism and as a vital participant in contemporary humanistic discourse.

In part 1 I focus on the lyric and epic modes of discourse in Ivanov's poetry and on his corresponding use of symbol and allegory. Linking the modern lyric to tragedy, Ivanov regarded lyric poems as interventions in ritual. Extending his scheme, I interpret Ivanov's narrative (or "epic") works as etiological myths that are derivative of his lyric poems but productive of thought. If lyric poetry exhibits primarily symbolic images, then narrative poetry relies mostly on allegory. A particularly vivid example is Ivanov's long poem *Man*, which I read as a narrative explanation of Scriabin's unfinished *Mysterium*.

In part 2 my emphasis shifts to Ivanov's theoretical constructions in the fields of cosmology (chapter 4), aesthetics (chapter 5), and history (chapter 6). Here I develop Ivanov's insights into a cogent hermeneutic theory based on his triad of terms: catharsis—mathesis—praxis. I demonstrate how Ivanov's thought fulfills the major task of hermeneutics, which, as formulated by Paul Ricoeur, is "to reconstruct the set of operations by which a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of living, acting, and suffering, to be given by an author to readers who receive it and thereby change their acting" (1984:53). Ivanov's ecstatic creative psychology leads directly to a consideration of history as a continuum of human interpretive activity, as well as to a conception of art as a historical force.

In part 3 I review Ivanov's creative universe in his final period, when, having emigrated to Italy, he became a committed Roman Catholic and

introduced subtle adjustments into his thought. An analysis of *The Correspondence from Two Corners* (1920) and related texts demonstrates how Ivanov saw emigration as “transcendent contemplation.” While he moved away from the historical engagement of his mature aesthetics, his last major poetic work, *The Roman Diary of 1944*, crowns his creative path as a stunning achievement, in which the dual poles poetry and thought, symbol and allegory, and Ariel and Prospero are held in exquisite balance.

Throughout this book I have emphasized and dramatized the crucial issue of Ivanov’s work as a hermeneutic quest to harness the power of art—and, more broadly, creative action—and apply it to concrete life situations (or to history in general). It is the dilemma of Prospero, who must liberate his attendant spirit, Ariel, in order to restore full sovereignty over his own creative self and to regain ethical agency. It remains a matter of speculation whether Ivanov was ultimately successful in distinguishing his thought from its poetic genesis, but the productive tension that resulted was a remarkable force in Russian modernism and a powerful spur for our own reflections upon modernity.

Acknowledgments

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I would like to express special thanks to my three mentors in Ivanov studies. James D. West first introduced me to Ivanov's work when I was an undergraduate at the University of Washington. Robert Louis Jackson was my advisor at Yale University and has remained a friend and inspiration. He, in turn, introduced me to Ivanov's son, Dimitri (Jean Neuvecelle), who graciously and patiently oversaw my work in Rome on numerous occasions prior to his death in 2003.

~ *The Russian Prospero*

Introduction

From Biography to Text

. . . Every third thought shall be my grave.

—Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* 5.1.311

Viacheslav Ivanov was a man of the cusp, an archetypal fin-de-siècle figure, heralding the dawn of a new age by wrapping himself in the faded robes of the past. A dissenter against modernity, he became the mistrusted mentor of the remarkable last generation of Russian modernists, which arrived late on the scene and was mercilessly scattered in the iron winds of the twentieth century. He was, finally and most definitely, a herald of the “end of history”—a false end that ricocheted back in revolution, war, revolution, and war again. Seeking inspiration in the ruins of the cultural past, Ivanov embodied history but was himself disembodied by his flight from the present.

For all his vitality and influence, Ivanov remains an enigmatic cipher on the horizon of European modernism, widely known yet little understood, universally respected yet hardly loved. The reason for this I seek in the uneasy dichotomy between Ivanov's lyric inspiration and his attempts to harness this lyric power in the service of his ideas; in other words, in the tension between Ariel and Prospero.¹ In subsequent chapters I present Ivanov's modernist lyrics as a form of discourse linked to ritual, which is eccentric to historical life and seeks to affect it from without. Ivanov forged his identity through participation in these lyric rituals, constructing a *transcendent persona* that could never reach full incarnation in history, only in texts. Insofar as even lyric ritual requires sacrifice, Ivanov's texts were always inscribed with some loss—of home, love, belief. These textual tombs constituted Ivanov's personal memory, and he learned to seek history

on their ground. I therefore begin my exploration of Ivanov's creative universe by tracing the interaction of text and event in his life.

THE LOSS OF HOME

Few Russian writers have shown such geographic and cultural dexterity. After beginning university studies in his home city, Moscow, Ivanov transferred to the University of Berlin in 1886 and spent extended periods conducting research in Paris (1891–92) and Rome (1892–96). He traveled widely in Greece, Palestine, and England before settling near Geneva in 1900. When he returned to Russia in 1905, he pointedly chose the revolutionary capital of Saint Petersburg over Moscow, but from 1913 to 1920 Ivanov lived again in his native city, struggling mightily to recognize it as *home*. After a bleak interlude at the new University of Baku (1920–24), Ivanov emigrated from Russia to Italy in 1924, living in Rome but spending much time also in Pavia, where he taught from 1926 to 1935.

In all of Ivanov's cosmopolitan peregrinations, Russia—or, more precisely, Moscow—remained his main point of reference, but it is questionable whether it ever was his *home* to him, a place that Ivanov increasingly came to define as the abstract unity of European culture. Fluent in many of Europe's languages, both modern and ancient, Ivanov maintained a feline elusiveness. However, his agile crisscrossing of cultural boundaries created those furrows of memory in which his poems sprouted.

Leaving Moscow

Viacheslav Ivanovich Ivanov was born in Moscow on 16 (28) February 1866, the son of a freethinking minor civil servant and a deeply spiritual and strong-willed woman from a family that counted clergy and high civil servants among its members.² According to Ivanov's 1917 "Autobiographical Letter" (the only good source on his early life), his mother instilled in him a profound sense of Russian identity, choosing for him the conspicuously Slavic name of Viacheslav (known in the West as Wenceslas) and providing him with a knowledge of Scripture, Orthodox liturgy, and the literary classics (*Coll. Works* 2:12). Crucially, she also cultivated him as a future poet.

Ivanov confessed to one negative trait inherited from his mother: "She unconsciously imbued me with a refined pride and the 'individualism' with which I was to struggle inwardly during my school years, and its secret poisons still remained active in the mature part of my life" (*Coll. Works* 2:12). The common strain in Ivanov's Slavic traditionalism and rebellious

individualism was his poetic ambition. His innate aestheticism was in evidence as early as the age of nine, when he chose his Moscow gymnasium “for aesthetic reasons: it was located in a beautiful old building alongside the Church of Christ the Saviour, which was not yet open then” (12). Ivanov began to write poetry at the same time he felt the first pangs of religious feeling, during a period of “Slavic enthusiasm”: “I stood for long hours at night before an icon and fell asleep on my knees from exhaustion” (12). However, life was not all poetry. Like many Russian youths of the time, he also passed through a short-lived period of atheism and revolutionary sympathies, which influenced him to study history. Ivanov later wrote that he had “dreamed of gaining independent mastery of the problems of society and to find the path to social action” (14).

From the very beginning Ivanov’s aesthetic inclinations clashed with his sense of social duty, leading him to seek a “path of action” through poetry. In particular, the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in 1881, which featured solemn speeches by such luminaries as Dostoevsky and Turgenev (*Coll. Works* 2:13), demonstrated to him how literary rituals could occupy a central place in the Russian cultural consciousness. Literary rituals essentially replaced religious ones for the young poet, who viewed the Orthodox sacraments of confession and communion as “annoying formalities” (Shor 1971:37). Ivanov’s later companion and first biographer, Olga Shor (pseud. Deschartes), wrote that the only religious rituals he observed were those linked to the memory of his mother, who died in 1896 (Shor 1971:37–38). Nevertheless, rituals of literature and of personal memory would become inextricably connected in his poetry of commemoration. There was a particular justice in Ivanov’s dedicatory inscription in his first collection of poetry, *Pilot Stars* (*Kormchie zvezdy*, 1902): “To the memory of my mother” (*Coll. Works* 1:514).

Although Ivanov wrote a large number of poems during his early years in Moscow, he soon realized that to become a *poet* in the exalted sense he had to sacrifice everything that bound him to temporal existence. He first had to relinquish his home. After two years of study under such renowned historians as Pavel Vinogradov and Vasilii Kliuchevsky at Moscow University, where he was awarded a scholarship for his classical studies (Kotrelev 1997:192), Ivanov enrolled at the University of Berlin. He traveled there in the summer of 1886 together with his young bride, Daria Mikhailovna Dmitrevskaia, who soon gave birth to a daughter.³ Ivanov spent five years in Berlin studying ancient history under the tutelage of Otto Hirschfeld (although he later stressed his work with the legendary Theodor Mommsen).⁴ These years of

intense study gave Ivanov an intimate knowledge not only of ancient history and literature but also of the German language, literature, and music. He especially revered Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, and Wagner. Most important, perhaps, Ivanov learned to associate the intellectual power of classical scholarship with the freedom of *being abroad*.

Being Abroad

Ivanov later wrote: “As soon as I ended up abroad, there stirred within me mystical aspirations and there awoke the need to understand Russia in her idea” (*Coll. Works* 2:18). Being “abroad” was not merely a physical but a metaphysical condition. From a distance he discovered a clairvoyant gaze, both on his own person and on his homeland. And so it was while abroad that Ivanov first discovered the Russian home he had already managed to lose. His renewed interest in Russia’s Christian heritage found expression in his correspondence with the great Byzantinist Karl Krumbacher⁵ and in his study of the works of religious philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, especially his 1887 tract on theocracy, which presented a religious ideal of social action.⁶

In 1891 Ivanov moved to Paris, where he polished his French, and in the following year to Rome, where he worked under the auspices of the German Archeological Institute. Here he ostensibly began to develop his doctoral thesis on tax-farming companies in ancient Rome, which he eventually finished in 1896, although it was only published (with characteristic procrastination) in 1910. This dissertation is the only thing Ivanov wrote that has thus far remained beyond the purview of the literary or intellectual historian.⁷ This is not just because it is a narrowly academic work; rather, it represents an entire life that Ivanov spurned. As he later wrote, there occurred “a sudden break” in his studies “because my family life underwent a change and I became absorbed with literary activity” (Kotrelev 1997:190). He delayed and eventually waived his doctoral exams at the University of Berlin, despite Hirschfeld’s insistent pleas that he complete his degree (Wachtel 1995a:367–73).

Ivanov’s change of heart had several causes. In the first place, his hereditary sense of pride instilled in him an insurmountable fear of failure.⁸ More important was the shock he received from his first direct experience of Italy in 1892. One can read autobiographical meaning into Ivanov’s later paraphrase of Goethe’s *Italian Journey*: “Enough of dreaming indistinctly and vaguely about the land of the gods; it is necessary to see them, feel them, know them, and accept into one’s soul the imprint of their incorruptible form” (*Coll. Works* 4:119). In contrast to Winckelmann and Goethe, however, Ivanov’s Italy was less a land of classical symmetry than an outpost of

Greek mystery religion. One of the first sights he visited was the ancient amphitheater in Taormina in Sicily: "Our thoughts were transported to the scenic art and dramatic poetry of the Greeks, and it seemed that the picture itself tuned our soul to the tone of a great ancient tragedy. Isn't it noteworthy that the Greeks located their theaters in a wild and picturesque place, on well-nigh inaccessible heights, where worldly noise and prosaic bustle could not reach, in sight of the sea, in sight of the isolated mountain peaks?"⁹ Henceforth for Ivanov Rome and Italy became synonymous with humanity's transcendent home, from which it has been forever exiled. Exile from Russia represented a painful separation from his historical home, while return to Russia became a no less painful exile from eternity.

The other major factor in Ivanov's sudden break with his previous life was his adulterous affair with Lidia Dmitrievna Zinovyeva, a well-to-do amateur singer who was living in Italy after leaving her first husband, with whom she had three children: Sergei, Konstantin, and Vera Shvarsalon. Ivanov's new love erupted during a tempestuous night at the Colosseum, which he described in verse as a ritualistic breaking of taboos and regeneration of antique religious fervor. The terrestrial consequences of the affair included Ivanov's separation from his wife of ten years in 1895 and from his young daughter, whom he continued to support sporadically. On 15 April 1896 Lidia Dmitrievna gave birth to a daughter, Lidia, at about the same time that Ivanov learned of his mother's death. The coincidence reinforced Ivanov's burgeoning biographical myth, in which erotic striving and physical suffering form a single *passion* that leads to rebirth. The two events lessened Ivanov's inclination permanently to return to Russia, where his admitted adultery precluded him from remarrying officially. It was only after Lidia Dmitrievna was granted a divorce from her first husband in 1899 that they could live together openly in Russia (although their Italian wedding was still of dubious legality in Russia).

Ivanov's move to Italy and affair with Lidia coincided with his discovery of Nietzsche, who provided the theoretical justification for breaking with previous attachments. Ivanov was gradually led away from Mommsen's brand of documentary social history toward the intangible truths revealed in art and myth. Both in interest and method Ivanov drew closer to some of Mommsen's bitterest opponents, such as Johann Jakob Bachofen. It is tempting to speculate that Ivanov may have followed the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, who occupied the chair in philosophy at the University of Berlin since 1882. Dilthey had pioneered the view of history as the verbal expression of past lived experience that each new reader must appropriate creatively in

his own living context. Similarly, for Ivanov experience essentially became a profoundly textual category, what one might call myth.

Myth provided Ivanov not only with a broad concept of enriched history but also a specific intellectual scheme. Ivanov was particularly taken by Nietzsche's image of Dionysus. Dionysus gave Ivanov a name for the emotional state inspired by his direct experience of antiquity and passionate love for Lidia.¹⁰ Ivanov died to his old life in what must have been a painful parting with university and family, rising again as a seemingly omnipotent poet in whom all "has been rejuvenated, blossomed and become verdant" (*Coll. Works* 2:20). The fluidity and instability of this evergreen Dionysian world, buffeted by alternating experiences of ecstasy and pain, is at the root of the most serious intellectual challenges Ivanov addressed in his mature thought, which issues from poetic transport but is oriented toward historical transmission. The category of myth incorporates irruptions of the transcendent into historical explanations.

In his prolonged attempt to reconcile the tumultuous events of 1895–96 with the spiritual and scholarly world of his youth, Ivanov began to research the "religious-historical roots" of the Roman state myth and the history of the Dionysian cult (*Coll. Works* 2:21). These were self-serving scholarly pursuits. As Nikolai Kotrelev has commented: "Ivanov viewed the institution of oracles and its role in the destiny of the Roman state [. . .] as related to his own conviction that his poetic vocation was prophetic and his epoch was one of a near and catastrophic turning point in history. [. . .] Dionysianism [. . .] became the theme of Ivanov's message and an instrument of the hoped-for transfiguration of humanity" (1997:187). It is as if, when he heard Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, Ivanov devoted all of his considerable powers to apprehending and resurrecting the conditions in which the Christian religion had formed.

The poetry Ivanov wrote beginning in 1895 formed the bulk of his 1902 collection *Pilot Stars* and determined its overriding tone, which is best described by the subtitle of the first section: "Impulse and Limits" ("Poryv i grani"). The pre-1895 poems clearly reflect Ivanov's earlier interests, especially his stylized Slavophilism (e.g., "The Russian Mind" ["Russkii um"] or the antirepublican cycle *Paris Epigrams* [*Parizhskie epigrammy*]) and somewhat pedantic classicism (the Vergilian distichs "Laeta" or Dantean terza rima of "The Sphinx" ["Sfinks"]). Many of the post-1895 poems use similarly complex poetic forms and ample classical references to express Dionysian themes of transgressive eros. In his creative appropriation of classical poetic measures Ivanov set an entirely new standard.¹¹ The multiple historical

layers in his language require a complex archeological reading posture, sensitive to nuances of both meaning and stylistic register. Moreover, Ivanov's formal experiments were rooted in an impressive religious-philosophical system. Ivanov's syncretic approach to literary style was part and parcel of his desire to contribute to the onset of a new historical period. However, his physical isolation from actual literary life in Russia blunted his effect on readers. Ivanov's absence from Russia was akin to an absence from history itself and a tarrying in the eternal sources of human culture. By extension, a return home acquired messianic overtones, as if a new world epoch would begin with Ivanov's incarnation into the historical life of his nation. It was, in short, no small matter for him to become a Russian poet.

Triumphant Homecoming

In retrospect, the publication of Ivanov's debut collection *Pilot Stars* at the end of 1902 was a pivotal event in Russian literary history. It was the first harbinger of the new wave of symbolist poets, which included Ivanov, Aleksandr Blok, and Andrei Bely. However, the volume did not immediately grant Ivanov the literary status he craved, this despite sympathetic reviews from Valery Briusov and Dmitry Merezhkovsky, the leading symbolists of the first wave. The overall impression was one of obtuse archaism and intellectualism, exacerbated by Ivanov's virtual anonymity. He did not rush back to Russia to capitalize on his modest success. Ivanov calmly held *Pilot Stars* to be "the point of departure for further activity" (Wachtel and Kuznetsova 1996:367), and for the time being his participation in Russian literary life remained cautious and, in the eyes of contemporaries, enigmatic. He continued to follow what in 1898 he had termed his "principle of waiting and deliberation" (343), as if planning an invasion to liberate his homeland from the clutches of the infidels, which was basically how he viewed the regnant schools of poetry and criticism.

Instead of accepting a full apprenticeship in Russian letters, Ivanov cultivated selective Russian contacts. Most importantly, he groomed himself as heir apparent to Russia's great poet-philosopher Vladimir Solovyov. During Ivanov's trips home in 1899–1900 (and also through the mediation of his ex-wife), Solovyov advised Ivanov on publishers, endorsed the title *Pilot Stars*, and helped to arrange the separate publication of some of Ivanov's poems, including his translation of Pindar's "First Pythic Ode."¹² This imprimatur sufficed for Ivanov to establish Solovyov as a keystone of his biographical myth. The first section of *Pilot Stars* opens with a poem explicitly dedicated to Solovyov; several others are more or less explicitly related to

Ivanov's brief contact with the late philosopher. Most telling is "Eternal Memory" ("Vechnaia pamiat'"), which Ivanov wrote immediately after Solovyov's death on 31 July 1900:

Вечная память

Над смертью вечно торжествует,
 В ком память вечная живет.
 Любовь зовет, любовь предчует;
 Кто не забыл,—не отдает.

Скиталец, в даль—над зримой далью—
 Взор ясновидящий вперя,
 Идет, утешенный печалью . . .
 За ним—заря, пред ним—заря . . .

Кольцо и посох—две святыни—
 Несет он верною рукой.
 Лелеет пальма средь пустыни
 Ночлега легкого покой. (*Coll. Works* 1:568)

[Eternal Memory

Eternal triumph over death belongs
 To him in whom eternal memory lives.
 Love calls, love foresees;
 Whoever remembers does not relinquish.

The wanderer walks, casting his clairvoyant gaze
 In the distance, above the visible distance;
 As he goes he is consoled by grief . . .
 Behind him glows dusk, before him glows dawn . . .

The two sacred treasures, the staff and the ring,
 He carries with a faithful hand.
 Amidst the desert a palm caresses
 The respite of a welcome station.]

The poem's title, taken from the Orthodox hymn of remembrance, underscores its status as an epitaph for Solovyov and an affirmation of the new life that issues from suffering. In a letter to his wife Ivanov identified the palm tree as an early Christian symbol of immortality.¹³ It is also noteworthy

how Ivanov ascribes to Solovyov the idea of casting his gaze into the eternal distance, suggesting that the wanderer's universal and ahistorical gaze is capable of evoking the historical being of the nation, which stares back at the individual with the cumulative gaze of the ages. Ivanov's cult of Solovyov continued throughout his life. In 1912 he attempted to make up with Aleksandr Blok by declaring in a poem that they had both been "mysteriously baptized" by Solovyov and thereby "betrothed" to Solovyov's ideal of the Eternal Feminine (*Coll. Works* 3:10). In 1926 he claimed Solovyov's inspiration for his conversion to Catholicism. In a very late poem Ivanov related how Solovyov had reconciled the Ivanovs with the Orthodox Church, and that they had learned of their patron's death on a pilgrimage to the ancient Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, which they had undertaken at Solovyov's behest (*Coll. Works* 3:621). Epitomizing the *tombeau*-like character of his own lyric verse, Ivanov is here also relating himself to an established tradition of poetic initiation, exemplified by Pushkin's claim to have received the blessing of the dying Derzhavin (*Eugene Onegin* 8.2.1–4).¹⁴

Solovyov's mantle was but one factor in Ivanov's burgeoning self-confidence. After seeing *Pilot Stars* to fruition, Ivanov quickly completed several major works: the tragedy *Tantalus* (*Tantal*, 1905), the first part of a projected trilogy; a second poetry collection entitled *Transparency* (*Prozrachnost'*, 1904); and numerous reviews, articles, and aphorisms for Briusov's new symbolist journal *Libra* (*Vesy*). In addition, Ivanov worked on numerous projects that would only be realized later in life, such as *The Tale of Svetomir-Tsarevich* (*Povest' o Svetomire-Tsareviche*).¹⁵ Although he was still relatively unknown, his attitude was far from that of an apprentice. In February 1903 Ivanov wrote his wife that he had sent his dithyrambic poem "Chorus of Blessing Spirits" to *The New Path* (*Novyi put'*), the leading modernist journal in Saint Petersburg: "I am just testing the ground: is it firm enough on this 'New Path' for my revelations?"¹⁶ In 1903 Ivanov traveled to Paris to read a course of lectures called "The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God,"¹⁷ which captured the interest of Russian modernist circles and promptly commenced publication in *The New Path*.

The significance of this mounting avalanche of publications was brought home to the Russian modernists by Ivanov's sojourn in Russia from mid-February to June 1904. Andrei Bely later described his first impressions of Ivanov, stressing his mysterious appearance and origin:

Nobody understood who he was: an archivist; a schoolteacher out of Hoffmann's tales, who has lived out an entire age in the German provinces, bent

over some grammar with a mug of beer in his hand; or a Romantic, who somehow survived to the revolution of '48 and miraculously lived through it by means of various camphors with mothballs; or a mystagogue who had packed the cult of Eleusinian mysteries together with Lidia Dmitrievna Annibal's hat in his suitcase in order to make us all here, on the Arbat, Prechistenka, Znamenka [. . .], lead a round dance to the sounds of Beethoven's symphonies. (Bely 1990:341–42)

Bely commented: “[T]here was a time when I thought: perhaps this sheep-like teacher is really a wolf?” (Bely 1990:346). Blok also mistrusted Ivanov's “regal train,” as he put it in a poem of 1911. Still, despite long periods of coolness, the three musketeers of “younger symbolism” (Ivanov, Blok, Bely) would form a loose literary alliance until death and emigration separated them for good in 1921. Compared at times to both Proteus and Orpheus, Ivanov remained a mysterious denizen of an idiosyncratic intellectual universe, “the wise Prospero of his island,” as Briusov called him in a 1904 review of Ivanov's *Transparency* (313).

A less savory foretaste of Ivanov's influence on the cultural scene was the peculiar ritual he instigated on 2 May 1905 at the Petersburg home of modernist poet and philosopher Nikolai Minsky and his wife, Zinaida Vengerova, who were both Jewish. Vengerova “donated” her blood, which the guests then passed around in a chalice. This supremely decadent rite, apparently intended as a protoecumenical bonding ceremony, only succeeded in creating a scandal for its esotericism, anti-Semitic overtones, and its utter pointlessness.¹⁸ However, it highlights the ritual function that Ivanov sought to exert both through his intellectual influence and his poetry. *Transparency* was organized in typically virtuosic fashion, leading from philosophical and mythological verse to exquisite sonnets, culminating in ecstatic “choruses” and the translation of an ancient Greek dithyramb by Bacchylides (equipped with extensive historical commentary). The weave of philosophy and ecstatic verse can be illustrated by the poem “Fio, ergo non sum” (“I am becoming, therefore I do not exist”):

Жизнь—истома и метанье,
 Жизнь—витанье
 Тени бледной
 Над плитой забытых рун;
 В глубине ночных лагун
 Отблеск бледный,

Трепетанье
 Бликов белых,
 Струйных лун;
 Жизнь—полночное роптанье,
 Жизнь—шептанье
 Онемелых, чутких струн . . .

Погребенного восстанье
 Кто содеет
 Ясным зовом?
 Кто владеет
 Властным словом?
 Где я? Где я?
 По себе я
 Возалкал!
 Я—на дне своих зеркал.
 Я—пред ликом чародея
 Ряд встающих двойников,
 Бег предлунных облаков. (*Coll. Works* 1:740–41)

[Life is languor and restlessness,
 Life is the flutter
 Of a pale shadow
 Over a tablet of forgotten runes;
 In the depths of nocturnal lagoons
 Is a pale reflection,
 The trembling
 Of white sparkles,
 Of flowing moons;
 Life is a midnight plaint,
 Life is the whispering
 Of mute, sensitive strings . . .

Who will cause
 The rising of the buried
 With a clear call?
 Who commands
 A powerful word?
 Where am I? Where am I?
 I thirst

For myself!
 I am at the bottom of my mirrors.
 I, before the face of the wizard,
 Awake as a series of doubles,
 The rush of sublunar clouds.]

The excitement of the short, irregular rhythms and insistent rhymes leads the poet to the nocturnal depths of existence, where his visage is exposed as an illusion. This is the grave of the individual, yet it is also the cradle of a new personhood reborn at the height of suffering and endowed with a “powerful word.” At this depth language itself seems to dissolve into pre-logical sounds and chords; at times Ivanov’s dense verbal textures presage the transrational language of the futurists. At the same time, the image of the corpse’s “rising” (*vosstanie*, which also means “uprising”) could be taken as an allegorical reference to the volatile political situation.

Ivanov’s semisplayful, semipotentous rituals were perceived not as laughter in the dark but as a complex response to the Russo-Japanese War and the ensuing revolutionary turmoil of 1905. Ivanov became increasingly eager to return to Russia for good, writing a stirring cycle of civic poems entitled *The Time of Wrath* (*Godina gneva*, a translation of *Dies Irae*), in which he interpreted current events in terms of Russia’s apocalyptic and messianic destiny. In July 1905 the Ivanovs finally moved to Saint Petersburg, taking a corner apartment on the top story of a building overlooking the Tauride Palace, the home of the new State Duma. Ivanov immersed himself in the literary life of the capital, contributing to the journal *Questions of Life* (*Voprosy zhizni*, the successor to *The New Path*), the mystical-anarchist almanac *Torches* (*Fakely*), and the satirical journal *Infernal Post* (*Adskaia pochta*). Ivanov’s strategy of delay was thus borne out in full: he returned to Russia as the putative leader of an entire wing of Russian modernism, the groundwork for which had been laid during his long exile.

Ivanov’s choice of Petersburg over Moscow was highly significant. In September 1905 Ivanov confided to Briusov that his move to Petersburg was temporary, and that he would follow on to Moscow as soon as he had overseen some publishing projects (LN 85:476). In subsequent letters Ivanov continued to defend the delay of his arrival in Moscow, the topic eventually being dropped entirely. Soon thereafter a polemic arose between the Moscow and Petersburg symbolists, based partly on theoretical disagreements and partly on personal rivalries. Ivanov led the Petersburg opposition, issuing a series of attacks on the Muscovite “decadents” and encouraging the creation of

separate publishing ventures for the Petersburg modernists, such as his own imprint *The Horae* (Ory). Ivanov appears to have had little intention of joining Briusov at all.¹⁹ His original excitement at having made contact with like-minded modernists gradually developed into a perspicacious differentiation between “elements” or “movements” within modernism, one that would eventually lead to a conventional classification of two branches in the symbolist movement, roughly equivalent to elder and younger generations, distinguished by aestheticism and mysticism, respectively. Ivanov felt quite confident that his mystical modernist vision represented the future. His choice of Petersburg over his native Moscow was therefore a symbolic break with his hereditary home and a declaration of his intention to *compose* for himself a new world within his texts.

LOSS OF LOVE

Eros

A significant dimension of Ivanov’s new world was his erotic mythology, in which the leading role belonged to his wife, Lidia. Accordingly, it was her death on 17 October 1907 that represented Ivanov’s most traumatic loss and served as the stimulus for most of his later poetry. Ivanov invariably depicted their relationship as a transcendent union that had been concluded once and forever. In an early letter dated 19 March 1895 Ivanov wrote: “Lidia, *amor mio*, how I thirst to caress you again—in a Bacchic way, insanely, insatiably, in a torment of pleasure and in the lyre of groans. . . . Your image persecutes me, irritates and torments me with its pleasure. . . . Spare me, enough. . . . You have already made me another man. You have ignited above me new, unknown stars, on my path you have grown new, unseen flowers. With your kiss you have melted my old faith and in its place I have felt in my soul a new, more truthful one.”²⁰ Lidia immediately became Ivanov’s muse, the Diotima who led his inner *daimon* to the heights of knowledge, creativity, and mystical ecstasy. At their 1899 wedding, held at a Greek Orthodox church in Livorno, they adorned themselves with Dionysian vines and white fleece (Shor 1971:35), thereby inscribing the rite into Ivanov’s creative universe. In light of Ivanov’s cult of memory, the event that bound the couple most tightly may have been the loss in 1899 of a second child, Elena, which inspired one of Ivanov’s best-known sonnets from *Pilot Stars* (Kruzhkov 2001:351–57, 376–77):

Любовь

Мы—два грозой зажженные ствола,
Два пламени полуночного бора;

Мы—два в ночи летящих метеора,
Одной судьбы двужалая стрела.

Мы—два коня, чьи держит удила
Одна рука,—одна язвит их шпора;
Два ока мы единственного взора,
Мечты одной два трепетных крыла.

Мы—двух теней скорбящая чета
Над мрамором божественного гроба,
Где древняя почитет Красота.

Единых тайн двугласные уста,
Себе самим мы Сфинкс единый оба.
Мы—две руки единого креста. (*Coll. Works* 1:610–11)

[Love

We're two trees on fire from lightning,
Two flames of a midnight grove;
We're two soaring meteors at night,
A two-headed arrow of a single fate.

We're two steeds whose bits are held
By a single hand, who are goaded by a single spur;
We're two eyes of a single gaze,
Two fragile wings of a single dream.

We're the grieving figure of two shadows
Above the marble of a divine tomb
Where ancient Beauty is laid to rest.

We're the two-voiced mouth of a single mystery,
We are a single Sphinx even for ourselves.
We're the two arms of a single cross.]

Here, as throughout Ivanov's auto-mythology, sexual passion culminates in the cross, understood as the redemptive suffering of beauty and mystery. However, this redemption occurs only when the experience is crowned with its inscription in a consummate sonnet.

The Ivanovs even tried to combine their creative efforts in a series of co-authored books. Nothing came of this fantastic idea, but Ivanov's rationale

demonstrates his brash and independent stance: “[W]e [would] receive the possibility of unifying our labors, which inwardly abide in profound solidarity, and of pronouncing with full freedom and with a redoubled voice our aesthetic and philosophical worldview, which cannot be attributed to any existing category, but which is complete and has matured to the point that it is inwardly necessary to express and proclaim it” (Wachtel and Kuznetsova 1996:368). However, this conjugal myth remained subordinate to Ivanov’s own creative persona, which for him was always the supreme value. In daily life Ivanov defied the constraints of marriage. As early as June 1895 he had warned Lidia: “You want to possess me *completely*. I have never felt myself to belong *exclusively* to a single emotion, nor a single woman, nor a single cause, nor a single idea. I devote to everything only a part of myself and belong wholly only to myself. . . . [T]he bed of your love is too confining for me. You are too narrow for me and seek to bind me.”²¹ Ivanov could never fully surrender himself to life, only to the art that grew out of its memories. What bound the Ivanov family together was their common bereavement, followed by their shared involvement in Ivanov’s poetic commemoration of these “sacrifices.”

On 2 September 1905 Ivanov and Lidia Dmitrievna hosted the first “Wednesday” salon at his apartment, which quickly became known as the Tower.²² The Ivanovs’ *jour fixe* remained a key ritual in Petersburg cultural life until 1912, permitting him to galvanize diverse creative minds around an ideology and spirit that owed much to his own inspiration. In some ways Ivanov’s strategy worked: the Tower hosted the literary debuts of Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, and Velimir Khlebnikov. Maksimilian Voloshin moved to Petersburg expressly to be near Ivanov, whose milieu he termed “a kingdom of the blessed” (Kupchenko 1997:301–4). Others compared Ivanov to Lorenzo de’ Medici, known as “the Magnificent,” who centuries earlier had reinstated the Platonic symposium at the center of his broad cultural revival effort in Renaissance Florence.²³ Others were less sanguine. Briusov called the meetings “Noah’s Arks.”²⁴ Voloshin’s wife, Margarita Sabashnikova, feared—justifiably, as it turned out—that Ivanov’s three-ring cultural circus was actually a “sect of Eros” (Kupchenko 1997:325). In addition to its more public activity, the Tower also spawned an elite, all-male group of spiritual sybarites who met under the aegis of the Persian poet Hafiz, exchanging drinks and kisses while reading from each other’s poetry and intimate diaries.²⁵ From a distance these goings-on seemed positively dangerous. However, when the police raided the Tower they found nothing seditious and succeeded only in losing Merezhkovsky’s fur hat.²⁶

The key to Ivanov's immediate influence in the Russian cultural scene was his enthusiastic sponsorship of new rituals. In the fluid, postrevolutionary environment a kiss or a poem could seem like a world-changing act, magnified by repetition and elaboration in private and public communications. A new journal, *The Golden Fleece* (*Zolotoe runo*), published in Moscow but dominated by Petersburg writers, presented their cosmopolitan viewpoint, in luxurious format with French translations on facing pages (a costly and pretentious feature that was soon abandoned).²⁷ Here Ivanov published a series of essays that broadened his aesthetic theorizing to encompass a cultural typology and theory of the symbol, which seemed to many the germ of an exciting new philosophy. In 1906–7 Ivanov was widely identified with an embryonic group of metaphysical politicians (or political metaphysicians) known as mystical anarchists, who called for social change to be achieved through the intensification of individual mystical experience. This negligible group (led by Georgy Chulkov and Ivanov) attracted howls of derision for its blanket betrayal of political responsibility, artistic independence, and spiritual integrity.²⁸ Under his own *Horae* imprint Ivanov published his poetry collection *Eros* (1907), two books of Lidia's prose,²⁹ and works by Aleksandr Blok, Sergei Gorodetsky, Mikhail Kuzmin, and other prominent poets.

In retrospect it is not easy to attain the proper perspective on these events.³⁰ Gorodetsky solemnly inscribed a photograph of himself to Ivanov in Latin: "Tibi, Solis evocator, / Victoriae animator, / Animarum victor" ["To thee, evoker of the Sun / Animator of victory, / Victor of souls"]. Yet the diabolic overtones did not exclude the possibility of humor. Valter Nuvel, a participant in the Hafiz brotherhood, proposed replacing "solis evocator" with "mystificator," and "Animarum victor" with "Boa constrictor."³¹ Perhaps they were aware of the rhyme with "honey-dripping distillator," which was how Konstantin Balmont described Ivanov in 1905!³² The magnificent doge of Russian modernism sometimes appeared to have no clothes.

Ivanov's *cénacle* is brought further down to earth in a prosaic account by historian Bernard Pares of his sojourn at Ivanov's Tower in March 1907, while he was observing the Second State Duma:

The Ivanovs' flat was known as the Tower, and served as a meeting-place for a number of the most distinguished writers of the time. Here I met Alexander Blok, a young Apollo and the greatest poet of his generation; the dreamy-looking Andrey Bely; the bearded religious thinker, Nicholas Berdiayev; and the eccentric novelist, Kuzmin, who lived in the flat. Kuzmin was a wonderful

musician, and about three o'clock in the morning he would play the Appassionata of Beethoven on a fine piano, only just on the other side of a door in my room, against which lay my bed; but it would have been quite impossible to have been anything but grateful to him. The family and their friends used to sit up all night, reading out to each other from their latest works, as yet unpublished, and criticising them in common. They begged me not to sing when I was in my bath in the morning, because that was the time when they were just going to bed. It was an exceptional and in some ways an eccentric environment, but it served admirably to balance the eccentric environment which filled the life of the poor Second Duma.³³

Viewed at a remove from the tumultuous emotions that ruled its inhabitants and the literary texts it engendered, Ivanov's Tower was simply a small artists' colony that served as a hothouse for cultural thought and for experimenting with unconventional lifestyles. However, in a heavily ritualized culture that was undergoing drastic change, these interventions in cultural rituals attained inordinate significance, and their textual manifestations gave rise to extensive and influential myths.

Thanatos

During the heyday of the Tower, Ivanov engaged in a series of erotic experiments that would engender both his most risqué poetry and pernicious rumors that would hound him for years to come. Lidia traveled to Switzerland at the beginning of July 1906, and Ivanov proceeded to send her a regular "diary" in epistolary form about his intellectual and sexual seduction of the young poet Sergei Gorodetsky. Wrapping his theories in expressions of devotion to his wife, Ivanov expounded a theory of triangular love whereby the young male counterpart served as a kind of divine incarnation of love that complemented the opposite poles of male and female; Gorodetsky was at once Bacchus, Eros, and Anteros. Ivanov also allowed for less flighty explanations, admitting that his affection for Gorodetsky was an expression of a "latent homosexuality" that had first manifested itself in his "being enamoured" (*vliublennost'*) of Briusov. He reassured his wife that his love for her was "passion *an sich*, universal in the sexual sense and mystical and demonic in its inner aspect." This logic placed their relationship beyond the conventional restraints of fidelity.³⁴

Ivanov's failure to achieve a triangular relationship with Lidia and Gorodetsky did not deter him from trying again with Margarita Sabashnikova. In the poems dedicated to this relationship, Sabashnikova appears as the

white lily or pearl that emerges from the red rose of Lidia's fatal passion. In his personal diary Ivanov stressed that this relationship was conducted "in the rhythm of 3" (*Coll. Works* 2:778). Lidia must have suffered gravely from her husband's trumpeted infidelities, but her send-up of the events in her play *The Singing Ass* (*Pevuchii osel*, based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) displays quite a bit of irony and even common sense.³⁵ Needless to say, these triangular relationships only lent credence to the view that Ivanov was ruled by an "evil genius." Sabashnikova's otherwise compliant husband Maksimilian Voloshin wrote sternly that "being close to [Ivanov] is deadly for everyone he loves. He doesn't know how to treat people; he breaks them and distorts them."³⁶

The upshot of Ivanov's dalliances was a renewed wave of lyrical production. In January 1907 he published a short collection of lyrics entitled *Eros*, which consisted mainly of poems dedicated to Gorodetsky and Lidia. *Eros* ultimately places less emphasis on the erotic union between the two or three lovers than on the agency of the poet in conjuring up passion. In the poem "The Architect" ("Zodchii") Ivanov writes:

Я башню безумную зижду
 Высоко над мороком жизни,
 Где трем нам представится вновь,
 Что в древней светилось отчизне,
 Где нами прославится трижды
 В единственных гимнах любовь. (*Coll. Works* 2:380)

[I am building a crazy tower
 High above life's mirage,
 Where we three will once again see
 What shone on us in our ancient fatherland,
 Where our unique hymns
 Will thrice bless love.]

In "The Artist" ("Khudozhnik") Ivanov describes the creative process of the genius who fashions idols:

И человека он возжаждет,
 И будет плоть боготворить,
 И страстным голодом восстраждет . . .
 Но должен, алчущий, дарить,—

До истощенья расточая,
 До изможденья возлюбя,
 Себя в едином величая,
 В едином отразив себя. (*Coll. Works* 2:380)

[And he will thirst man,
 And will deify the flesh,
 And will suffer with passionate hunger . . .
 But in his hunger he must give:

Spending himself to exhaustion,
 Loving himself to emaciation,
 Glorifying himself in the one,
 Reflecting himself in the one.]

Ivanov's erotic mythology affirms the autarky of the creative personality within an ontologically unified cosmos, in which the poet's anarchic energy restores unity among people and things.

Ivanov's poetry was not merely a reflection of his mood and his mind but was itself a precondition for his self-comprehension; it interpreted his past and projected out a plan for future actions. For example, *Eros* formalized and inscribed as text an entire set of equivalencies—which had hitherto remained latent—between the 1905 revolution, his erotic experimentation, his poetry, and his growing intellectual mastery. Thus, when Lidia passed away unexpectedly on 17 October 1907, Ivanov immediately cast this trauma in terms of his poetic mythology. In some unfortunate sense Lidia's death was the logical outcome of a relationship that Ivanov had invariably depicted in terms of passion and sacrifice; it was, so to speak, the inevitable denouement of the mythic story Ivanov wove out of his life. Lidia could only become fully present in Ivanov's own world by completely surrendering her life to his texts.

It is difficult to explain the events of the following years unless one sees Ivanov as locked inside a world where the symbolic images of his poetry comprise the only effable reality.³⁷ Reading the section "Love and Death" from Ivanov's 1911–12 *Cor Ardens* (which included most of the poetry he wrote from 1905 to 1911), one cannot help but be impressed by the power of his love for his Diotima, as he called her after the personage in Plato's *Symposium*.³⁸ At the same time, the lack of a stable reality outside of this passion tended to make everything an allegory for the erotic life, which itself was conflated with the artistic process. Like Salvador Dali's monumental

canvases, Ivanov's poetic universe is a strikingly idiosyncratic vision that expands to address such cosmic mysteries as time and resurrection, yet at times it is liable to seem like someone else's bad dream.

Although Ivanov certainly "plotted" his life, I do not mean to suggest that he was always engaged in its premeditated construction. He was often so absorbed in the creative moment that it was only in retrospect that he could organize events into cogent narratives. Similarly, while I do not propose some single biographical myth about Ivanov, his life lent itself to being read backwards as an allegory that is open to interpretation through his texts. Ivanov *textualized* erotic loss and *allegorized* betrayal, detaching them from their immediate experience and elevating them to the status of myth in his creative universe. Thus, the act of interpretation for Ivanov always involved a certain dissimulation of the original event.

One remarkable testimony to Ivanov's intricate weaving of memory and text is his *Garland of Sonnets* (*Venok sonetov*). This rare form consists of fourteen sonnets, each of which takes as its first line the last line of the previous poem. These first lines combine to produce a fifteenth sonnet. Ivanov took as the cornerstone sonnet the poem "Love" from *Pilot Stars* (see the section "Eros") and developed each of its lines into a separate sonnet. The result is an almost Talmudic explication of the original poem, which is revealed as a complex prophecy of Lidia's life and death. Although *The Garland of Sonnets* may seem excessive, esoteric—even pedantic—it does succeed in illuminating the incredible expressivity of the original poem. The elaboration of this mystery into an entire narrative is a common pattern in Ivanov's poetry (as I will argue in chapters 1 and 2). The original erotic event, which Ivanov perceived in ritual terms, is mapped onto time as both a historical record and a plan of future action.

Following Lidia's death, Ivanov made a partial return to the academic world. In 1909 he established a "poetic academy" at the Tower, offering a course in versification that was attended by many of the top literary figures of the day.³⁹ Later this evolved into the Society of Lovers of the Artistic Word, which some found excessively academic.⁴⁰ After his Berlin dissertation was finally published in 1910, Ivanov was appointed to a professorship at the Raev Women's Courses. In 1912 he published lengthy essays on Goethe and Homer intended for a popular audience. In the same year he began his second monograph on Dionysus, this time concentrating on the prehistorical roots of the cult. This research eventually formed the basis of his second dissertation, which he defended in 1921 in Baku.⁴¹ At the same time Ivanov began work on translations of Sappho, Alcaeus, and Aeschylus.

Thus, following a period of languorous excess, Lidia's death provided Ivanov with a new focus for his creative work and restored him to the center of Russian cultural life, albeit on a somewhat different plane. Ivanov's majestic sovereignty was crowned by the publication of the monumental *Cor Ardens* in two volumes (1911–12). The romantic impulse of his early public career was gradually being replaced by an ideal of classical harmony, symbolized by Pushkin and Goethe. Ivanov's tangled erotic life conspired with his renewed interest in history to bring about his departure from Petersburg, first for a year's stay in his eternal home of Rome and then to his native Moscow, where he would remain for seven years of war and revolution.

The Tender Mystery

Ivanov's creative life after 1907 was dominated by the memory of his late wife. A sojourn in the Crimea in the summer of 1908 granted Ivanov a mystical revelation (mainly in Latin and Italian) that restored his spiritual communion with his departed wife.⁴² Ivanov also fell under the sway of Anna Mintslova, an overbearing Rasputin of a woman whose power over Ivanov stemmed from her ability to facilitate communication with his dearly departed Diotima.⁴³ Mintslova disappeared in 1910, but by then Ivanov had realized that Lidia lived on in her daughter, Vera. A memoir written several years after the fact by Vera corroborates Ivanov's claim (made mostly in his poetry) that Lidia had chosen her daughter to take her place as Ivanov's wife.⁴⁴ From today's vantage point it is difficult to rid oneself of the image of Ivanov as a manipulative stepfather taking advantage of a naïve young woman. Ivanov's view of the situation is expressed most succinctly in several poems addressed "To Her Daughter" ("Ee docheri"). It is notable that Vera would always remain for him precisely "her daughter," inseparable from her mother. In one poem Ivanov identifies Vera as Persephone, who links the world of the living to that of the dead. In addition to affirming the identity of mother and daughter, the lyric poem "Doubt" ("Somnenie") displays Ivanov's profound ambivalence with respect to this situation:

Поймет мой смутный страх,
 С надеждою делимый,—
 Когда в твоих чертах
 Мелькнет, неуловимый,
 Тот свет, что я зову,
 Тот образ, что ловлю я,—
 Мой страх, что наяву,

Как та, кого люблю я,
Истаешь ты,—что сплю я,
Пока тобой живу. (*Coll. Works* 3:520)

[I comprehend with vague fear
Mixed with hope:
When your features give
An elusive glimpse
Of the light I summon,
Of the image I seek;
With the fear that in waking
Like the one I love
You will melt; that I sleep
As long as I live in you.]

The almost impenetrable syntax masks an underlying reluctance to utter directly what the poem actually says, namely, that his love is not for the addressee but for another whom she resembles. Moreover, this likeness belongs only to the realm of dream and dissipates upon waking.

Events soon roused Ivanov from his moral slumber, as news of Vera's pregnancy caused Ivanov virtually to flee from Petersburg to Switzerland. It was a retreat reminiscent of Prospero's exile to his island, "to which the wise wizard retired away from social hatred and falsity with his dear daughter and the servile spirit of poetry, Ariel," as Ivanov put it many years later.⁴⁵ Far from the insidious rumors, reclining along the banks of Lake Geneva, Ivanov underwent a process of personal regeneration. Andrei Bely, who met up with Ivanov in Basel during this period, recalled: "He [. . .] was in a new life; there is no longer the 'Tower,' which had drawn into itself all of Petersburg, a city to which he would not return; he had returned to the places where ten years earlier he had lived a quiet life, where, together with Lidia Dmitrievna, a professor and not yet a poet, he had labored over books, resting on a bench near rippling Lake Geneva" (Bely 1990:327).

In July 1912 Vera bore Ivanov a son, Dimitri, in the south of France, and in the same year she repeated her mother's Dionysian wedding to Ivanov in the same Greek church in Livorno (Ivanova 1992:52). This cycle of rebirth was given poetic expression in the 1912 collection *The Tender Mystery* (*Nezhnaia taina*). By 1912 the image was firmly associated with Vera's assumption of her mother's role alongside Ivanov, and with the generation of new life out of his pain. Dimitri's birth not only represented "new life, torn from [Lidia's] death"

but also encouraged Ivanov's newfound conviction in the independent value of human life above and beyond its aesthetic expression.⁴⁶ As I demonstrate in part 2, this conviction informed Ivanov's mature aesthetic theory and helped him break out of the hermetic world of his poetic mythology.

Nevertheless, the sober tendencies in Ivanov's Moscow period could not redeem his brief marriage, which was infected with the doubt to which Ivanov confessed in his poem. Contemporaries often noted a strange void in Ivanov's new marriage and in Vera herself. Of course, the situation was far from optimal in any respect. Perhaps most difficult was the almost total dependence of their marriage on Ivanov's poetic myth, which from the very beginning cast a pall of fatality and even morbidity over their relationship. Following a long illness, Vera passed away on 8 August 1920 at the age of thirty. To an even greater degree than had been the case with Lidia, Ivanov's poetry seemed almost to prepare a textual tomb for Vera, especially in the two remarkable cycles *The Winter Sonnets* (*Zimnie sonety*) and *De Profundis Amavi*, both of which were composed in 1920.

The twelve *Winter Sonnets* relate to the rough winter of 1919–20, the utter nadir of War Communism. Separated from his family, Ivanov pleads with God to provide him with basic necessities: warmth, grain, fellowship, and the Easter bells. Ivanov's poetic diction becomes correspondingly clearer, graver, and more concrete. In *De Profundis Amavi* Ivanov confesses that only love has kept him alive in his "netherworld" (*Coll. Works* 3:574). The cycle breaks off in the middle of the ninth sonnet, which Ivanov addresses to God:

Из глубины Тебя любил я, Боже,
Сквозь бред земных пристрастий и страстей.
Меня томил Ты долго без вестей,
Но не был мне никто Тебя дороже.

Когда лобзал любимую, я ложе
С Тобой делил. Приветствуя гостей,
Тебя встречал. И чем Тебя святей
Я чтил, тем взор Твой в дух вперялся строже.

Так не ревнуй же! (*Coll. Works* 3:578)

[Out of the depths I loved you, God,
Through the delirium of earthly obsessions and passions.
You tormented me for a long time without news,
But no one was dearer to me than You.

When I kissed my beloved, I shared
 My bed with You. Welcoming my guests
 I welcomed You. And the more I venerated
 You, the more severely Your gaze pierced me.

So don't be jealous!]

Written with a clear presentiment of his third wife's impending death, the final sonnet remains as if abandoned under the force of events. However, it should also be noted how the pressure of real events once again leads Ivanov toward texts. Vera's death became wholly real for him only as a poetic crisis; her strange, short life took shape as the deformation of a sonnet.

It is remarkable that Ivanov left little lyrical remembrance of his final love, Olga Shor, a young devotee from a prominent Jewish family, who followed him into emigration in 1927. Leaving Russia, Ivanov made the highly symbolic gesture of entrusting Shor with the upkeep of his family's graves in Moscow.⁴⁷ Reunited with the poet in emigration, Shor became Ivanov's secretary, helpmate, and closest friend; following his death in 1949, she assumed the role of literary executor, editing his collected works and becoming his first biographer. Although we may never know the extent of their relations, Shor, whom Ivanov christened "Flamingo," was a fitting muse for his more sartorial *émigré* works. She seems to have been content to share Ivanov's personal and intellectual life without aspiring to a role in his poetry, which to the end of his days remained centered upon his cult of Lidia Dmitrievna and "her daughter."

LOSS OF CONVICTION

Ivanov's restless peregrinations and infidelities were matched by his leap-frogging over ideological boundaries and categories. While studying at the University of Berlin, Ivanov cultivated a Slavophile image.⁴⁸ In 1903–5 he sympathized with the revolutionary forces in Russia. In Petersburg in 1905 he surveyed the revolution from his "Tower" as the ideologue of the mystical anarchists. Under Mintslova's influence in 1908–10, Ivanov was absorbed with gaining an influence over the Rosicrucian movement. His 1912 sojourn in Rome coincided with his first significant flirtation with the universal ideal of Roman Catholicism. In its fluid mutability Ivanov's ideological position reveals a stable set of core values: a concern for a new collectivism; a belief that its advent could cause drastic social change while reuniting modernity

with tradition; and confidence that art had a leading role to play in instigating change and ensuring its consistency with tradition.

Ivanov's 1913 move to Moscow, the "Third Rome," neatly integrated his traditionalist and universalist tendencies. The global relevance of Russian spiritual history was confirmed by the outbreak of World War I in June 1914, when Ivanov declared the "universal task" of the Allies to be the restoration of a global Christian empire. Ivanov's patriotic position in 1913–18 by no means marked the end of his ideological flip-flops, but it did, in my view, represent perhaps the most natural development of Ivanov's core values, especially the idea of universality through tradition. It was, in other words, the ideological position that flowed most directly from his lyrical poetry. This was a double-edged sword for Ivanov. On the one hand, his ideology was strengthened by its poetic expression, but, on the other hand, his poetry became rather flatly ideological. The new force with which these ideas were formulated, the flurry of religious-philosophical activity accompanying the outbreak of war in 1914, and Ivanov's modest poetic output after 1912 (his next collection of lyrics was published posthumously in 1962) led to his being seen increasingly as a religious thinker.⁴⁹ Moreover, Ivanov was now linked less to the poetic tradition of symbolism than to the so-called neo-Slavophiles.

Sobornost'

Ivanov's vastly underestimated role in the history of the Russian imaginary centers on his extensive (if not profligate) use of the word *sobornost'*. The term is usually attributed to the Slavophile thinker Aleksei Khomiakov, but he seems only to have used its adjectival form *sobornyi*, which is the Slavonic equivalent of "catholic" in the Nicene creed.⁵⁰ The abstract noun *sobornost'*, translated as "catholicity" or "conciliarity," was used by some of Khomiakov's followers, but it was popularized by Ivanov in his essays of the early 1900s. Ivanov generally used the word to denote the choral principle of tragedy, which he viewed as the germ of a future society. Insofar as the word was laden with theological connotations, Ivanov's aesthetic utopia was generally viewed as Christian or neo-Christian in inspiration, which made it a major point of reference for those concerned with revitalizing the Orthodox ritual and community. For Ivanov only a voluntary unification of sovereign individuals could ground an authentically Orthodox community in the modern age.

Given Ivanov's manifold influence on numerous spheres of Russian thought, the publication in 1909 of his first collection of essays, *By the Stars: Essays and Aphorisms* (*Po zvezdam: stat'i i aforizmy*), was a major event in

Russian intellectual history, eliciting reviews from such prominent philosophers as Nikolai Berdiaev, Semyon Frank, and Fedor Stepun. Many young thinkers became Ivanov's acolytes, from "mystical individualists" like Modest Gofman to Orthodox reformists like Vladimir Ern. Ivanov's wildly aesthetic utopia held surprising currency among wide swaths of the intellectual elite. His gradual turn toward an increasingly Christian position around 1910 was therefore considered a notable event.

Since the Saint Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society had been reformed in 1906, Ivanov took an increasingly active part in its discussions. In 1909 he became the chairman of its Section for Christian Philosophy.⁵¹ In March 1910 he traveled to Moscow to deliver a lecture entitled "Beauty in Christianity" at the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society, which impressed the group of Moscow philosophers. At the end of the year he confirmed his membership in the leading group of religious philosophers with a speech on Vladimir Solovyov.⁵² All of these connections helped Ivanov to explicate his aesthetic utopia in terms of Russian history and to translate it increasingly into positive prescriptions for society.

Ivanov's halting attempts at ideological engagement are illustrated by the remarkable essays he wrote between 1910 and 1917. His shift toward a Slavophile orientation became especially marked after he settled in Moscow in 1913—for example, in his 1914 speech on Dostoevsky's novel *The Demons*. The essays dating from 1910–14 were collected and published as *Furrows and Boundaries: Aesthetic and Critical Essays (Borozdy i mezhi: Opyty esteticheskie i kriticheskie)*, a title that would seem to reflect a pious respect for historical limits and distinctions. The collection, ready by 1914, only appeared in 1916 in abbreviated form due to the privations of war. By this time, however, Ivanov's essayistic tone had already changed, as witnessed by his 1917 collection *Matters Native and Universal: Essays (1914–1916) (Rodnoe i vselenskoe: Stat'i [1914–1916])*. While some of Ivanov's works from his Moscow period display an increased sensitivity to historical issues, he often betrays a utopian streak, as if he were already living not in Moscow circa 1916 but in Moscow the Third Rome, the apocalyptic reincarnation of universal Christendom, a mystical confluence of empire and Orthodoxy. These essays more than justify the book's dedication "To the Eternal Memory of F. M. Dostoevsky." From the first essay "The Universal Task" ("Vselenskoe delo," 1914), reflecting Ivanov's patriotic response to the outbreak of World War I, to "The Image and Masks of Russia" ("Lik i lichiny Rossii," 1916), an extended discussion of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivanov's tone is increasingly prophetic. He evidently modeled himself upon the Dostoevsky of *The Writer's Diary*,

especially its issues dating from 1877, where Dostoevsky mixes fiction and memoir with extended commentary on the Russo-Turkish War. In one egregious example of his detachment from reality, Ivanov hailed the alliance between Russia and Britain uniting two European empires with connections to the spirituality of the East, in Britain's case thanks to its imperial holdings in South Asia. As the Bolshevik revolution loomed, at the last minute Ivanov made a Dostoevskian gesture by adding several essays and notes dated October 1917, in which his tone verges on the apocalyptic. In one such note to "The Images and Masks of Russia" Ivanov concluded that "Dostoevsky will eventually turn out to be right: Constantinople will 'sooner or later' belong to us" (*Coll. Works* 4:756–57). In sum, during the war Ivanov's theoretical myths gained ascendancy over his lyric muse.

Ivanov's ideological stance suggests the curious figure of a passive observer waiting for an invitation to become court philosopher, a situation described by Carl Schmitt as political romanticism. Schmitt identified romanticism as a form of occasionalism: it dwells on antitheses in the phenomenal realm (subject/object, man/nature) only as "occasions" for the manifestation of some third, absolute power (community, God), in which "the concrete antithesis and heterogeneity disappear" (1986:89). Since romantics see the activity of this "third" element in art, manifest conflicts become mere occasions for the experience or "mood" of the individual artist, for his personal "activity and productivity" (96). Schmitt concludes: "The assent of the romantic occasionalist weaves a web for itself that is not touched by the real external world, and thus it is not refuted either" (103). As a consequence, the romantic is excused from elucidating causes and effecting ends in reality; action is reduced to the subject's assent or rejection of the event (94).⁵³ Schmitt's "political romanticism" describes quite well the situation that resulted when Ivanov applied his ideas to historical reality, be it the Slavophilism that surfaced prior to 1905 and during the World War I, the mystical anarchism of his Petersburg years, his pro-Soviet stance in 1918–24, or the anti-Soviet religious humanism of the last two decades of his life. Each of the distinct versions of Ivanov's ideology is an attempt (made in good faith) to present his aesthetic position in terms of the reigning political atmosphere, effectively turning history into an instrument of creative self-affirmation.⁵⁴

The result of Ivanov's ideological wanderlust was political romanticism: instead of engaging *reality*, Ivanov ended up suspended among an array of mutually exclusive *potentialities*. Yet in this realm, as in the others I have discussed, loss bred memory in Ivanov's texts: each time Ivanov's latest ideological obsession suffered crushing defeat at the hands of History, he worshiped

at the fresh grave and composed for it a fitting epitaph which was written into the narrative of his life, one that could survive any permutation without losing the plot.

Ivanov's Russian Orthodox mythology is a case in point. It could not simply be expressed in his poetry; only its demise could be commemorated. Comparatively speaking, the Moscow years were poetically barren. Ivanov published his tragedy *The Sons of Prometheus* (*Syny Prometeia*) in 1915, but it had been written much earlier. Moreover, it was featured in the de facto organ of the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society, which implies that it was seen less as poetry than as philosophy. In 1916 the same journal was the venue for the third part of the "melopecia" *Man* (*Chelovek*, 1915–19; published in full in 1939). Even Ivanov's translations of Alcaeus and Sappho (published in 1914 and, in expanded form, in 1915) and Aeschylus (published in full only posthumously) supported Ivanov's Slavophile image insofar as their archaizing language and tone demonstrated Ivanov's belief that Orthodox Slavic culture was the heir to the Hellenic heritage.⁵⁵

Two major exceptions to this poetic drought are indicative of Ivanov's overall poetics. Soon after his move to Moscow, Ivanov befriended the composer Aleksandr Scriabin and had a particular influence on Scriabin's plan for the *Mysterium*, which would begin as a drama and end as the apocalypse. Following Scriabin's death on 14 April 1915, Ivanov played a central role in commemorating the composer. His works on Scriabin include a remarkable series of lyric *tombeaux*. In chapter 2 I argue that Ivanov's entire *Man* should properly be seen as a defense of Scriabin's unfinished *Mysterium*. Ivanov experienced a similarly strong poetic response to the death of his closest friend Vladimir Ern on 29 April 1917. The death of Ern, a staunch neo-Slavophile, foreshadowed the death of Ivanov's entire Slavophile mythology following the October revolution, an event that Ivanov could comprehend only by inscribing it into poetry as Russia's ultimate historical sacrifice.

Revolution

Although his name was closely linked with the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society, Ivanov attended its meetings for little more than three years. The beginning of the end of this association was the February Revolution, which Ivanov and most of the other members of the Moscow Religious-Philosophical movement welcomed quite enthusiastically. Ivanov, ensconced in a sanatorium in the southern resort town of Sochi, even entered the competition for a new national hymn with a poem entitled "The Choral Song

of New Russia” (“Khorovaia pesn’ novoi Rossii”; *Coll. Works* 4:60, 717), which demonstrates Ivanov’s fidelity to his earlier ideals of democratic nationalism founded upon ecstatic religious experience. In late 1917–early 1918, after the Bolshevik seizure of power, Ivanov allied himself with the spiritual opposition to the new government.

Ivanov’s vehement opposition to Bolshevism in the first months of the new regime found expression in a remarkable poetic cycle, *Songs of a Time of Troubles* (*Pesni smutnogo vremeni*, 1917–18).⁵⁶ In his post-revolutionary lyrics Ivanov willingly accepted some of the blame for fanning the revolutionary flames earlier on. In 1918 he dedicated to his former partner in mystical anarchism, the writer Georgy Chulkov, a stirring *nostra culpa*:

Да, сей костер мы поджигали,
И совесть правду говорит,
Хотя предчувствия не лгали,
Что сердце наше в нем сгорит.

Гори ж, истлей на самозданном
О сердце-Феникс очаге!
Свой суд приемли в нежеланном,
Тобою вызванном слуге!

Кто развязал Эолов мех
Бурь не кори, не фарисействуй!
Поет Трагедия: «все грех,
Что воля деет. Все за всех!»

А Воля действенная: «действуй!» (*Coll. Works* 4:81)

[Yes, we started this fire
And our conscience tells the truth,
Although our premonitions did not deceive
And our hearts will burn in it.

Burn, then, smoulder on the primal
Hearth, o Phoenix heart!
Accept your judgment in the servant
You summoned forth against your will.

Whoever untied the Aeolian skins
Should not reproach the storm or be a Pharisee!

Tragedy sings: “everything the will does
Is sin. Everyone for everyone!

And active Will answers: “act!”]

Despite the repentant tone and paraphrase of Dostoevsky’s dictum “everyone is guilty for everything and everyone,” the poem ends with a Promethean affirmation of the infallibility of the Will. This call to action presages Ivanov’s gradual realization that his poetry required an outlet for its ideological application, even in the inauspicious climate of War Communism.

Sensing his isolation but ever eager for broad influence, by mid-1918 Ivanov resigned himself to the revolution as a *fait accompli* and began to seek avenues of collaboration with the Bolshevik authorities. Whether as a foolhardy attempt to retool his skills for atheistic enlightenment or as a desperate plea to feed his family and receive medical help, in 1919–20 Ivanov held a number of important posts in the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (or “Education,” abbreviated as Narkompros) under Anatoly Lunacharsky, an old Bolshevik and onetime guest at Ivanov’s Tower. At the state publishing house Gosizdat Ivanov was responsible for reviewing and editing monographs and contributed articles to the new scholarly journal.⁵⁷ Ivanov was also a member of the Literary Department (LITO) of Narkompros, subordinate to Lunacharsky and his old friend and rival Briusov.⁵⁸ At the Theatrical Department (TEO) of Narkompros, Ivanov at first answered to Olga Kameneva, the wife of prominent Bolshevik Lev Kamenev and sister of Leon Trotsky, and then to Vsevolod Meyerhold.⁵⁹

Realizing that the new regime required new rituals, Ivanov played a particularly active role at TEO, reworking old essays and addressing them to the revolutionary masses. In addition, Ivanov led poetry workshops, gave lectures on the history of the theater and on Scriabin, read reports at conferences on the worker-peasant theater and adult education, and even participated in the day-to-day bureaucracy of running the Moscow theaters. His constant propaganda for the presentation of mass festivals, while superficially consistent with the ideas he had been developing for well-nigh two decades, was retooled for an atheistic-proletarian audience and directed toward concrete recommendations for government policy:

1. It is necessary to facilitate however possible the inculcation, distribution, and development of the chorus; to keep large choruses at the expense of

the municipality and to patronize the activity of choral societies; *for choruses to perform on city squares on holidays; [. . .] in a word, to create out of the chorus a vital and artistically effective organ for the enthusiastic expression of popular thought and popular will.*

2. It is necessary to strive to adapt the popular celebrations to the forms of rite, lending it the character of cogent lyrical-dramatic unity that develops its main idea in the harmonious continuity of the whole. [. . .]
3. In the summer it is necessary to perform selected works from the existing theatrical repertory [. . .] on large stages and round arenas set up under the open sky [. . .] which would serve as a true sign that they are inwardly consistent with the element of grand, universal art, insofar as everything private, individual, isolated, sick, and vulgar would fall away by itself, yielding its place to the depiction of heroic actions, national movements, and, finally, to the ideal element in the symbolic images of myth, fairy tale, and legend.

Such an initiative could give rise to original forms of spiritual collectivism.⁶⁰

Giving Ivanov the benefit of the doubt, one can regard these efforts as quixotic attempts to redirect the “nonreligious” revolution into a potentially religious channel. Even so, they serve as clear proof of Ivanov’s political romanticism in the sense defined by Schmitt: first the war and then the two revolutions of 1917 become mere instruments of Ivanov’s creative self-expression. The revolutionary authorities showed themselves surprisingly receptive to Ivanov’s input, with the quoted passage incorporated almost word for word into the resolution adopted by the Conference on Adult Education held by Narkompros.⁶¹ Thus, some of the faux-religious pageantry typical of 1920s Soviet culture and transferred into Stalinist monumentalism can be traced back to Ivanov, who once again stood at the origin of new social rituals.

To be sure, Ivanov can be given the benefit of the doubt for much more weighty reasons. The years 1918–20 were marked by famine and hardship, which were exacerbated in Ivanov’s case by his wife’s illness. This situation was in the background of Ivanov’s *Winter Sonnets*, perhaps the pinnacle of Ivanov’s lyric achievement. Memoir accounts describe Ivanov receiving a literary prize consisting of two logs of wood or sharing his ration of tobacco with Marina Tsvetaeva, who was always worse off than everyone else.⁶² Not only did Ivanov’s official positions grant him a steady income and various privileges, but the connections he made and solidified in these years opened up the possibility of leaving Russia. Ivanov’s first opportunity to emigrate

arose in March 1920, when he applied to Narkompros for financial assistance and permission to travel abroad.⁶³ That summer, while Vera and the children remained at a sanatorium just outside Moscow, Ivanov resided at a rest home with the cultural historian Mikhail Gershenzon, with whom he exchanged a remarkable series of letters that were subsequently collected and published in 1921 as *The Correspondence from Two Corners* (*Perepiska iz dvukh uglov*). Enjoying the sponsorship of Lunacharsky himself, who sympathized with Vera's plight, Ivanov was granted permission to leave the country and was even assigned additional help for moving his massive library. However, the Ivanovs' visa fell through at the last minute.⁶⁴ On 8 August Vera succumbed to her illness, which was complicated by tuberculosis. Ivanov's sense of despair at Vera's illness found dramatic expression in the unfinished sonnet cycle *De Profundis Amavi*. As early as 12 August Lunacharsky provided Ivanov the mission—most likely fictitious—to help establish the Kuban State University, and granted Ivanov's family permission to enter a sanatorium in Kislovodsk in the interim. After burying Vera and making last-minute arrangements concerning the bulk of his library and belongings, Ivanov and his two children left Moscow for the northern Caucasus region on 28 August 1920.⁶⁵

Apart from a lecture or two at the local office of Narkompros, Ivanov took no evident steps toward fulfilling the official goal of his trip. Throughout September and October Kislovodsk was under the continuous threat of occupation by the White Army, foiling Ivanov's attempts to win a more permanent sinecure in southern climes.⁶⁶ The family finally made it to Baku, and on 19 November 1920 Ivanov was named professor of classical philology at the new Azerbaijan State University.⁶⁷ He quickly reworked his study of the roots of the Dionysus cult for his dissertation, which he defended in 1921 and published in expanded form in 1923. For four years Ivanov taught a wide range of classes, from ancient literature to Dostoevsky and the Italian language, establishing close relations with several students who later became prominent Soviet philologists and did much to preserve the memory of Ivanov in the Soviet Union. From their notes and memoirs, as well as from other sources, it would appear that these four years were not the happiest and certainly not the most productive, yielding a small number of poems (mostly dedicated to students) and an uncharacteristic comic libretto entitled "Is Love a Mirage?" ("Liubov' mirazh?"), which satirized the international political situation.⁶⁸

Ivanov declined invitations to return to Moscow, citing his satisfaction with the southern climate and with the work being done at the fledgling

university.⁶⁹ However, Baku was merely a surrogate for Italy, and Ivanov continued to seek opportunities to leave the country in some official capacity.⁷⁰ When Narkompros invited him to return to Moscow in May 1924 for the celebration of Pushkin's 125th birthday, Ivanov used this as an excuse to obtain the support of his former bosses Kameneva and Lunacharsky for a renewal of his government-sponsored trip abroad. Compared to four years earlier, it was now significantly more difficult to leave Soviet Russia, but the death of Lenin and temporary ascent of Lev Kamenev may have fostered Ivanov's hopes.⁷¹ When Ivanov finally received permission to leave in June, he was wearing several hats: university professor on sabbatical; distinguished man of letters with ambitious literary projects; agent of Narkompros; and Soviet representative at the Venice Biennale. Although he made some gestures toward fulfilling each of these roles, at the end of the day the poet Ivanov most accurately described his impending trip with the words: "I am going to Rome to die."⁷²

LOSS OF FAITH

Emigration as Conversion

Ivanov was to spend the last twenty-five years of his life in Italy, pursuing his literary calling in a new setting. Despite initial difficulties—exacerbated by the poor health of his son, Dimitri, and a lack of steady income—by the early 1930s Ivanov had become a minor star in the European intellectual firmament. Eloquent conversant in all the major European languages, with erudition of rare breadth and depth, Ivanov allied himself with representatives of the religious and cultural revival that occurred in many countries between the wars, including Charles du Bos, Martin Buber, Ernst-Robert Curtius, Gabriel Marcel, and Jacques Maritain. Ivanov's conversion to Catholicism in 1926 and isolation from the main currents of émigré and Soviet life contributed to an image of near-sanctity, which Ivanov promoted by softening some of the more doctrinally objectionable aspects of his thought and adopting scholastic terminology. The late reawakening of Ivanov's poetic muse in 1944 serves as an eloquent and decisive reminder that, in the final analysis, he remained, first and foremost, a lyrical poet held captive by eternity and struggling to define a place in history.

Ivanov's first three years in emigration show him struggling to define his allegiances and to comprehend his new situation. He undertook a series of joint projects with Soviet literary and dramatic organizations, including Maxim Gorky's journal *Colloquium* (*Beseda*) and his old friend Meyerhold's

production of Gogol's play *The Inspector General* (*Revizor*). Ivanov also redoubled his efforts to publish his translations of Aeschylus (uncompleted) and Dante's *Purgatorio* (hardly begun). By 1927 these efforts had largely petered out, and after this date Ivanov published only one article on Pushkin (dated 1925) and a translation of Goethe's "Prometheus" in the Soviet Union.⁷³

Ivanov enjoyed two short bursts of poetic creativity in 1924 and 1926–27. *The Roman Sonnets* (*Rimskie sonety*), written soon after Ivanov's arrival, are often considered the peak of Ivanov's poetic mastery. Expressing his joy at reaching the eternal city, they compare his plight to that of Aeneas, who escaped burning Troy to become the founder of Rome. The implication is that, fleeing Russia, Ivanov bears its Penates with him and will reestablish his homeland at its eternal source in Rome. By contrast, the second series of poems reveals a profound inner crisis rooted in the collapse of Ivanov's utopian hopes. "Palinodia," in particular, has often been interpreted as a renunciation of Dionysus, the god who inspired Ivanov's pre-emigration poetry and thought.⁷⁴

Палинодия

И твой гиметский мед ужель меня пресытил?
 Из рощи миртовой кто твой кумир похитил?
 Иль в вещем ужасе я сам его разбил?
 Ужели я тебя, Эллада, разлюбил?
 Но, духом обнищав, твоей не знал я ласки,
 И жутки стали мне души недвижимой маски,
 И тел надменных свет, и дум Эвклидов строй.
 Когда ж, подземных флейт разымчивой игрой
 В урочный час ожив, личины полой очи
 Мятежною тоской неукротимой Ночи,
 Как встарь, исполнились—я слышал с неба зов:
 «Покинь, служитель, храм украшенный бесов».
 И я бежал, и ем в предгорьях Фиваиды
 Молчанья дикий мед и жесткие акриды. (Coll. Works 3:553)

[Palinodia

Has your Hymetian honey really sated me?
 Who stole your idol from the myrtle grove?
 Or did I smash it myself in vatic horror?
 Could it really be that I have stopped loving you, Hellas?
 But in my spiritual poverty I no longer knew your caresses,

And the masks of your inert soul filled me with terror,
 Like the light of haughty bodies and the harmony of Euclidean thoughts.
 But when, arising at the proper time
 With the intoxicating play of flutes, the eyes of a hollow mask
 Were filled, as of old, with the rebellious longing
 Of indomitable Night—I heard a call from heaven:
 “Abandon, o priest, the temple decorated by demons.”
 And I fled, and now I eat in the foothills of Thebaid
 The wild honey and rough locusts of silence.]

Although “Palinodia” has usually been read as a “renunciation of Dionysus,” in fact the hermit-poet seems to have retreated to the desert in anticipation of a new visitation by the god.⁷⁵

And the god came. Just as he discovered Dionysus during his first trip to Rome in 1895, now, thirty years later, Rome brought him back to his god in a new guise. On 17 March 1926 Ivanov solemnly joined the Roman Catholic Church, pronouncing a formula of reunification composed by Vladimir Solovyov in addition to the standard disavowal of Eastern Orthodoxy.⁷⁶ In this, Ivanov’s last grand church-creating ritual, he technically became an Eastern-Rite Catholic, like the Ukrainian Uniates and Syrian Marionites, who preserve the Orthodox forms of worship while admitting Roman dogmas, including papal infallibility. The extent to which this represents a natural outgrowth of Ivanov’s lifelong interest in Catholicism and Catholic culture is open to dispute since it had been precisely an abstract interest, spurred by his reading of Solovyov (see the section “Being Abroad”), more than a matter of personal belief. In 1912 the writer Konstantin Siunnerberg introduced Ivanov to Leonid Fedorov, the secret papal exarch to Russia. Fedorov recalled listening to lectures by Andrei Bely and Viacheslav Ivanov: “[T]he first was quite interesting, the second was a typical example of the chaos reigning in the minds of our intelligentsia. [. . .] Viacheslav Ivanov turned out to be a supporter of the Catholic Church and took great interest in the Byzantine Rite. However, his sympathies toward Rome and those of many like him are based on motives of an aesthetic and mystical character, of quite vague and extremely whimsical fantasies.”⁷⁷

During his stay in Rome in 1912–13, Ivanov met often with Aurelio Palmieri, the Italian scholar of Orthodoxy, and defended Catholicism in discussions with Vladimir Ern (Ivanova 1992:51–52). By 1924 Palmieri had fallen into disfavor as a “modernist,” but such examples of papal repression did not deter Ivanov. He was not joining the Roman Catholic Church circa 1926

but rather the church of the Apostle Peter and Leo the Great, the *ecclesia militans*, which combined doctrinal clarity with institutional strength. One sometimes gets the impression that it was not just Ivanov who was reunifying Eastern Orthodoxy and the Roman Catholic Church but that the entire Russian nation was returning to Rome in his person. This may have been hubristic, but it seems to have been sincere. In a fascinating series of letters to his children, Ivanov portrayed his conversion as a profoundly inward and personal decision to make his spiritual allegiances clear and, most important, to act upon them without, however, obliging anyone else to follow suit. (Both children nevertheless converted to Roman Catholicism the following year.)⁷⁸

Ivanov's conversion slammed shut the door back home. Losing literary contacts with home, unable physically to return to renew them, and bereft of lyrical inspiration, Ivanov felt that "David" had abandoned his "Saul." He was ready to turn his "desert" into a "monastery," as he wrote to the poet Vladislav Khodasevich.⁷⁹ Yet Ivanov was no ascetic. The critic Pavel Muratov, who visited Ivanov in 1926, declared: "Of all people he should be the least isolated. Viacheslav Ivanov is a man of a circle, of an audience, of concord and commonwealth. He needs followers and students."⁸⁰ Financially Ivanov's situation improved in October 1926 when he secured a teaching position at the Collegio Borromeo of the University of Pavia, whose Renaissance-era campus perfectly suited Ivanov.⁸¹ Already in early 1927 Ivanov was delivering lectures on Russian thought and hosting his old friend Faddei Zelinsky (Thaddeus Zielinski).⁸² Although outwardly Ivanov seemed to have secured a prestigious position, the reality was less magnificent, as can be gleaned from Soviet sculptor Boris Ternovets's letter home from Pavia in April 1927: "In Pavia we sought out Viacheslav Ivanov. [. . .] His lack of means forced him to take the position of teacher of foreign languages in the local Collegio; moreover, his post is not so much that of professor as that of 'tutor.' His situation is unenviable, to be frank, but it is quite acceptable if one considers his circumstances—the impossibility of steady earnings in Italy, etc."⁸³ Ivanov was unable to depend on earnings not only because he was still relatively unknown as a poet and intellectual but also because he and his family retained their Soviet citizenship until 1935.⁸⁴ One reason for doing so was the continuing prospect of receiving stipends and even a pension from the Soviet state; as late as 1929 Gorky and Olga Kameneva wrote to Lunacharsky in support of Ivanov's request for a state pension, noting Ivanov's unique status as a "red professor" in Fascist Italy.⁸⁵

Hardly a “red professor,” Ivanov was slowly gaining recognition as a religious humanist with something unique to contribute to the restoration of cultural values in Europe. The main factor behind this was the publicity accorded *The Correspondence from Two Corners*, which was translated into German, French, and Italian. The German translation appeared in Martin Buber’s journal *Die Kreatur*, leading not only to a correspondence with Buber and other German intellectuals but also to a string of articles in the German-language journals *Hochland* and *Corona*. The international renown resulting from the German translation led Ivanov to compose a continuation of the work in 1930 in the form of a “Letter to Charles Du Bos,” where he provided a public explanation (in French, thus intended primarily for a non-Russian audience) of his conversion to Catholicism as a natural consequence of his desire to take a stand “for God” and to breathe “with both lungs” (i.e., as Orthodox and Catholic, Eastern and Western). In 1932 Ivanov produced a second essay on humanism in the form of a letter to Alessandro Pellegrini.⁸⁶ In 1931 Ivanov’s status was buttressed by a public dispute with Benedetto Croce, the leading Italian intellectual in the interwar period, who traveled down from Milan with a large entourage especially for the occasion.⁸⁷ Thus, Ivanov’s post-emigration crisis resolved into a whole-hearted affirmation of humanism understood as a kind of Christian classicism. In articles in this final period Ivanov’s ecstatic and even prophetic tone yielded to that of a sage elder sharing the lessons of experience. Ivanov subsequently contributed articles to the *Enciclopedia italiana* on “Symbolism” and “Realism” and wrote several introductions to Italian translations of Russian literature. By 1931 Ivanov could boast that “my shares on the literary market have risen and my name is becoming known in Italy.”⁸⁸

Despite his renown, Ivanov’s life in emigration was relatively uneventful. In 1936, upon reaching the age of seventy, Ivanov was obliged to retire from his position at Pavia. Returning to Rome, he occasionally taught at the Oriental Papal Institute, for which he also prepared the annotated editions of the Psalter and most of the New Testament, as well as several prayers.⁸⁹ (Interestingly, Ivanov’s commentaries to the Russian scripture have become his most widely disseminated work thanks to Vatican activism in Russia.)⁹⁰ Ivanov’s return to Rome enabled him to establish closer relations with certain émigrés who traveled there before and after the war, such as Dmitry Merezhkovsky and Zinaida Gippius, Nikolai Otsup, and Boris Zaitsev.⁹¹ The year 1936 also saw Ivanov’s literary debut in the émigré journal *Contemporary Annals* (*Sovremennye zapiski*), and in 1939 he published the melopeia

Man.⁹² Ivanov's new lyrics reached into Russia. Evgeniia Gertsyk found in them confirmation of her long-cherished hope that Ivanov would achieve Goethean clarity and wisdom in old age (Gertsyk 1996: 330; cf. 134). This poetic wisdom was still accompanied by a fundamental alienation from the world of people and events. Ivanov was now writing for posterity.

World War II brought a fresh period of deprivation in its wake, cutting Ivanov off from both new and old friends, yet it also roused his dormant muse to an unprecedented spurt of activity. In the course of 1944 Ivanov kept a poetic diary, resulting in over eighty poems throughout the year. This final work, which should be read as a chronicle that interweaves various levels of temporality, represents a final reconciliation between Ivanov's poetic vision and the historical reality in which he lived. No longer viewing objective reality as a mere occasion for self-expression, in his waning years Ivanov initiated a new search for self-understanding by correlating his own life with the past and present. If the unfinished *Tale of Svetomir-Tsarevich* was the final testament of Ivanov the utopian dreamer, then *The Roman Diary of 1944* was fated to become the fullest expression of a new, realist hypostasis of Ivanov the poet.

The postwar years were full of new acquaintances and new publications. Ivanov's apartment became a port of call for such varied guests as Thornton Wilder and Jacques Maritain. *The Correspondence from Two Corners* was republished in several German editions and appeared in English and Flemish for the first time. Through the intercession of C. M. Bowra and Isaiah Berlin, whom he met in 1946, and of the Oxford don Sergei Konovalov, Ivanov began the process that would eventually lead to the posthumous publication of an English translation of his book on Dostoevsky (*Freedom and the Tragic Life*, with a foreword by Bowra)⁹³ in 1952 and his final book of poetry *The Evening Light (Svet vechernii)* in 1962. These last few years confirmed Ivanov's international status as a leading European intellectual, although active knowledge of his work was initially limited to a handful of cognoscenti before broader interest picked up again in the early 1980s.

Viacheslav Ivanov died on 16 July 1949 following a long illness. His life and works in emigration crowned a long, multifaceted, and distinguished career, confirming that Ivanov would always remain a poet anchored in the past but oriented toward the future, solidly joined to literary tradition but with aspirations for social relevance. The hoary simplicity of his latter years did not completely mask the enigmas that remained in his heart and mind. To the very end Ivanov inhabited an enchanted isle, far from the madding crowd but with a curious hold over those who wandered within its orbit.

Writing Life

Ivanov typically regarded his final sojourn in Italy from 1924 to 1949 less as a period in his life than as an epoch in world cultural history. His first residence upon arrival was a modest furnished apartment at 172 via Quattro Fontane, yet even this served as a pretext for celebration in his *Roman Sonnets*.

Бернини— снова наш,— твоей игрой
 Я веселюсь, от Четырех Фонтанов
 Бредя на Пинччо памятной горой,
 Где в келью Гоголя входил Иванов,
 Где Пиранези огненной иглой
 Пел Рима грусть и зодчество Титанов. (*Coll. Works* 3:580)

[Bernini, ours once more, I enjoy
 Your play, wandering from the Four Fountains
 Up to Pincio on that memorable hill
 Where Ivanov visited Gogol's cell
 And where Piranesi, with his fiery needle,
 Sang the sadness and Titanic architecture of Rome.]

Viacheslav Ivanov identifies himself with the artist Aleksandr Ivanov, whose monumental canvas *The Appearance of Christ to the People* (1837–58) was, in tandem with Gogol's epic poem *Dead Souls*, created far from Russia, from the standpoint of eternity, as a promise of Russia's return to universal history. In turn, this promise is tied to Bernini's baroque fountains, which celebrate Rome's kinship to the Dionysian element of water, and Piranesi's vision of Rome, which Ivanov ties to the Promethean impulse to erase boundaries. If Rome is the conduit for the water of universal baptism, then Ivanov himself is the prophetic forerunner of a universal Russia.

The baroque identity that Ivanov cultivated in emigration was confirmed by his subsequent addresses: the Collegio Borromeo in Pavia (named after the Counter-Reformation churchman Saint Carlo Borromeo), where Ivanov taught for ten years; Monte Tarpeo, overlooking the "naked relics" of the Forum; and via Leon Battista Alberti on the Aventine Hill. Taken together, the seemingly fortuitous nature of such details demonstrates how comfortable Ivanov felt amid historical signifiers. He was sensitive to the pulse of history and viewed his own actions as meaningful in its context, even if he despaired of achieving direct historical action, or indeed of finding a stable

historical identity. Within this mythology of origins there lies revealed a constant kernel of Ivanov's creative persona: transcendence of place, or being *abroad* as an existential condition. Ivanov celebrated his outsider status in a 1928 poem entitled "Earth" ("Zemlia"), claiming that it was characteristic of the modernist muse:

Повсюду гость, и чуженин,
И с Музой века безземлен,
Скворешниц вольных гражданин,
Беспочвенно я запределен. (*Coll. Works* 3:508)⁹⁴

[Everywhere a guest and alien,
Landless with the Muse of the age,
A citizen of free starling nests,
I am groundless and therefore transcendent.]

Indeed, the condition of exile (understood as transcendence) may be a trait typical of lyric poets of any age, yet Ivanov was always careful to allegorize the symbols with which he surrounded himself, weaving a meaningful narrative out of the fortuitous details of his life and work.

Ivanov never merely *resided* in a place; rather, places inhabited Ivanov's texts, where for the first time they achieved full existence for him. His shifts between European capitals indicated the adoption of various eschatologies, whether the revolutionary anarchism of Petersburg, the messianism of Moscow–Third Rome, Bolshevik Prometheanism, or Catholic ecclesiology. Correspondingly, his departure from each city indicated disillusion in its claims to be *the* city. Ivanov's move to Rome in 1924 provided a logical conclusion to his wanderings, especially when considered together with his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1926. However, it was only in texts like the *Roman Sonnets* that Rome really became home for Ivanov, for it was only here that it entered into his creative universe and became part of his textual memory. While Ivanov never felt attached to a particular domicile, he was sharply attuned to the meaning each place had accrued in his work as the site of creative events.

The restless homelessness of Ivanov's life is a fitting symbol for his age as well as for his own endeavor, which, radically open to the absolute, often seemed sealed off from life in a world of detached meaning apart from historical events and agency. His attempts to claim citizenship in such abstractions as "the Earth" or "Memory" highlight the alienation of the modern lyric

poet from history: he may change our rituals, but he hardly ever participates in them. Ivanov met this challenge head-on by translating his lyric perception and will into narrative and theoretical discourse that facilitates historical understanding, and by conceptualizing the process of translation in a hermeneutic theory. Acknowledging the primacy of the text in modernist culture, Ivanov found his home not as lover, denizen, or citizen but rather as the author of texts that, despite their author's detachment from the life of his age, became full-blooded participants in the negotiation of history and the construction of new meanings. Ivanov's lyric performances always presupposed his agency as cultural historian and allegorical mythmaker, while his attempts to transcend life in poetry returned him to the historicity of the very act of writing, which is always an act of commemoration and an affirmation of tradition. This turn toward life in Ivanov's texts, which reaches its apogee in Ivanov's hermeneutic philosophy and in his final poetic collection, *The Roman Diary of 1944*, is the main theme of this book.

PART 1



PROSPERO AND ARIEL

Categories of Discourse

Verföhrend fast und süß:
Ihn hinzulassen—, um dann, nicht mehr zaubernd,
ins Schicksal eingelassen wie die andern,
zu wissen, daß sich seine leichte Freundschaft,
jetzt ohne Spannung, nirgends mehr verpflichtet,
ein Überschuß zu dieses Atmens Raum,
gedankenlos im Element beschäftigt.

[How sweet, how tempting
to let him go—to give up all your magic,
submit yourself to destiny like the others
and know that his light friendship, without strain now,
with no more obligations, anywhere,
an intensifying of the space you breathe,
is working in the element, thoughtlessly.]

—Rainer Maria Rilke, “Der Geist Ariel” (translated by Stephen Mitchell)

[T]his is the first time indeed that you have met the only subject
that you have, who is not a dream amenable to magic but the all too
solid flesh you must acknowledge as your own.

—Caliban in W. H. Auden’s *The Sea and the Mirror*

INTRODUCTION

Viacheslav Ivanov’s life was shaped above all else by his commitment to his poetic muse and by his reliance on lyric perception instead of rational or ethical sources of knowledge. His works bear clear traces of the tension this

caused, not only between his creative persona and his private person but also between different aspects of his creative endeavor—as poet and thinker, as modernist and antimodernist, as Ariel and Prospero. In part 1 I investigate this tension in terms of Ivanov’s two basic *modes of discourse*, which I define as *lyric* and *epic*. For Ivanov lyric discourse exercised intervention in religious and social ritual. However, the lyric mode failed to provide a sufficiently stable foundation for a poet’s influence on social and intellectual life. Ivanov’s ideological project required that his lyric universe also be grounded in an “epic” discourse that would relate his experiences to existing systems of meaning, such as history, metaphysics, or even his own biography.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide overviews of Ivanov’s lyric and epic output. In my readings of selected lyrics from Ivanov’s major periods, I focus on their ritual purpose and reliance upon mimetic *symbols* as primary means of signification. At the same time, Ivanov’s early lyrics reveal a tendency toward allegory, which establishes connections with extraliterary reality but also obscures the lyrics’ emotional immediacy. I argue that, over time, Ivanov achieved a clearer distinction between the symbolic discourse of his lyric mode and the allegorical discourse of his narrative or epic mode. In chapter 2 I demonstrate how Ivanov exercised his allegorical tendency in a series of remarkable narrative works, which provide myths justifying his lyric intervention in ritual. In chapter 3 I analyze Ivanov’s understanding of genre and place it in its historical context, concluding that Ivanov developed an original theory of discourse that deserves to be placed alongside those of the Bakhtin circle. As I demonstrate in part 2, the move toward distinct narrative forms was matched in Ivanov’s theoretical works by a shift in emphasis from the ecstatic experience of creative individuals to its historical transmission in narrative myth.

Ivanov’s predicament can be compared to that of Shakespeare’s Prospero, who is a recurring figure in Ivanov’s writings. In order to regain his dominion in human society Prospero must relinquish his supernatural magic by granting Ariel his freedom. Having emancipated his thought from the charms of lyric discourse and released his lyrics from their ideological burden, in his late poetry Ivanov echoed Prospero’s words at the end of *The Tempest*:

Now my charms are all o’erthrown,
And what strength I have’s mine own (Epilogue, 1–2).

Lyric, Ritual, Symbol

RITUAL IN IVANOV'S EARLY POETRY

In this chapter I introduce Ivanov's lyric poetry and demonstrate how it achieves its intervention in ritual. While many of the concepts I explore later are already present here, it is important to begin with Ivanov's lyrics insofar as they served as the origin of his narrative and theoretical constructs. I demonstrate that Ivanov's lyric discourse is basically imitative of ritual and that it relies most heavily on the mimetic representation that he defined as the symbol. However, Ivanov's lyrics also included richly allegorical denotations that developed the mimetic symbol into elaborate myths and ideas and drew his lyric poems toward narrative genres. I argue that, over time, Ivanov's lyrics gradually moved to a purer form of lyric discourse that left allegorical contextualization to the reader.

Symbol and Allegory in Pilot Stars

Of all of the archaic Slavonic words that Ivanov resurrected in his debut book of poetry, *Pilot Stars* (1902), none is more prominent than *trizna*, which means a funeral repast. In fact, the collection at times gives the impression of one magnificent funeral celebration, beginning with the dedication ("To the memory of my mother") and continuing through the separate dedications to his recently deceased mentor Vladimir Solovyov. Nothing is more personal and more grievous than the death of a loved one. And yet for Ivanov nothing could be more universal and more *productive* than its commemoration.

The funeral repast marks a passage from this world into the transcendent realm and thereby denotes a boundary where pure meaning comes to be. For Ivanov any funeral imitates the victim's death and rebirth; it is, by

extension, a celebration of the suffering god, whose resurrection is the promise of the worshipers' own regeneration. In the poem "Dionysus's Funeral Repast" ("Trizna Dionisa") Ivanov depicts modern worshipers of the ancient god who gather at the ruins of an amphitheater and replicate a symbolic burial of Dionysus in a coffin of cypress, the symbol of resurrection. Instead of rebirth, however, they achieve only the death of the god.

Дул ветер; осыпались розы;
Склонялся скорбный кипарис. . .
Обнажены, роптали лозы:
«Почил великий Дионис!»

И с тризны мертвенно-вакхальной
Мы шли, туманны и грустны;
И был далек земле печальной
Возврат языческой весны. (*Coll. Works* 1:572)

[The wind blew; the rose petals fell;
The grieving cypress bowed . . .
Naked, the grape vines complained:
"Great Dionysus is deceased!"

And from the moribund-Bacchic funeral repast
We walked, sad and not comprehending;
The sad earth was distant
From a return of pagan spring.]

This poem captures both Ivanov's enthusiasm for ritual and his disillusionment with the state of ritual in modernity. However, his program here is clear. The mood of the disappointed revelers echoes that of Christ's disciples in Luke 24:13–35: their god has died and has even disappeared from the tomb, as they haplessly make their way to Emmaus. Of course, in the gospel story the disciples recognize their companion as Christ himself, and they go forth proclaiming, "The Lord is risen indeed." Ivanov suggests that in order to achieve a new recognition of the god, modernity requires a new immersion in the ritual of commemoration.

This was the implication of Ivanov's 1906 poem "The Road to Emmaus" ("Put' v Emmaus"). The disciples face the dizzying abyss of God's death on the cross: "brandishing negation, and swinging the gloom, there arises *Nothing*" (*Coll. Works* 2:264). However, a stranger approaches and speaks to them

of “the sacrificial, dead God. . . . And our hearts breathe and burn . . .” (264). Ivanov quoted these lines in his 1907 essay “On the Joyful Craft and the Joy of the Spirit” in support of his hope for cultural renewal: “We place our hopes on the elemental, creative strength of the nation’s barbarian soul, and we beg the forces that preserve us only to preserve the imprint of the eternal on temporal and human things,—on the past, which may be stained with blood, but which is dear to memory and holy, like the tombs of forgotten ancestors.”¹

However, the fulfillment of these hopes and expectations is always deferred into the future; in a sense, even Christian revelation always remained in the future for Ivanov. In “Dionysus’s Funeral Repast” he does *not* cite the tale of Emmaus but purposefully desires a “return of pagan spring.” Ivanov’s silence on Christianity here and elsewhere is crucial; he writes on Dionysus instead of Christ because, in his conception, the Dionysian celebration was not only a religious event but also a literary text: tragedy. Dionysus and Dionysian tragedy presented modern poetry with a path back to transcendent reality through verbal form, without making any purely religious claims in its content. Lyric poetry, like ancient tragedy, is not ritual, but its cathartic power is able to renew the reader’s perception of ritual and to reopen, as it were, the eyes of faith.

The emphasis on the cathartic nature of lyric poetry presupposed that it would bypass the intellect and affect readers’ souls in a direct fashion. However, Ivanov’s lyrics are often replete with multiple layers of allegory that address our mind more than our soul. The poem simulates ritual, but insofar as the poet remains detached from the experience, the poem might seem to *dissimulate* the ritual. Ivanov was often criticized for conflating art and religion. However, he apparently felt that art was within its rights addressing ritual as long as it left open the doctrinal conclusions.²

An example of this tension is found in Ivanov’s poem “Dust” (“Perst”), which is both a heartfelt lyrical confession and a ready-made summary of Ivanov’s cosmology.

Персть

Воистину всякий пред всеми за всех и за все виноват.

—Достоевский

День белоогненный палил;
 Не молк цикады скрежет знойный;
 И кипарисов облак стройный
 Витал над мрамором могил.

Я пал, сражен души недугом. . .
 Но к праху прах был щедр и добр:
 Пчела вилась над жарким лугом,
 И сох, благоухая, чобр. . .
 Укор уж сердца не терзал:
 Мой умер грех с моей гордыней,—
 И, вновь родним с родной святыней,
 Я Землю, Землю лобызал!
 Она ждала, она прощала—
 И сладок кроткий был залог;
 И все, что дух сдержать не мог,
 Она смиренно обещала. (*Coll. Works* 1:519)

[*Dust*

In truth everyone is guilty before everyone, for everyone, and for everything.

—Dostoevsky

The white-hot day flamed on;
 The cicada scraped sultrily without ceasing;
 The sumptuous cloud of cypresses
 Floated over the marble tombs.
 I fell, smitten by an illness of the soul . . .
 But the dust was generous and kind to my dust:
 A bee hovered over the hot meadow,
 And the savory dried fragrantly.
 My heart was not tormented by any reproach:
 My sin died together with my pride;
 And once again kin to my kindred treasure,
 I kissed the Earth, the Earth!
 It waited, it forgave me—
 And this meek promise was sweet;
 Everything that my spirit could not fulfill
 It humbly promised.]

The poem depicts the apotheosis of the modern individual, whose tragic fall returns him to communion with the earth. This reunion of soul and spirit is promised by the cypresses, overseen by the bee, and vouchsafed by the earth. Instead of presenting the lyric hero's dilemma in personal terms,

the poem formulates the universal statement that death is a precondition for new life. This interpretation is reinforced by the epigraph from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, which itself takes as its epigraph John 12:24: "[U]nless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain." The Christian context of the poem is strengthened by the archaic vocabulary. The title word "*perst*" is most closely associated with the Slavonic translation of Gen. 2:7: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." It is, significantly, of feminine grammatical gender, which is closely associated with other feminine nouns in the poem: tomb, earth, soul, bee, pride, treasure. The sexual connotations of this series are activated in the final stanza, which is dominated by the feminine third-person singular pronoun, which means both "it" and "she." The poem thus encapsulates Ivanov's synthetic mythmaking, according to which the masculine principle of active initiative and sin must always seek dissolution in the feminine principle: heaven must return to the earth, the spirit must be grounded in the soul, and man must submit to the love of woman. The ideological structure is reinforced at every level of the poem. Ivanov's archaic lexicon includes Homeric compound adjectives and Slavonicisms that combine solemnity with an almost self-parodic awkwardness. The underlying metaphysical structure could theoretically yield Christian or pagan interpretations. Ivanov directs the reader toward a ritual of repentance and establishes its basic interpretive concepts without, however, dictating the religious conclusions to be derived therefrom.

The same ambivalent metaphysics is evident in Ivanov's first lyric response to his affair with Lidia Dmitrievna. "At the Colosseum" ("V kolizee") was written in Rome soon after they became lovers and seems to depict the consummation of their love, their "first closeness," in March 1895 at the Roman theater.³ This event is depicted as a sacred sin, an ethical contradiction announced by the epigraph from Byron: "Great is their love, who love in sin and fear" (*Heaven and Earth: A Mystery*, 1.1.67).

В Колизее

День влажнокудрый досиял,
 Меж туч огонь вечерний сея.
 Вкруг помрачался, вкруг зиял
 Недвижный хаос Колизея.

Глядели из стихийной тьмы
 Судеб безвременные очи. . .

День бурь истомных к прагу ночи,
 День алчный провожали мы—

Меж глыб, чья вечность роковая
 В грехе святилась и крови,—
 Дух безнадежный предавая
 Преступным терниям любви,—

Стеснясь, как два листа, что мчит,
 Безвольных, жадный плен свободы,
 Доколь их слившей непогоды
 Вновь легкий вздох не разлучит . . . (*Coll. Works* 1:521)

[At the Colosseum

With moistened locks the day shone its last
 Sowing vesperal fire amidst the storm clouds.
 Around us there darkened and yawned
 The immobile chaos of the Colosseum.

The timeless eyes of destiny
 Peered from the primal twilight . . .
 We showed the day of weary tempests
 To the threshold of night, a thirsty day;

Amidst the stones whose fatal eternity
 Was hallowed by sin and blood,
 Committing our hapless spirit
 To the criminal thorns of love,

Nestling together like two will-less leaves
 Which are driven by freedom's greedy captivity,
 Until the storm that joined them
 Disperses them with a light sigh.]

The ancient theater is a vortex in which the poet joins with his betrothed in an explosion of the elements: tempestuous storms and a dark night are punctuated by revelatory flame. Transgressive love leads to Ivanov's archetypal ritual situation: the hero ("spirit"—*dukh*) chooses suffering and is sacrificed to the feminine cosmos ("Love"—*liubov*) in lieu of the divinity, *as the divinity*. In this manner the hero achieves transcendence into eternity. The state of ecstasy culminates in the descent of the spirit (*dukh*) in an "easy sigh"

(*vzdokh*); in the imagery of the poem it is comparable to the dawn of a new day. By extension, the poem as aesthetic object stands as the poet's offering, a ritual substitution for the poet himself, who has channeled his suffering into creative work. The poem is the imitation of divine suffering, a symbol of erotic consummation, and a marital rite. The reader partakes of this suffering mimetically, performing the renewed rite in a readerly manner, and this experience punctuates his life with the irruption of new meaning.

However, the immediacy of the reader's experience is complemented by a mediated reflexivity that weaves a myth about the poet's sacrifice and provides a neat ethical teaching: moral *transgression* becomes a precondition for spiritual *transcendence*. This doctrine is supported by a prominent intertextual reference to Paolo and Francesca from Dante's *Inferno* (Davidson 1989: 160–62). The epigraph from Byron's *Heaven and Earth* opens up another intertextual dialogue. In Byron's drama the lovers not only reject their lawful suitors but also contradict God's prohibition against love between humans and angels. Anah and Aholibamah, two female descendents of Cain, reject the sons of Noah for the angels Azazel and Samiasa.

NOAH: Woe, woe, woe to such communion!
 Has God not made a barrier between earth
 And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?
 SAMIASA: Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
 Did God not love what he had made? And what
 Do we but imitate and emulate
 His love unto created love? (1.3.475–81)

In the end, both angels and their brides choose love—and damnation. By extension, Ivanov is depicting his relationship with Lidia as a ladder between heaven and earth. It is noteworthy that Anah's abandoned bridegroom is named Japhet, which calls to mind Japetus, the father of Prometheus, who in turn is Ivanov's favored rebel against the divine order: Ivanov is tracing his own spiritual lineage in his literary citations. However far one is willing to trace it, the act of interpretation expands the mimetic event of Ivanov's poem into an allegorical narrative by activating all of its source texts, its source authors, and even entire literary traditions. The text is a simulacrum of the ritual, but the act of interpretation dissimulates the ritual as an ideological construct.

The allegories of "At the Colosseum" do not end with the references to Dante and Byron. In a related sonnet entitled "The Colosseum" ("Kolizei"),

most likely written after "At the Colosseum," Ivanov depicts gladiators' "bloody orgies," which recede to reveal Christ. The Colosseum is a container of chaos, the locus where pagan frenzy encountered Christian sacrifice and martyrdom in an orgy of redemptive blood. This poem clarifies why Ivanov saw the Roman Colosseum as "hallowed by sin and blood" and pierced by those "timeless eyes of destiny." Historical boundaries break down in a single chaotic act of sacrifice. Briefly stated, in addition to their manifold external references, Ivanov's individual lyrics also attain allegorical signification with respect to each other, making his entire body of work into a single narrative of the poet's life and thought.

"At the Colosseum" is intended as a universal renewal of the marriage rite through the poet's sacrificial transgression, channeled into creative power and distilled in an aesthetic work. Yet the text is more than just a vicarious event, frozen in its mimetic power and semantically open until it is performed by the reader: it is also an argument. It translates the ecstatic symbol into an allegorical myth about history by informing the lovers' tryst with the dark chaos of gladiatorial contests. In addition to this historical allegory, it contains a myth about ritual: just as Roman sacrifice begat Christian martyrs, so the modern lyric sacrifice will beget agents of a rejuvenated Christianity. There is also an erotic and cosmic myth about love and passion as the keys to universal reconciliation. The multiple intertextual references form yet another layer of narrative: that of the universal cultural tradition. These are the four primary layers of myth within Ivanov's texts: historical, ritual, erotic, and literary. Recognizing the relationships between Ivanov's own texts, one can add a fifth level of myth: that of his poetic biography. Here the allegorical denotation remains internal to Ivanov's poetic universe; instead of dissimulating the ritual in other fields of meaning, it comprehends it as an event in a human life.

I shall refer back to the five levels of allegorical myth that accrue around Ivanov's lyrics. Although it is always possible to read these different kinds of meaning *into* a poetic text, Ivanov's early poems seem semantically overdetermined because of their presence *within* the text itself, suggesting ready-made interpretations to the reader; the text constantly looks beyond itself to external matrices of meaning. Thus, in Ivanov's early poetry the text *imitates* a ritual experience, yet it also *dissimulates* in its own allegorical reflections, creating a palpable tension between mimetic power and allegorical reach. It is only in his later poetry that the text itself becomes relatively unencumbered by allegorical denotation, which instead becomes the task of the interpreter who composes Ivanov's texts into a meaningful narrative.

Dithyramb and Drama in Transparency and Cor Ardens

Ivanov's linkage between ancient tragedy and modern lyric poetry is most evident in the poems he denoted as "dithyrambs," a prosodically diverse form that Ivanov regarded as an intermediary stage between ritual and tragedy (i.e., between religion and imaginative literature). Several poems in *Pilot Stars* can be denoted as dithyrambs, among them "The Torch" ("Svetoch") and "Rebirth" ("Vozrozhdenie") (*Coll. Works* 1:682, 684). The dithyramb was more central in *Transparency*. In addition to three narrative poems in dramatic form, Ivanov provides a translation of Bacchylides' dithyramb "Theseus" together with an interpretive introduction. Here Ivanov describes the dithyramb as "intended for musical performance in masks in the setting of the tragic stage" (*Coll. Works* 1:816). The masks allow for "new heroes" to appear in place of the god Dionysus, "arising as masks or hypostases of the divine hero of tragic passion" (817). The use of masks characterizes the time "when the dithyramb and tragedy began to expand the bounds of their content, which hitherto had been limited by the cult" (817). Bacchylides' text, in particular, represents "a link connecting tragedy with the original Dionysian choral 'act'" (816). The "external" narrative is there only "to open the way for inner Dionysian music," out of which "there clearly rise the voices of tragic fear before the hero who bears fate, and of a tragic fear for his fate that is akin to the 'compassion' that Aristotle mentions in his definition of tragedy" (817). The dithyramb marks the moment when *art* begins to distinguish itself from *ritual* and to achieve a productive intervention in it.

Ivanov minimizes the narrative element because he sees the dithyramb as fundamentally opposed to usual categories of time, causality, and morality. However, the narrative element is a necessary vessel for its instantaneous charge of cathartic energy insofar as it contextualizes the mimetic exclamations. The dual lyric and narrative nature of the dithyramb is clearly exhibited in "Ganymede" ("Ganimed"), in which the protagonist is captured by Zeus's eagles. Ganymede's exclamations alternate with passages of explanatory narrative from "The Chorus of the Valley" and "The Chorus of the Heights":

Ганимед

Сильный орел, довольно
Игр высоких!
Долю мощь твою, страшный, ринь!
Дохнул холод . . .

Тосклив и тесен
 Воздушный плен!
 Пусти на волю,
 В дол родимый! . . .
 Темны снега,
 Душно в небе . . .
 Могилой дол
 Уходит бездонный . . .
 Орел! Орел! . . . —
 И я в могилу
 Лечу, низринут! . . .

Хор высот

О Ганимед, лелеет
 В жадных лапах клекчущий вор, милый, твой сон лилейный!
 Облак весны глубокой,
 Не лобзать нам, отрок, тебя, снежных полей Мэнадам!

Ганимед

Где я? где мы,
 солнцеокий,
 тихокрылый?
 В золоте, золоте
 морей всеодержных
 с тобой тону я,
 черный челн! [. . .]
 Долу заснул я,
 проснулся в небе—
 и таю в неге
 жадного неба . . . (*Coll. Works* 1:792–93)

[*Ganymede*

O strong eagle, enough
 Of high jinks!
 Cast your might downwards, o terrible one!
 A blast of cold . . .
 Lonely and cramped
 Is this aerial captivity!
 Let me free
 To my native land! . . .
 The snows are dark,

I can't breathe in the sky . . .
 The bottomless land
 Disappears like a grave . . .
 Eagle! Eagle! . . . —
 And I fly, overthrown,
 Into the grave! . . .]

The Chorus of the Heights

O Ganymede, dear one,
 Your lily-soft sleep is nurtured by the crowing thief in his greedy
 claws!
 A cloud of deepest spring,
 We will never kiss you, o youth, we Maenads of the snowy fields!]

Ganymede

Where am I? Where are we,
 O sun-eyed,
 O quiet-winged?
 In the gold, in the gold
 Of all-bearing seas
 I drown with you,
 O dark skiff! [. . .]
 I fell asleep on earth,
 And awoke in heaven—
 And melt in the languor
 Of greedy heaven . . .]

As in Ivanov's earlier poems, the grave is the door to heaven. In the dithyramb, however, one begins to see the differentiation between the properly lyrical elements (here mostly exclamations) and the allegorical narrative of the choruses. The difference is not merely one of imagery; the very diction is distinct in terms of poetic measure, syntax, and vocabulary. Ivanov may well have modeled his use of lyric and narrative discourse on phenomena familiar to him from his study of ancient religion, for example, the so-called Gold Leaves, which preserve cultic texts of the Hellenistic period. Some of these texts combine narration, invariably in dactylic hexameter, with mimetic prose consisting of ritual exclamations. Thus, both in these Hellenistic texts and in Ivanov's poetry, the prosodic form reflects a difference not only in the origin of the text (i.e., literary versus ritual) but also in its type of discourse (i.e., narrative versus mimetic).⁴

In Ivanov's case the distinction is not merely one of classification but

strikes at the very process of writing poetry. Although “Ganymede” is mainly a mimetic depiction of ritual experience with minimal narrative content, Ivanov later developed this narrative kernel into his early drama *Tantalus*. This is the first clear instance of a prevailing pattern in Ivanov’s oeuvre, whereby lyric works with mimetic depictions of ritual experience (“dithyrambs”) are elaborated into allegorical narratives of increasing complexity. It demonstrates that Ivanov saw narratives as explications of mimetic lyric poems. The dithyramb is so important precisely because it occupies the boundary where the pure lyric achieves epic breadth, and where imitation of ritual becomes fictional narration.

The dithyramb remained Ivanov’s “genre de guerre” in his next collection, *Cor Ardens*, which opened with the explosive rhythms of “The Maenad” (“Menada”), composed in 1905. Compared to the previous dithyrambs, which were somewhat academic in tone, “The Maenad” is driven by raucous tempos, hieratic diction, and a lexicon that combines religious terminology, folk language, and a trochaic meter with ancient and folk associations. The result is a hypnotic chant that closes with the following refrain:

Бурно ринулась Мэнада
 Словно лань,
 Словно лань,—
 С сердцем, вспугнутым из персей,
 Словно лань,
 Словно лань,—
 С сердцем, бьющимся, как сокол
 Во плену,
 Во плену,
 С сердцем яростным, как солнце
 Поутру,
 Поутру,—
 С сердцем жертвенным, как солнце
 Ввечеру,
 Ввечеру . . . (*Coll. Works* 2:228)

[The Maenad stormed forth
 Like a doe,
 Like a doe;
 With her heart frightened from her breast,
 Like a doe,

Like a doe;
With her heart beating as a falcon
In a cage,
In a cage;
With a furious heart like the sun
In the morn,
In the morn;
With a heart of sacrifice like the sun
In the eve;
In the eve . . .]

”The Maenad” may strike some listeners as a religious hymn that induces emotional frenzy and opens up the psyche to mystical experience. The original publication made this reading explicit through its title: “Before the Sacrifice.”²⁵ Indeed, when performed at Ivanov’s Wednesday soirees at his Tower apartment, “The Maenad” ritualistically expressed the group’s ecstatic and erotic spirit. However, it was also an anthem that encapsulated Ivanov’s complex social and metaphysical program in the wake of the 1905 revolution. Published in the debut issue of the almanac *Torches* (*Fakely*), “The Maenad” could be read as an allegory for Ivanov’s mystical anarchism. A transparent tribute to Lidia, it also encapsulated Ivanov’s erotic program. The image of the crazed maenad was taken from the *Iliad*, so in terms of Ivanov’s literary myth it can be seen as defending Ivanov’s thesis on the tragic origin of Homer’s poem (see chapter 3, section “Epic and Myth”). In essence, the choice of readings—whether as ritual hymn or ideological anthem—reflects the reader’s judgment concerning the aesthetic efficacy and immediacy of the work. Is it a mimetic depiction of a religious experience intended to instill in the reader hope for a new theophany or an explanation of why such hope is appropriate? In any event, “The Maenad” was not left as an isolated mimetic lyric but was developed by Ivanov into the unfinished tragedy *Niobe*, a kind of sequel to *Tantalus* (Gerasimov 1984).

The same pattern was repeated with “The Fire-Bearers” (“Ognenostsy”) of 1906, which grew into the drama *Prometheus*. Like “The Maenad,” “The Fire-Bearers” was published in the debut issue of *Torches*. However, it was separated from the rest of Ivanov’s poetry and placed immediately following Georgy Chulkov’s militant introductory note, which promised “implacable opposition to the power of obligatory external norms over man” and raised its “torch” “in the name of affirming the individual personality and in the name of the free union of people, united by their love for the transfigured

world of the future.”⁶ The poem therefore implicitly engages not only religious rituals but also social ones; it signals a Promethean step toward a new community.

“The Fire-Bearers” depicts an ancient ritual attended by choruses of Oceanides and Fire-Bearers, a hierophant, and the prophetess Pythia. The hierophant tells how Prometheus’s capture of fire has inspired human initiation. This section is in iambic tetrameter, the most common meter of Russian narrative poetry.

Неси ж, о Факел, суд земле,
 И на подлунном корабле,
 Будь, пламень огненный, кормилом,—
 Затем что дух в кольце немиллом,
 Затем что мир лежит во зле,—
 Затем что есть в конце путей
 Мир окрыленной и святей,
 И светоч смелым завоеван,—
 Затем что в муках Прометей
 Ждет, люди, огневых вестей,
 Не примирен и не раскован! (*Coll. Works* 2:240)

[Bear forth, o Torch, judgment to the earth;
 And on your sublunar vessel,
 Be, o fiery flame, our rudder:
 Because the spirit is in a hostile ring;
 Because the world lies in evil;
 Because there is at the end of our paths
 A world more wingèd and more holy
 And the torch is captured by the brave;
 Because in torments Prometheus
 Awaits, o people, fiery tidings!
 He is still not reconciled and still not unbound!]

In contrast to this narrative, the chorus of “The Fire-Bearers” consists of incantations to Prometheus, whom they await as a mystical bridegroom. It is written in a much quicker metric form (iambic dimeter with dactylic and feminine rhymes).

И вам у брачного
 Дано чертога

Ждать во полночи
 Пришельца-Бога,—
 О духа бурного
 Во тьме языки,
 Глаголы Хаоса,
 Немые клики! . . . (*Coll. Works* 2:241)

[And you are to await
 By the bridal chamber
 At midnight
 The God Who will come;
 O, the flames
 Of the stormy spirit in the darkness,
 The words of Chaos,
 The silent calls! . . .]

The unusual meter mimics the sound of the tragic chorus, while the imagery is borrowed from the Orthodox services of Holy Week, which celebrate the coming of the Bridegroom at midnight to the faithful souls. Pentacost is implied by the “flames” (or “tongues”) of the stormy Spirit and the “words of Chaos” that induce glossolalia. It is as if the reader (or performer) of the text is led through the events of the Resurrection to the descent of the Holy Spirit, just as he is being led through language to a universal, rhythmic expression. Language and sovereignty must be abandoned in the ecstatic performance of the dithyramb prior to a religious sacrifice.

The frenzy of expectation eventually leads the Pythia to reveal the god. This mixed narrative/exclamatory section is in iambic trimeter (with dactylic and masculine rhymes).

Легло на дно пурпурное
 Венчальное кольцо,—
 Яви, смятенье бурное,
 В лазурности—Лицо! (*Coll. Works* 2:241)

[The wedding ring
 Lay on the purple seabed;
 Reveal, o stormy tempest,
 In the azureness: the Face!]

The sacrifice of love, symbolized by the ring, triggers the revelation of the god, which implicitly heralds the return of love on a higher plane. Thus, self-abandonment leads to self-discovery:

Их хаоса родимого,
 Гляди—Звезда, Звезда!
 Из *Нет* непримиримого—
 Слепительное Да! . . . (*Coll. Works* 2:243)

[From the native chaos,
 Look—a Star, a Star!
 From an irreconcilable *No*
 Arises a blinding Yes! . . .]

While the listener of the poem may well be lost in ritual ecstasy by this point, the careful reader is constantly brought back to consciousness by the abstract language and the profligate capitalization that intellectualizes key images. Ivanov also lays bare the extensive literary genealogy of his images. The ring, for instance, can be traced to Schiller's ballad "The Ring of Poly-crates," where the hero mollifies the gods by sacrificing his most treasured possession: he casts the ring into the sea, only to have it promptly returned in the belly of a giant fish. The image was widespread in Russian poetry thanks to Vasily Zhukovsky's 1831 translation of Schiller's ballad and through Fedor Tiutchev's 1852 poem "You, my ocean wave" ("Ty, volna moia mors-kaia"), which reads: "It was not a ring, as a valued gift, that I dropped into your waves. [. . .] No, in that fateful moment, driven by a secret passion, I buried my soul, my living soul, in your depths."⁷ There is also the obligatory reference to Pushkin. The original 1906 version of the poem ends with a stage direction: "The noiseless burning of torches accompanies the prayerful silence [*bezmolvie*] of the Chorus."⁸ This recalls the conclusion of Pushkin's tragedy *Boris Godunov*, where in the face of a cycle of usurpation and regicide the "people are silent [*narod bezmolvstvuet*]." The reader is encouraged to interpret "The Fire-Bearers" as an echo of Pushkin's response to the Decembrist revolt in *Boris Godunov*. Ivanov intimates an analogy between the despotic rule of Zeus and the Russian government, as well as between the tragic chorus of chthonic gods and the cowed Russian populace. If the Promethean narrative encourages rebellion, then its inconclusive ending leaves open the proper response to the Russian government's compromises in the wake of the revolution. By providing his poem with a built-in history,

Ivanov softens the poem's rebellious edge and switches the level of discourse from exclamation to meditation. Remarkably, at the summit of mystic rapture, the reader is forced to reflect upon its allegorical transpositions.

In "The Fire-Bearers" the distinction between the mimetic diction of ritual and the allegorical narrative is clearly marked by the prosodic segmentation of the text as well as its further extension into the narrative drama *Prometheus*. Taking the original dithyramb as the model for Ivanov's lyrics, one sees how the two kinds of discourse may at times work at cross purposes: either the passion dissolves into ideas or the ideas dissipate into ambivalent emblems.

Marriage Rites

The tension between mimetic symbol and narrative allegory is especially taut in *Cor Ardens*, Ivanov's monumental epitaph to his late wife, Lidia. Here the ritual of commemoration becomes inextricably linked to that of matrimony, and the poet's intense mourning produces the most baroque allegories ever seen in Russian poetry. All of Ivanov's literary, intellectual, and erotic experiments become fodder for his central biographical myth, namely, that his erotic passion for Lidia is consummated in his passionate grief for her passing, and that by being "married to her death" he can be reborn as a man.

Ivanov had always viewed his relationship to Lidia in ritual terms. In the introduction I highlighted the solemn yet idiosyncratic wedding ceremonies that Ivanov conducted with Lidia and her daughter, Vera. It is clear that although he approached the institution of marriage nontraditionally, he attached great significance to the rite itself. Marriage in the Orthodox Church, especially in Ivanov's day, was an event heavy in ritual trappings that upheld the sanctity of the patriarchal family. This kind of official ritual severely rankled Ivanov on most occasions, especially considering his inability to be legally married after the dissolution of his first marriage.⁹ However, the symbolism of Ivanov's poetic rites outstrips even that of the Orthodox rite in its intricacy. The poem "The Sacrifice" from *Transparency* exhibits such a high degree of theological sophistication in its presentation of marriage that its putative eroticism may seem positively blasphemous.

Жертва

Когда двух воль возносят окрыленья
 Единый стон,
 И снится двум, в юдоли Разделенья,
 Единый сон,—

Двум алчущим—над звездами Разлуки—
 Единый лик,—
 Коль из двух душ исторгся смертной муки
 Единый крик:
 Се, Он воскрес!—в их жертвенные слезы
 Глядит заря . . .
 Се, в мирт одет и в утренние розы
 Гроб алтаря . . .
 И пригвожден (о, чудо снисхожденья!)
 На крест небес,
 Умерший в *них* (о, солнце возрожденья!)—
 Он в *них* воскрес! . . .
 Свершилась двух недостижимых встреча,
 И дольний плен,
 Твой плен, Любовь, одной Любви предтеча,—
 Преодолен!
 О, Кана душ! О, в гробе разлученья—
 Слиянье двух!
 Но к алтарям горящим отреченья
 Зовет вас Дух!
 На подвиг вам божественного дара
 Вся мощь дана:
 Обретшие! вселенского пожара
 Вы—семена!
 Дар золотой в Его бросайте море
 Своих колец;
 Он сохранит в пурпуровом просторе
 Залог сердец
 Вы плачете? . . . Мужайтесь совлечься
 Тяжелых туч!
 Гроза грядет . . . О, радуйтесь облечься
 В единый луч! (*Coll. Works* 1:703–4)

[The Sacrifice

When the inspirations of two wills raise a single groan, and two
 dream a single dream in the vale of Separation;

When two who thirst—above the stars of Separation—[dream] of a single face; if from both souls is wrested a single cry of fatal torment: Behold, He is risen! And the dawn gazes into their sacrificial tears; behold, the tomb of the altar is dressed in myrtle and in morning roses . . .

And He who died in *them* (o, sun of rebirth!) is nailed to the cross of heaven (o, miracle of condescension!) . . .

An encounter of two inaccessible ones is achieved, and your earthly captivity, o Love, the forerunner of united Love, is overcome!

O, Cana of souls! O, the joining of two in the tomb of separation! But the Spirit calls you to the burning altars of disavowal!

All the might of a divine gift is given you for your feat: o, you who have received! You are the seeds of the universal conflagration!

Throw His golden gift of your rings into the sea; the gift will preserve the promise of your hearts in the purple expanse . . .

Are you crying? . . . Dare to shed the heavy storm-clouds! The storm is coming . . . O, be joyful as you clothe yourselves in a single ray!]

At the core of this poem one glimpses the same allegory found in “At the Colosseum”: appearing after Christ’s resurrection, the Spirit calls the two human spirits to renounce their selfhood at the altar to Love, which is depicted as both prison and liberation. This sacrifice is depicted in a remarkable synthesis of Christian ritual and Nietzschean philosophy. The separation of the lovers is akin to death on the cross, but there is resurrection: a heavenly Cana of Galilee presided over by the Bridegroom Himself. This couple, moreover, comprise the “two or three” of the new church, here termed a “universal conflagration.” It is a rite of origination, like the Baptism of Christ, which is alluded to in the phrase “the forerunner of united Love.” (In the Eastern Church John the Baptist is usually called the Forerunner.) As all sacraments (Eucharist, marriage, baptism) combine into a single, erotic encounter, one wonders whether this is the reduction of Christianity to coitus or the expansion of the idea of marriage to the model for a new Christianity. The unity of Ivanov’s imagery is too taut to be shaped into a coherent narrative of the origins and application of this new rite, yet it is also too dense to encourage its imitative enactment by the reader.

One way in which such lyrics broke their self-imposed hermetic isolation was through quotation in Ivanov’s essays. “The Sacrifice” was first utilized in Ivanov’s 1904 introduction to his wife’s drama *The Rings*, which utilized much the same imagery (*Coll. Works* 2:80–81). Ivanov also quoted from it

in his 1908 essay “On the Dignity of Woman” (“O dostoinstve zhenshchiny”), where he argued against traditional marriage understood as “the constant and indefinite cohabitation of two people of different sexes,” claiming that “[c]ontemporary consciousness no longer wants to reconcile itself to this bio-sociological formula [which] fails to hold up before the new needs of the individual personality” (*Coll. Works* 3:142). Extending the imagery of “The Sacrifice,” Ivanov calls for men and women to practice sexual asceticism, preserving “love and passion as an exceptional event in life, a rare miracle, desirable, but only on the condition of its authenticity” (*Coll. Works* 3:144): “But until the Bridegroom comes at midnight, woman, tragic in her most profound nature and in a sense the incarnation of Tragedy itself, should be [. . .] the bride and wife and mother of the sons of the Earth, who have been born in truth by the strict love of ascetics of the Sun” (*Coll. Works* 3:145). This, perhaps, was less an argument than the pained cry of grieving widowhood seeking to lessen the trauma by weaving it into a myth.

Ivanov’s commemoration of his wife involved not only the exercise of grief but also the extirpation of guilt. Much of the conjugal poetry of *Cor Ardens* is actually devoted to his dalliances with Sergei Gorodetsky and Margarita Sabashnikova, which added additional allegorical twists to the poetic presentation of his marriage. Ivanov diligently recorded his affairs in diaries and letters. In one letter to Lidia he celebrated his seduction of Gorodetsky by quoting to her from “The Maenad”: “with a heart beating like a falcon in a cage, in a cage,—with a heart as furious as the sun, in the morn, in the morn.”¹⁰ The verse that Ivanov wrote concerning his affairs was collected in the volume *Eros*, which was later subsumed into *Cor Ardens*. In the first part Ivanov depicts Gorodetsky as the god Eros, who presides over the marriage and mixes the two souls into a single, intoxicating wine; like a bee he stings the lovers but produces sweet honey (“Krater”; *Coll. Works* 2:381). The erotic symbolism of some of this verse verges on the pornographic. In the poem “The Architect” (“Zodchii”) the poet calls to Eros/Gorodetsky: “melt with your fiery-stinging lightning three victims into a triune altar!” (380). Ivanov’s heightened sensuality seemed only to intensify his sacrificial and even Eucharistic imagery, as sexual consummation was equated with communion.

The Eucharistic overtones of this erotic verse continued in the sonnet cycle “Golden Screens” (“Zolotye zavesy”), dedicated to Margarita Sabashnikova. Here Sabashnikova is depicted as Psyche and as the pearl (i.e., “margarite”) created by the suffering of Ivanov’s passion for Lidia Dmitrievna. Consummating this love, however, reveals a pure lily that blossoms out of the scarlet rose—Ivanov’s love for Lidia, strengthened by its having been sacrificed:

Разлукой рок дохнул. Мой алоцвет
 В твоих перстах осыпал, умирая,
 Свой рдяный венчик. Но иного рая
 В горящем сердце солнечный обет

Цвел на стебле. Так золотой рассвет
 Выводит день, багрянец поборая,
 Мы розе причащались, подбирая
 Мед лепестков, и горестных примет

Предотвращали темную угрозу,—
 Паломники, Любовь, путей твоих,—
 И ели набожно живую розу. . .

Так ты ушла. И в сумерках моих,—
 Прощальный дар,—томительно белея,
 Благоухает бледная лилея. (*Coll. Works* 2:390–91)

[Destiny breathed parting. My crimson bloom
 Shed its glowing wreath in your fingers,
 As it expired. But in my burning heart
 The solar vow of another paradise

Bloomed on the stem. Thus golden sunrise
 Leads forth the day, defeating the crimson hue.
 We partook of the rose, gathering up
 The honey of its petals, forewarning

The obscure threat of its grievous omens—
 We pilgrims of your paths, o Love,—
 And piously we ate of the living rose . . .

Thus you left. And in my evening gloom
 A parting gift,—turning white in languor
 A pale lily issues forth its fragrance.]

What on the factual plane seems an act of adultery is portrayed poetically as a cosmic mystery. As the sun changes from red dawn to golden day, so Ivanov surrenders his spirit, partakes of the rose (passionate love), and is rewarded by a lily (spiritual love). The scene also suggests the iconography of the Annunciation, which in turn hints at messianic issue. The language of the dark passion is both erotic and overtly Eucharistic (“partaking,” “pilgrims”

“piously we ate,” “gift”), which both sacralizes the erotic event and eroticizes the sacrament. As always, this intense *event* is complemented by extensive intertextual references to, among others, Petrarch, Dante, Greek and Hindu myth, and Egyptian religion. This complex of references explains the event, places it culturally, and, to a certain extent, justifies it. The grandeur of allegory here is almost excessive, implicating both love and sacrament in a dissimulation, underscored by the contrast between passionate transgression and almost pedantic explanation. The poem risks becoming a hollow gesture toward ideas that are hinted at but not explained. It also risks seeming grotesque in its conflation of all five different levels of allegory.

Lyrics such as “The Sacrifice” attained a modicum of narrative coherence only after Lidia Dmitrievna’s sudden death in October 1907, as parts of an elaborate autobiographical myth. Ivanov understandably felt vindicated in the intuition he had expressed through his erotic poetry, namely, that their love was inextricably interwoven with motifs of passion and loss. Indeed, in Lidia’s final moments he took the Dionysian ring from her finger, put her wreath on his head, and in this fashion “married Lidia and her death,” in the words of a telegram he sent to his friends (Bogomolov 1999a: 245–46). Ivanov wrote in his diary that from beyond the grave Lidia had asked him for a rose, which he brought to the cemetery and dedicated to her, after standing for some minutes in the church (*Coll. Works* 2:786; cf. Obatnin 2000: 88–89). Ivanov mapped this chapter of his autobiographical myth onto Petrarch’s *canzone* on the death of Laura, adopting their very structure. Despite the bookishness of this conceit, the poems powerfully convey the grief and despair of the abandoned lover, who sings: “You have been born; but I, in a night warmed by the conception of silent depths, I have died, the seed of a birth-giving field” (*Coll. Works* 2:397). He continues:

8

Одним огнем дышали мы, сгорая
 И возгораясь вновь;
 И быть двоим, как мы, одной вселенной
 Воскреснуть вместе, вместе умирая,
 Мы нарекли: любовь.
 Ее в земном познали мы нетленной . . .
 Зачем же облик пленный
 Оставлен сырým—по земле печальной
 Идти до цели дальней?

Мой полон дух, и полны времена;
Но все не видно в горькой чаше дна.

9

А твердь все глубже, полночь осиянней;
Лучистой и тесней
От новых звезд мирьяды к сердцу нитей
Бегут, поют; цветы благоуханней,
И тайна все нежней,
И в Боге сокровенное открытей.
Единосущней, слитей
Душа с тобой, душа моей вселенной!
Зачем же вожденней
Таится миг в ночи, храним судьбой,—
А днем я мертв, расторгнутый с тобой? (*Coll. Works 2:400*)

8

We breathed the same flame, burning up
And catching fire again;
The two of us were a single universe,
Dying and rising together,
Which we called: love.
In earthly life we knew immortal love . . .
Why is its captive visage
Left orphaned and sentenced to go
To the distant end across the mournful earth?
My spirit is full, the times are complete;
But still there is no bottom to the chalice of my grief.

9

The firmament is deeper, midnight more glorious;
Myriads of threads
Run, sing from new stars to my heart
More radiant, closer; the flowers are more fragrant
And the Mystery more tender
And the hidden is more open in God.
More consubstantial, merged
Is my soul with you, the soul of my universe!

So why does the moment hide in the night
 More desired, guarded by fate,—
 While in the day I'm dead, separated from you?]

Ivanov walks a very fine line in these poems between grief and exhibitionism, but it would take a very hard heart to begrudge him his intense mourning. Here, more than elsewhere, Ivanov's texts play a constructive role in his self-comprehension. The Petrarchan *canzone* are but a single strand in the complex funeral wreath Ivanov wove for Lidia. The book "Love and Death" ("Liubov' i smert'") formed the cathartic center of Ivanov's incredible collection *Cor Ardens*. In it the sonnet "Love" from *Pilot Stars*, where Ivanov declared "We're the two arms of a single cross," was expanded into an entire "garland" of fifteen interconnected sonnets (see Introduction). The transformation of their relationship is reflected directly in the transformation of the original lyric into a protonarrative. Within Ivanov's poetic myth, Lidia's death confirmed her role as Ivanov's muse and mediatrix, while her heavenly patronage confirmed his belief in the power of his lyrics to serve as means for mediating transcendence for his readers. Even here the immediate power of this poetry was mediated by an elaborate allegorical narrative; but this was the point at which this narrative took a sharp turn inward and became less ideology than self-comprehension.

Excursus on Symbol and Allegory

In Ivanov's parlance, the lyric revelation is a *symbol*, that is, a mimetic representation of an experience of transcendence. The symbol communicates to the beholder the cathartic energy of this original transcendence, and is therefore linked to the tragic mood.¹¹ Moreover, the symbolic lyric presupposes a performative reenactment of the original experience by the beholder. In the case of "The Fire-Bearers," one might imagine that the reader is encouraged to sacrifice what is dearest (i.e., a marital band) in order to experience a face-to-face vision of the divinity. In this way the poem is capable of affecting the beholder's performance of religious ritual.

Next to the cathartic discourse of the lyric one finds the reflexive discourse of narrative. For example, if in its rhythmic drive and play of images "The Fire-Bearers" is designed to foster ritual experience, its complex references to literary and ritual texts make the poem an allegorical argument *about* ritual, one that traces the lineage of the lyric from tragedy, through Christianity, German romanticism, and Pushkin, to modernism. This is an allegory that partakes not of transcendent reality but of history and time, that

affects the beholder through the mediation of reflection and memory. In short, the lyric contains its own myth concerning its origins. Ivanov's narrative myths are always self-referential and concern the creation and/or performance of the poem itself. This phenomenon may be typical of modernism, in which, as Paul de Man has argued, "any narrative is primarily the allegory of its own reading" (1979: 76). For Ivanov, however, this idea has deeper roots. Each poem imitates the self-sacrifice of the poet (as priest and victim) and therefore must appeal for its justification to the poet's sacrifice, which is the source of its transcendent power and the legitimization of its allegorical extensions.

I use the term "allegory" here advisedly. Ivanov himself never used the term except in a derogatory sense, having inherited the romantics' devaluation of it. For example, Ivanov wrote: "We protest against myth as allegory, which is also *ratio*, and propose that true mythopoesis is unconscious, that myth is an organic formation such as the symbol, and that the metaphysical content of myth is not a *prius* with respect to its poetic creation."¹² However, the term "allegory" has recently gained respectability and can legitimately be used—despite Ivanov's protestations—to describe his correlation of lyric expressions with exterior matrices of meaning. The relationship between the mimetic symbol and the allegory vexed de Man, who was partly responsible for the renewal of allegory:

[I]n allegory [. . .] it seems that the author has lost confidence in the substitutive power generated by the resemblances: he states a proper meaning, directly or by way of an intra-textual code or tradition, by using a literal sign which bears no resemblance to that meaning and which conveys, in its turn, a meaning that is proper to it but does not coincide with the proper meaning of the allegory. [. . .] From the structural and rhetorical point of view [. . .] the allegorical representation leads towards a meaning that diverges from the initial meaning to the point of foreclosing its manifestation. (74)

For de Man the presence of allegory "will deflect from the act of reading and block access to its understanding" (77). In Ivanov's poetry there is no such antagonism between the immediate symbol and the mediated allegory. In an image taken from his essays, the allegorical myth *grows* out of the symbol as an oak grows out of an acorn (*Coll. Works* 1:714). Read as allegory, the symbol uncovers its reference in various ideological systems, among which Ivanov posits an underlying unity.¹³ Allegory extends the cathartic charge of the lyric poem in a sequence of events or concepts. This process

is similar to what Paul Ricoeur has called *emplotment* or *muthos* (i.e., “mythopoesis” in Ivanov’s terms; Ricoeur 1984: 31–51; cf. 79). While Ricoeur sees *emplotment* as an imitation of temporal action, Ivanov differentiates between the properly mimetic revelation, which reflects the eternal realm, and its explication in a dynamic narrative.

In addition to the five types of allegorical myth in Ivanov’s lyrics, it is helpful to distinguish two sorts of memory. First, the narrative establishes an intrinsic order of events and, as it were, creates in the reader a record of the events leading up to the performance of the text. This can be termed *narrative memory*. It provides the pattern that can be plotted onto external matrices of meaning, be they historical or metaphysical.

The second type of memory retrieves the extrinsic matrices of meaning necessary for the allegorical interpretation. This is *cultural memory*. Renate Lachmann has discussed the importance of this kind of memory for literature, which she calls “the mnemonic art par excellence”: “Literature supplies the memory for a culture and records such a memory. It is itself an act of memory. Literature inscribes itself in a memory space made up of texts, and it sketches out a memory space into which earlier texts are gradually absorbed and transformed” (1997: 15). Literature exercises this power over cultural memory through intertextuality, which Lachmann defines as “the process by which a culture continually rewrites and retranscribes itself” (15). Ivanov’s texts are exemplary in that they simultaneously rely on readers’ knowledge of texts and create the knowledge—or at least the consciousness—of an entire canon. Ivanov cannot expect all his readers to know Homer and Schiller well enough to interpret all his allusions, but he does expect his text to form a context within which this cultural legacy may become vividly relevant for his reader.

However, there is another kind of extrinsic intertextual reference that depends not on cultural memory but on narrative memory. This occurs when the reference is mediated by a previous appropriation of that same referent, that is to say, mediated by the author’s own memory of the text. If Ivanov’s early poetry relies on a universal canon of classic texts that he manipulates as a single cultural Text (Homer, Schiller, Zhukovsky, Tiutchev) and into which he inscribes his works, in his later poetry he is more concerned with transcribing his own previous appropriations into a personal history of reading. While the first kind of intertextuality relies on universal memory, the second makes its major appeal to an autobiographical narrative memory. This personal address does not limit the efficacy of memory as an explanatory medium; its claim to universality is no longer participation

in a disembodied cultural tradition, but fully embodied personhood. The purpose of intertextuality remains that of explaining the origin of the lyric poem and legitimizing its intervention in ritual. However, Ivanov's lyrics increasingly achieve this purpose by establishing an autobiographical narrative across texts. This return of the text to the man is most palpable in his lyric poetry in the period of the "tender mystery."

THE TENDER MYSTERY

The Third

The poems analyzed thus far belong to the first half of Ivanov's poetic career (through the 1911–1912 collection *Cor Ardens*), which is dominated by his concern to renew and reform rituals through the symbol and to explain this intervention by means of narrative myths and intertextual references. In Ivanov's mature verse one begins to see a more complex relationship between the imitation of ritual and its narration in allegorical myth. The interpretation of his later lyrics relies less on universal cultural history than on personal memories as recorded in his textual myth. The beginning of this process is linked to the image of the "tender mystery."

In his 1912 essay "Thoughts on Symbolism" ("Mysli o simbolizme") Ivanov quotes an "ancient, naively profound Italian song":

Per che il terzo sia presente,
E quell terzo sia l'Amor.

[So that the third is also present,
So that the third is Love. (*SE* 51–52; *Coll. Works* 2:607)]

When he wrote this essay Ivanov's spiritual relationship with Lidia had just been crowned once again by the appearance of a new "third" member. By early 1912 Lidia had reincarnated herself in her daughter, Vera, and now the latter was expecting a child, to be born miraculously out of her mother's passion.¹⁴ Although Ivanov's relationship with his stepdaughter was even more scandalous than the 1906–7 series of erotic experiments he had commemorated in *Cor Ardens*, it was their logical outcome. Indeed, the image with which he denoted his wife's reincarnation in Vera and Dimitri—"the tender mystery"—had initially appeared in the first "Canzona" on Lidia's death in *Cor Ardens*, which is quoted above. However, in terms of his poetry and thought, the emergence of the "tender mystery" in Ivanov's poetry and

his personal life represents his progression toward a more balanced picture of human life growing out of painful experience.

The poetry of *The Tender Mystery* (1912)¹⁵ is refreshing both in the restraint of its imagery and in its prosodic immediacy, traits that are on display in “The Lips of Dawn”:

Уста зари

Как уста, зря багряная горит:
 Тайна нежная безмолвьем говорит.
 Слышишь слова золотого вещей мед?
 Солнце в огненном безмолвии встает!

Дан устам твоим зари румяный цвет,
 Чтоб уста твои родили слово—свет.
 Их завесой заревою затвори:
 Только золотом и медом говори. (*Coll. Works* 3:37)

[The Lips of Dawn¹⁶

Like lips the crimson dawn does burn:
 The tender mystery speaks in silence.
 Do you hear the wise honey of the golden word?
 The sun is rising in fiery silence.

Your lips were granted the dawn’s crimson color,
 So that your lips might bear a word of light.
 Seal them with the screen of dawn:
 Speak only in gold and honey.]

Continuing the theme of the search for an objective incarnation of the erotic-creative process, “The Lips of Dawn” is typical of a general tendency in Ivanov’s poetry of the 1910s toward comparative unadornment. With nouns prevailing over adjectives, the images are painted in bold, clear strokes, while the color scheme is harmonized in a single shade of “gold-vermilion.” Specific intertextual references are difficult to identify. Ivanov works with universal symbols that speak directly to the poem’s beholder, such as the comparison of light speaking through lips to the crimson brilliance of the dawn. After the grandeur of *Cor Ardens*, the syntax and verse structure also strike one as refreshingly direct. The addressee of Ivanov’s poem is now “you”; the author recognizes his reader as a human being who will receive the poem, learn from it, and apply it to his or her life. The “Lips of Dawn”

shows how Ivanov gradually moved toward more direct lyric address, although its plain beauty issues straight from the ornate weave of Ivanov's previous verse.

The poem also marks this turning point in Ivanov's lyrics by dramatizing the very notion of mimetic verse. The poet's lips burn with a desire to express a light-bearing word, only to realize that such a word could not be audible and would have to consist of a phosphorescent substance such as gold or honey. The solution is for the poet to preserve his silence and to let the transcendent light speak through him, while exhorting the listener, in turn, to accept the light and speak it in silence. Here we see activated all four layers of extrinsic myth described above: historical, ritual, erotic, and literary. However, in contrast to Ivanov's earlier verse, while the poem refers to other texts, it does not require the reader to trace them.¹⁷ The allegorical myth of the poem is solely intended to underscore and justify its immediacy. This effectively shifts the domain of the poetic intervention from social and religious ritual to the personal sphere, where the dominant ritual is prayer. Thus, the imitation of ritual is no longer a simulacrum and the text's interpretation no longer presupposes the dissimulation of ritual.

When Ivanov returns to themes of ancient religion in his poetry, he cannot dispel his doubt over the authenticity of the "revealed images." The poem instead becomes a means of tarrying within the charmed circle of ritual experience without seeking its allegorical transposition into visible and palpable denotations:

Элевсинская Весна

Ночь! В твоей амброзийной волне
Отдаюсь я глубокой Весне;
Но грустны, как забытые сны,
Мне явленные лики Весны,
Отлучающей светами дня
От сосцов твоих темных меня,
Чуть к дымящимся персям твоим
Я приник и поник в этот дым—
Благовонной ливана крохой
На жаровне истаять глухой,
Где душа с божествами в огне
Сочетается тайной Весне. (*Coll. Works* 3:496–97)

[Eleusinian Spring

Night! In your ambrosial wave
 I surrender to deep-set Spring.
 But like forgotten dreams I mourn
 The revealed images of Spring,
 Which alienates me in the light of day
 From your dark breasts;
 As soon as I fall to your smoky breasts
 I enter into the smoke—
 To melt on the silent flame
 As a fragrant crumb of incense,
 Where the soul and the gods in the flame
 Are joined to mysterious Spring.]

”Eleusinian Spring” is a cryptic depiction of the Eleusinian mysteries. The poet is immersed in Demeter’s sensuality and awakens to the radiant vision of her daughter, Persephone. For the poet this passage from ecstasy to knowledge is bittersweet; attainment of the light and of Persephone entails alienation from nocturnal Demeter. As a commentary on poetry it expresses the poet’s desire to remain within the symbolic lyric, without passing over to the clarity of allegory and narration. Indeed, the poet stops short of explaining his poem in any terms other than those of ritual.

Ivanov here expresses his desire to remain as light as Ariel, and the poem’s exquisite orchestration and hypnotic rhythm encourage the reader to share that sentiment. Yet multiple narratives can be woven *around* the poem through cultural and personal-narrative memory. Ivanov evokes cultural memory in the images of ancient mysteries, the universal spring of poets and composers (Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* is a particular reference here). Read as a later reflection on Lidia, the poem is the quintessence of Ivanov’s dark optimism. Despite recurrent doubts concerning the possibility of genuine representation, for Ivanov the poem remains authentic as the embodied memory of an inner event that begs emplotment in a greater narrative of life and understanding.

The Lyric as Icon

The increasingly mimetic character of such lyrics as “The Lips of Dawn” and “Eleusinian Spring” relieved them of some of the ideological burden of

Ivanov's more allegorical and intertextual poetry. This coincided with the ideal postulated by Ivanov's theurgic symbolism of 1908–10, in which allegory plays no role and the most perfect art is the religious icon: a mimetic image of the transcendent realm that communicates to its beholders the energy of the divine original without intellectual mediation.

Orthodox iconography became a prominent theme of Ivanov's poetry in the 1910s, which was markedly ekphrastic in approach. A handy transitional moment is provided by the poem "Primitif" ("Primitiv," 1912), which exists in several variants, each with a progressively increasing element of allegory. The first version reads:

Икону Тайны Нежной,
Келейник Красоты,
Я кистью прилежной
Живописать умыслил
И на доске расчислил
Священные черты.

Я видел: Цвет Единый
Простер из тайника,
Где Корень спит змеиный
К лазури ствол зеленый,—
И Агнец убеленный
На пурпуре Цветка.

Меж Солнцем и Землею,
Меж Корнем и Венцом
Меж Агнцем и Змеею—
Меж Розой и Долиной
Посланец голубиный
С таинственным Кольцом.¹⁸

[A servant of Beauty,
I have undertaken to paint
An icon of the Tender Mystery
With my diligent brush,
And on the board I marked
The holy outlines.

I saw: the Single Blossom
Stretched out of the recess

Where the snake Root sleeps,
 A green stem toward the azure,
 And a white Lamb
 On the purple of the Blossom.

Between the Sun and Earth,
 Between the Root and the Crown,
 Between the Lamb and the Snake—
 Between the Rose and the Valley,
 A dove emissary
 With a mysterious Ring.]

The difference from Ivanov's earlier poetry is pronounced. Whereas the early Ivanov proclaimed himself a "nomad of beauty" (*kochevnik krasoty*; *Coll. Works* 1:778), he is now "beauty's monastic servant" (a more literal translation of *keleinik krasoty*). If earlier Ivanov presented his poetry as revealing the face of God in all its rapturous glory, here he is content merely to trace the outline of a holy image as viewed by the individual believer. The sentiment of the first half of the poem flows directly from the humility of the "tender mystery," as seen in the silent speaking of "The Lips of Dawn."

The second half of the poem develops this passive stance into an elaborate vision of the "tender mystery" as a baroque allegory, a romantic fairy tale—even a theology. The erotic image of the flower emerging from the snake-filled recess leads to a vision of Christ in the heavens and then of the dove as mediator between the two realms. This allegory links the iconic attitude back to Ivanov's conjugal mythology: the dove proffers a ring as a token and promise of suffering love. It is important to note, however, that this allegory grows not out of some esoteric *symbolarium* but out of the poet's own poetic universe; he is not making it up himself but rather describing it as found on the icon. As a result, the icon has an immediacy and authenticity often denied the rituals in Ivanov's earlier verse; this artistic asceticism and humility sets the allegory into clearer relief. Even as the private confession becomes public narrative, the terms of the narrative remain deeply personal.

The nature of the allegory was radically altered in the published version of "Primitif," which expanded the original eighteen lines into a seventy-two-line narrative that turned this icon into a veritable shield of Achilles, replete with an entire universe of elaborate symbols and scenes drawn from the New Testament, from the Annunciation to the Crucifixion and Dormition. The poet next turns a self-description into a surprising vision:

И в золото, и в миний
 Я кисти обмакнул,
 Чертя примерных линий
 На хартии разводы,—
 Когда распались своды,
 И синий свет сверкнул . . .

Сквозит родной могилой
 Прозрачный фимиам,
 И Роза дивной силой
 Струит с Распятья зори . . .
 Но кто, поникший в горе
 На светлый холм?—Я сам! . . . (*Coll. Works* 3:31–32)

[And I dipped my brush
 In gold and crimson,
 Marking on the parchment
 The contours of the tracing,—
 When the vaults opened
 And the blue light shone . . .

The transparent incense
 Reveals a beloved grave,
 And the Rose with wonderful power
 Streams dawn from the Crucifixion . . .
 But who is weighed down with grief
 Walking to the light hill?—Myself!]

The artist is admonished for merely “painting these dreams” when he had himself “experienced the grace of the tender mystery in his own tempestuous fate.” In other words, the painting of the icon is shown not only to reveal to the artist the truth about his life but to make him a participant in archetypal reality. In the story the Christ-like artist *becomes* Christ and his wife becomes Mary in fulfillment of their aspirations. The allegory therefore is turned back into the mimetic portrayal of a ritual experience, which in turn deepens the allegory. However, it is thereby removed completely from the artist’s own life and related back to a set of universal archetypes that unite the levels of liturgy and eroticism in a single text. The lyric here reprises its role as a simulacrum of ritual; it is allegorized within the text as ritual dissimulation. The two versions of “Primitif” illustrate Ivanov’s conscious

negotiation of genre. The mimetic lyric expands into allegorical myth that exteriorizes the poem's inspiration at the cost of its aesthetic immediacy.

In subsequent poems based on icons Ivanov largely resisted this tendency to allegorize the symbol and sought instead to preserve a sense of immediacy in his lyrics. The 1914 poem "The Icon" ("Ikona") (*Coll. Works* 3:555), for example, describes an icon of Christ Pantocrator in free verse before trailing off into a prayer.¹⁹ The following is a similar poem from Ivanov's 1918 cycle *Songs of a Time of Troubles*:

Есть в Оптиной пустыне Божия Матерь Спорительница.
 По видению старца Амвросия
 Написан образ Пречистой:
 По край земли дивное
 Богатство нивное;
 Владычица с неба
 Смотрит на простор колосистый;
 Спорятся колосья,
 И множатся в поле снопы золотистого хлеба . . .

Тайная церкви глубин святорусских Затворница,
 Руси боримой со светлыми духи Поборница,
 Щедрая Благотворительница,
 Смут и кровей на родимой земле Умирительница,
 Дай нам хлеба в скорости,—
 Добрым всходам спорости,
 Матерь Божия Спорительница!²⁰

[There is in Optyna Pustyn' *The Mother of God the Facilitator*.
 The image of the Most Pure One
 Was painted in accordance with elder Ambrosy's vision.
 The marvelous riches
 Stretch to the edge of the earth;
 The Mistress from heaven
 Looks on the fertile expanse.
 The grain ripens
 And the bales of golden grain multiply in the field.

Gatekeeper of the secret Church of Russian depths,
 Defender with bright spirits of Russia beset with conflict,

Generous Benefactor,
Reconciler of troubles and blood feuds in our nature land,
Grant us grain soon,—
Grant the harvest ripening,
Mother of God the Facilitator.]

This poem is certainly not glossolalia and even provides a narrative about the image it describes before turning into a prayer addressed to the image. As if to stress the nominalizing aspect of narrative, the poem begins with the assertion of the image's existence but ends with the affirmation of its name. Avoiding allegory, the poem ekphrastically depicts the image, narrates its story, and provides a mimetic account of its veneration.

However, a poem exists in time, and it cannot depict total stasis in the manner of the visual arts. Even in Ivanov's iconic poetry one sees the emergence of allegory, both as self-reference and as mediated by memory. In the first stanza the poet recounts a creative act that parallels his own: Amvrosy's vision instructed the icon painter to create an image of the Mother of God. But the second stanza launches forth from this memory into a prayer, which implicates the memory of both the vision and the icon. The resulting poem contains all three creative acts in a new whole, which is then sent out into the world to continue this mnemonic chain. Memory opens up a contrast to the present. The political significance of the poem, which was published in the anti-Bolshevik weekly *Democracy* (*Narodopravstvo*) together with more explicitly political verses, was perhaps its most pronounced aspect. Ivanov's publisher Samuil Aliansky described the poem as "malicious counterrevolutionary verses" (Aliansky 1969: 58). Thus, the symbolic poem attains allegorical signification through the poet's own memories, and through extratextual factors such as inclusion in cycles or in certain periodicals. This multiple chronology undermines pure mimesis; the work instantiates a dialogue between the poet and the beholder, between memory and experience. Compared to his earlier poetry, however, Ivanov's mature lyrics transfer the function of allegoresis to extratextual factors, leaving the reader more free to determine the correlation between the text and its significations. Indeed, each reading will inevitably allegorize the text in a unique manner, such that the narrative element emerges from the reader's unique encounter with the text and not from the author's embedded equivalences. The poem is free to speak; here narrative allegory becomes a field of communication rather than a means of instruction.

MYTH AND MEMORY

Intertexts in the Interval

Ivanov's poetic cult of memory sprang from his basic vision of the world as a unified and eternal feminine cosmos, yet it also allowed him to expand its initial limits to incorporate a sense of personal existence in time. On an elementary level, Ivanov's poetry is always concerned with memory, with its archaisms and intertextual references to all manner of texts, both ancient and modern. However, the existential import and relevance of such cultural memory only become explicit when the poet subordinates them to his own existential and historical situation, providing an example of how his divine cosmos provides him with personal knowledge of the shared world of humanity. The personalization of Ivanov's poetry begins in *Cor Ardens*, the chronicle of his love for Lidia Zinovyeva-Annibal. Yet their relationship is so mythologized that the grief, though palpable, is obscured by its reflections on other levels of signification (as ritual sacrifice, cosmic mystery, intertextual myth, etc.). The process culminates in Ivanov's final lyric work, *The Roman Diary of 1944* (*Rimskii dnevnik 1944 goda*), a retrospective chronicle that makes sense of the past by examining the passage of time on a personal, quotidian level.

The Roman Diary includes several poems that set cosmic visions in an explicitly personal and historical context. The following verse, dated 14 August 1944, provides the clearest example:

У темной Знаменья иконы, в ночь, елей
 Лампадный теплится; я ж, отрок, перед ней
 Один молясь, не знал, что кров мой был каютой
 Судна, носимого во мраке бурей лютой
 Что голосами тьмы не бес меня пугал,
 А в доски бьющийся осатанелый шквал,
 Что малый, кроткий свет, по серебру скользящий,
 Елея данью был, валы миротворящей. (*Coll. Works* 3:625–26)²¹

[Before the dark icon of the Sign, at night, the lamp
 Oil was burning; I, a child, prayed before it
 Alone, not knowing that my shelter was the cabin
 Of a ship borne forth in the gloom by a vicious storm,
 That it wasn't a demon scaring me with the voices of darkness,
 But a diabolical squall beating on the boards,

That the soft and meek light that slid along the silver
Was a gift of the oil, which pacified the waves.]

This poem synthesizes many familiar images in a confessional manner that deflects attention from sources and tradition (which are no less abundant than in the previous poems) and concentrates attention squarely on the poet's own experience of the event he describes. The icon of the Sign depicts the Mother of God Oranta (with arms spread in prayer), and, in a circle within her figure, the Christ child: it is a promise of the Incarnation and, for the poet personally, a sign of individual rebirth—the tender mystery. However, the reader's attention is drawn less to the icon and its cosmic connotations than to its apprehension by a child and its recollection by the mature poet.

The mature poet corrects the child's naïve understanding. The child senses that his room is being battered by a demon, who scares him with the voices of darkness. In fact, the poet avers, the room was a ship being battered by a diabolical storm. While the child believes the oil provides light, the poet now knows that the oil pacifies the storm-tossed waves. Neither explanation, it should be noted, holds up in isolation. Both—especially that of the mature poet—depend on subjective perception and free association to narrate a ritual experience without addressing its factual content. However, the lack of an authoritative explanation of the prayer does not mean that Ivanov has relinquished the hope of depicting spiritual reality. Instead, he implies that the lyric poem can access this reality only through its individual apprehension. The changes in understanding over time both inform the poet of his own change and help to illuminate the spiritual reality from different perspectives. In sum, the poet seeks to reinterpret a memory in the light of experience and to gain some meaning from it that he can apply to his present situation.²²

The poet's task is not to disassociate narrative from raw experience but rather to fuse alternative narratives in a new act of narrative-creation. This explains the marked shift in emphasis away from the icon and the light it radiates to the offering of the devotee. The final line underscores the constructive power of devotion in the formation of the personality. The light of the candle is called "a gift of the oil, which pacified the waves." Since "peace" in Russian is a homonym of "world" (*mir*), one hears in this line the suggestion that the oil "made a world" of the waves. The act of devotion makes sense of the child's terror by transforming it into a narrative world. It is only as narrative, not as prayer, that the memory can be recovered and fused into a new world of meaning.

However, as I have argued, the lyric poem is itself severely limited in its capacity for narrative. Instead of combining life's moments into a life story, the lyric poem seems to suspend time and to unite the various periods of the poet's life in a timeless moment of memory. Dragan Kujundzić has noted a similar phenomenon in the poetry of Boris Pasternak, which "brings back a 'false memory' of the initial moment when language produced a name for a thing, and that memory is possible only as 'false' because the event it remembers is being repeated at the moment of remembering, therefore suspending memory in the moment of producing it. ('One cannot, by definition, remember an event and experience it in the moment of its making; one cannot remember presence')" (1997: 88). Kujundzić here applies Tynianov's concept of the interval (*promezhutok*), a moment in which language is born and which "is marked by its own coming into being" (93). In Ivanov's poem the polemic between the adult poet and the child of his memory brings into focus the poet's self, placing that self in the context of reality and making sense of the self as an entity bound and formed by time. The referent text (the icon) is suspended between its original reception by the child and the memory of this reception at another moment in time; the narrative of the icon becomes a narrative about its perceiver.

The shift in accent away from the Mother of God to the entreater himself does not imply a loss of faith in her reality. Rather, it suggests that poetry can communicate the attitude of prayer but not its object, not the experience itself. Ivanov's reevaluation of the lyric as a profoundly personal affair is more respectful both of poetry, whose purpose is now commensurate to its means, and of the spiritual universe, which can no longer be reduced to aesthetic formulae.

The interpretive limits placed on the lyric standpoint within this single poem are transcended in the larger framework into which Ivanov placed it, namely, *The Roman Diary of 1944*. The fivefold of allegorical myths (ritual, erotic, literary, historical, biographical) is bestowed precisely by this larger whole, which implicates individual lyrics in a nascent narrative, a manifold chronology, and a rehearsal of cultural history. As I demonstrate in greater detail in chapter 7, *The Roman Diary* comprises an interwoven chronology of events drawn from various levels of life, ranging from the purely personal to the cosmic and religious, yet united by their common share in memory. In this way, individual lyrics are relieved of the obligation to shoulder multiple layers of allegory and are freed to express the poet's personal experience more directly. Mythmaking in Ivanov's lyrics is focused on the poet's personal myth, his self-narrative. This permitted Ivanov to reflect on his

ideas in a distinct type of discourse, the epic, which gradually established itself in his writings in the 1910s as the complement to the heretofore dominant lyric discourse.

Ariel's Emancipation

The resolution of the creative tension in Ivanov's later poetry is illustrated by another poem from *The Roman Diary of 1944*. Here Ivanov sets up a simple myth, matching the allegorical (epic) and the mimetic (lyric) aspects of his creative persona to the characters Prospero and Ariel. In so doing, he implicates a single referent text: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The result is a complex narrative that asserts equivalences between particular moments of the play and Ivanov's creative life. Moreover, the yawning space between the two poles of the allegory invites the reader's intervention in deciding the matter.

Зачем, о Просперо волшебный,
Тебе престол,
Коль Ариель, твой дух служебный,
Прочь отошел.

Спешит к закату день Шекспира
С тех пор, как хмель
Его мечты не строит лира—
Смолк Ариель.

Ужели гений—волхв могучий,
Ты ж, Ариель,
Лишь посланец его певучий,—
Лишь эльф ужель?

Иль в гордую вошед обитель
Из шалаша,
Ты сам владыки повелитель,
Его душа? (Coll. Works 3:601)

[O why, wizardly Prospero,
Do you need a throne?
If Ariel, your attendant spirit,
Has departed forth.

Shakespeare's day has hastened to its sunset
Ever since his lyre

Has stopped creating the drug of his dream,
Ariel fell silent.

Is the genius really the mighty wizard,
While you, Ariel,
Are only his songful emissary,
Only an elf?

Or entering into the proud palace
From the grot,
Are you the lord of the master,
Are you his soul?]

Just as Prospero needs Ariel's inspiration, so Ivanov's allegorical reflection relies on the more immediate aesthetic power of the mimetic lyric. Yet it must free itself from its "attendant spirit" in order to assume historical agency.

To be sure, Ivanov's narratives and ideological schemes always remained dependent upon their lyric origin. At the moment when his epic discourse parts from the lyric, Ivanov could appropriate Prospero's wistful lament at the close of *The Tempest*:

. . . release me from my bands
With the help of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails . . . (Epilogue, 9–12)

Epic, Myth, Allegory

The symbolic power of Ivanov's lyrics was sometimes blunted by his Prospero-like attempt to control their interpretation through allegory. In chapter 1 I argued that Ivanov's mature lyric poetry resolves this tension by limiting the allegorical references to such extratextual factors as arrangement, dating, and dedication. Here I show how Ivanov's development of a purer lyric discourse was accompanied by a corresponding tendency to a purer epic discourse in his narrative works.

All five of Ivanov's major narrative works are expressions of a constant *epic ambition* to ground his lyrical work extrinsically in philosophical, social, and historical contexts. Specifically, Ivanov's dramas, narrative poems, and prose narrative all utilize complex allegorical schemes in creating an etiological myth of the symbolic lyric. The lyric artist is invariably depicted as a hero or saint undergoing a severe trial, a punishment for his transgression of ritual prohibitions. The scope of this etiological myth expands in each successive work. If in his dramas *Tantalus* and *Prometheus* Ivanov is concerned squarely with justifying the modernist lyric poet who fights the world order in defense of God's design, in *Infancy* he deals with the poet as an agent of history. In *Man* Ivanov shifts from autobiography to a defense of Scriabin's *Mysterium*, the ultimate intervention of an artist in ritual, which elevates Ivanov's poetry to a level of great theosophical abstraction. Finally, in *The Tale of Svetomir-Tsarevich* Ivanov reviews the agency of the writer as historian and shaper of the collective memory. I conclude that the increasingly pure allegorical nature of Ivanov's modernist narratives reflects his conscious search for a distinct epic discourse to complement his lyric interventions in ritual. This epic discourse is typified by the genre of the mystery play, an independent narrative that directs the spectator toward the sacrament or ritual that lies at its origin.

THE SONS OF PROMETHEUS

The Promethean Cosmos

Although Ivanov denoted his first two excursions into narrative as tragedies, I will argue that they are best read in the tradition of the medieval mystery play, Byron's allegorical plays, or *Trauerspiele* (as analyzed by Walter Benjamin). If the mystery play was often a narrative extension of the liturgy, then Ivanov's dramas provided myths as background to his lyrics. In fact, as I indicated in chapter 1, the origins of both dramas and the uncompleted *Niobe* can be traced directly to dithyrambic lyrics.

Tantalus originated from the dithyramb "Ganymede," which mainly relates of the protagonist's abduction by Zeus's eagles, the cause of both suffering and ecstasy.¹ Ivanov's emplotment of this mimetic lyric is quite ingenious. He attributes it to Pelops, one of the two sons of Tantalus. The son of Zeus and the nymph Pluto, Tantalus is the offspring of both heaven and the underworld, which qualifies him as a Titan. He sires the heavenly Pelops with the star goddess Dione, but his other son, Broteas, is born of Hemera (i.e., "fleeting moment") and belongs to the illusory world. The two sons act as Tantalus's doubles, embodying their father's mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly aspects (Toporov 1989: 108). Recounting his liaisons with the two goddesses, Tantalus proclaims to the chorus:

Тогда познал я, девы, что крылатый миг
и вечность, дольний цвет и звездный свод,
что все—мое зеркало, и что я—один. (*Coll. Works* 2:29)

[Then I learned, o maidens, that the fleeting instant
and eternity, the flower of the valley and starry firmament,
that everything is my mirror, and that I am alone.]

Ivanov's acolyte Evgeniia Gertsyk interpreted these lines (perhaps with the author's assistance) as "the daring of thought that has passed through the entire temptation of Kantianism and is again ignited by thirst, [. . .] the spirit of new humanity" (Gertsyk 1905: 166). Ivanov is eager to show that modern man, even if abandoned by God, still has intimations of immortality—precisely in the tragic depths of his transitory existence. Tantalus stands in for the modernist artist, cast off from traditional religion but capable of establishing new rituals. Yet Tantalus, sated with self-abundance and convinced of his solar divinity, also displays the negative side of the

modernist philosophy of the instant, which is embodied by his hapless son Broteas, who doggedly ties Tantalus down to the transient world.

To ensure his immortality, Tantalus invites the gods to a feast with Pelops. Coveted by both Zeus and Poseidon, Pelops is able to steal their ambrosia. Tantalus descends to offer the stolen nectar to the Titans Ixion and Sisyphus. It is a Eucharistic act: "You have partaken of divinity. You are immortal," says Tantalus (*Coll. Works* 2:62). In the drama's dominant allegory, this denotes the poet's sharing of his poetic gift. Amid this ecstatic reverie, however, Broteas steals up and spills the nectar on the earth, whence Zeus's doves quickly gather it up and return it back to Olympus. In the ensuing tumult Broteas is struck by lightning, the Titans Ixion and Sisyphus undergo eternal punishment, and Tantalus is suspended beneath the petrified cosmos, like an extinguished sun unable to rise (cf. Toporov 1989: 99). The end of the drama is a cosmic cliff-hanger, but there is a resolution.

Before being led like Isaac to the sacrificial altar, the youth Pelops had presented the text of "Ganymede" as a dream, in which he begs Zeus's eagle to attack his breast. Since Pelops is Tantalus's double, Pelops's sacrificial death represents Tantalus's vicarious reconciliation of earth with heaven (*Coll. Works* 2:55). This ensures a positive resolution of Tantalus's own predicament at the end of time.² Taken as an allegory, *Tantalus* suggests that the poet is sacrificed in the creative act, only to be redeemed at the apocalypse by his progeny's transcendent power.

Ivanov's second drama, *Prometheus* (*Prometei*; first published in 1915 under the title *The Sons of Prometheus* [*Syny Prometeia*]),³ presents a similar dynamic. Even Prometheus's fate—to be chained for all eternity to a cliff—is similar to that of Tantalus. The difference between the two dramas is that whereas Tantalus's offspring are ethereal aspects of his own psyche, Prometheus creates a new race—humanity—out of the remnants of Dionysus (according to the Orphic cosmology) and the clay of Mother Earth. Unlike Tantalus, who achieves only a return to eternity, Prometheus engenders historical action. In his 1919 commentary on *Prometheus*, Ivanov wrote: "In truth [Prometheus's sons] are the first fruits of fate and the initiators of the Titanic tragedy that is called world history. [. . .] When he summons the human race to being he knows that it will betray and crucify him, but still he believes that it will save him" (*Coll. Works* 2:168). While the resolution of *Tantalus* points to a redemption of the hero through his immortal will, at the end of *Prometheus* one discerns—just as darkly—the eschatological restoration of the entire universe through the hero's creation of new historical generations.

The very beginning of *Prometheus* consists of the choruses from the dithyramb “The Fire-Bearers.” This is in contrast to *Tantalus*, which incorporates the entire dithyramb “Ganymede” into the center of its dramatic development and makes it the goal of its allegorical explication. In *Prometheus* the lyric impulse is not the outcome of the narrative but its beginning. Prometheus’s task is to communicate the necessity of transcending the limits of the world through the lyric. The lyric signifies a freedom and a responsibility rooted in man’s inner consciousness of divine sonship. Like Tantalus, Prometheus sees his own immortality as a burden, since he is condemned to spend eternity in the dungeon of death. Humanity, by contrast, can transform eternal death into eternal life through historical action:

Мой темный сев дремучим встанет лесом
 Дубов нагорных, голосом Земли
 И преисподней Правды. (*Coll. Works* 2:114)

[My dark seed will rise as a dense forest
 Of mountain oaks, as the voice of the Earth
 And as nether Justice.]

Prometheus desires to fashion people capable of creating or binding themselves (126, 112). Yet they face a series of temptations that shake their resolve and incline them to the easier burden of obeisance to the law. The chorus of Oceanides in particular is mindful of the new burden of spiritual freedom that poisons men’s lives instead of liberating them, calling Prometheus the “forger of new chains” (113). These words bear more than a passing resemblance to those addressed to Christ by Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor. Prometheus later wonders whether his sons might not seek “to redeem the abundance of the world by light captivity and the generosity of the clouds by the meekness of their prayers” (127). This passive piety before established rituals would be a betrayal of the labor to which he appeals. Prometheus’s sons, however, continue on the path of Cain, using the fire of freedom as a weapon of internecine conflict. Jealousy and impiety raise Archates against Archemorus, introducing physical death into the world. Archates promptly commits suicide and Opheltes is mutilated by a lion, showing that the pestilence has spread beyond consciousness to the world of nature.

In his 1919 commentary to *Prometheus*, Ivanov analyzes the structure of his work as a pyramid (169). The rising plane reflects Prometheus’s creation and institution of immanent religion, which transgresses against the

established order of Olympus. The peak is formed by Prometheus's kenotic self-renunciation, brought on by the exhaustion of his agency. Finally, the descending plane is accounted for by the apostasy of his sons, who illustrate the bind of hereditary action and transgression (157). If *Tantalus* dramatizes Ivanov's inner intuition of the divine cosmos, *Prometheus* demonstrates how this cosmos can become a locus of human activity, of history.

The interpretation of historical action in Ivanov's second completed drama is complicated by the existence of two titles. Under the 1915 title *The Sons of Prometheus*, the drama stresses the historical conditions and consequences of Prometheus's action, which by analogy would present Ivanov's own art as an event in human history. By contrast, *Prometheus* (and its 1919 commentary) shifts the focus to Prometheus's plight as the creator and benefactor of an ungrateful mankind, which is seen as a timeless allegory for human creativity. Under this heroic title, Ivanov's drama is reminiscent of Byron's mystery plays *Manfred*, *Cain*, and *Heaven and Earth*, which for Ivanov typified the theomachic attitude of romanticism (*Coll Works* 2:163, 168; 4:283, 293). The original title, however, draws attention to the hero's progeny, highlighting the historical nature of the dilemma faced by humans. With this focus it could be taken as a drama about myth and memory: the myth of Prometheus preserves humanity's sense of an inner divine fire. In both cases the allegorical injunction remains similar: in his fallen state modern man must choose to affirm his divine potential. However, in *The Sons of Prometheus* this affirmation includes a sense of responsibility for the transmission of this divine legacy through history.

The Mystery Play

In contradistinction to Ivanov's definition of tragedy as man's encounter with transcendent darkness, his own nominal tragedies turn out to be unabashed allegories for the author's predicament as lyric poet. The mythological hero stands for the author himself, who cannot help but create, while his hapless offspring stand for the audience, who both need the poet's creative act and are liable to reject it in their spiritual indolence. The drama arises as a narrative explication of the originary lyric. The narrative element gestures toward the catharsis of the lyric poem but does not necessarily preserve it. It is not surprising that Ivanov's dramas have never been staged.

It is reasonable to regard Ivanov's dramas not as tragedies but as mystery plays, which historically arose as allegorical and narrative extensions of the sacrament. Although Ivanov seems to have distinguished between the genres of "tragedy" and "mystery play" (*misteriia*), the precise difference for him

remained vague.⁴ In a 1906 prescription for modernist theater, Ivanov simply equates the two genres: “[D]ivine and heroic tragedy, such as was ancient tragedy, and mystery, more or less analogous to medieval mystery plays, most closely correspond to the forms that we expect the synthetic rite to take” (*SE* 108; *Coll. Works* 2:100). Moreover, “tragedies, comedies and mystery plays must become the hearths of the nation’s creative or prophetic self-determination” (*SE* 110; *Coll. Works* 2:103). Ivanov’s most extensive discussion of the mystery play occurs in his 1923 study *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism*, where he quotes Goethe on the mystery play as the modern form of tragedy: “Just as Greek tragedy issued from the lyric, so in our day we have a notable example of how drama sought to liberate itself from the historical or, rather, epic narration; we see this in the way that Holy Week is celebrated in Catholic churches with a passion play.”⁵

Furthermore, Ivanov projects the mood of the mystery play onto tragedy: “If we imagined in a Christian society a special stage for spiritual mystery plays, the content of which would be borrowed mostly from the lives of the saints, a stage on which images of God could appear only in the distance and only episodically, in visions, prologues and epilogues, we would approach an understanding of the religious reserve that prescribed that tragedy not go beyond the bounds of a holy golden legend about the heroes” (*DP* 252). This is a transparent reference to *Faust*, with its “Prologue in Heaven” and the allegorical visions of Part II. As if following Vladimir Solovyov’s paradoxical definition of *Faust* as a “lyrico-epic tragedy,”⁶ Ivanov sees in the mystery play a way to augment the tragic power of lyric poetry with the breadth of epic narrative.

Thus, despite his Nietzschean rhetoric, at times Ivanov identifies a direct lineage between ancient tragedy, Christian mystery plays, and the allegorical drama of romanticism. Ivanov projects the romantic cult of the poet back onto medieval mystery plays and ancient tragedy. He also projects Christian theology back upon Greek mythology, imbuing the latter with a singularly un-Hellenic teleology and eschatology. In this way Ivanov creates tragic heroes whose actions are conceivable only in the Christian terms of guilt and atonement; their responses are neither silent nor self-damning, as in ancient tragedy, but rather eloquent and defiant. In this respect Ivanov’s theory of tragedy finds points of contact with Walter Benjamin’s discussion of the medieval mystery play and the religious dramas of the baroque. In the medieval mystery play history is seen *sub specie aeternitatis*—an immanent process with repercussions in the transcendent realm; it therefore bears a significant eschatological element (Benjamin 1998: 77–78). The later, more

secularized *Trauerspiel* manifests a “baroque, secular explanation of history as the Passion of the world” (166), where eschatology is replaced in the climax by the hero’s death. The *Trauerspiel* compromises the value of practical virtue and historical action insofar as “the only response to the call of history is the physical pain of martyrdom” (91). “Death,” Benjamin writes, “is not punishment but atonement, an expression of the subjection of guilty life to the law of natural life” (131). If the tragic hero achieves cathartic silence at the end of his action (108), in the *Trauerspiel* the heroes are always fully conscious of the “dialectic of their fate”; moreover, they share the lessons they have learned before they expire: “Devoted neither to the earthly nor to the moral happiness of creatures, its exclusive aim is their mysterious instruction” (170).

It is just such “mysterious instruction” that Ivanov pursued in his allegorical dramas, which eschew silent imitation for eloquent dissimulation. In this spirit Ivanov praises modern artworks, which “are marked by a demonstrative gesture, like the outstretched finger that points to something beyond the border of the canvas in the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci” (*SE* 95; *Coll. Works* 2:86). Ivanov’s “demonstrative gesture” is what Benjamin calls “the eccentric embrace of meaning” (1998: 202): “[T]he profane world [. . .] is characterized as a world in which the detail is of no great importance. [. . .] [A]ll of the things which are used to signify derive, from the very fact of their pointing to something else, a power which makes them appear no longer commensurable with profane things, which raises them onto a higher plane, and which can, indeed, sanctify them” (175). Benjamin decries the romantic bias against allegory, which ignored balanced assessments of symbol and allegory such as that given in Friedrich Creuzer’s formulation: “There [in symbol] we have momentary totality; here [in allegory] we have progression in a series of moments. And for this reason it is allegory, and not the symbol, which embraces myth . . . , the essence of which is most adequately expressed in the progression of the epic poem” (165). Similarly, for Ivanov allegory is the preeminent means of emplotting the symbol in a temporal sequence, which renders it transparent for interpretation and active as a pedagogical guide in the world.

Walter Benjamin’s defense of allegory helps us to appreciate the peculiar epic discourse achieved by Ivanov in his dramas. While everything in the texts can be mapped onto his ideological system almost without any remainder, the activation of the allegory requires an assertive reading posture that belies simple didacticism. In the very act of tracing the allegory the reader exercises free agency; he traces the direction of Ivanov’s thoughts but frees

himself from their obligatory conclusions. In fact, just as the medieval mystery play led the spectator to the Eucharist, so Ivanov's allegorical dramas gesture back to the mimetic and cathartic event that itself is pure act, empty of meaning. It is for this reason that the mystery play is a key artistic form of Russian modernism: it utilizes universal narrative structures to lead the reader or spectator beyond narrative to either pure mimetic poetry, ritual, or even liturgy. While Ivanov's subsequent narrative works steer clear of the dramatic form, they retain the character of semiliturgical allegories or mysteries based on the image of the heroic artist as martyr. They also accrue a richer basis in social and cultural history that expands their allegorical resonance.

INFANCY

Paradise and Poetry

Infancy is a long narrative poem that Ivanov wrote in 1912 during the period of the "tender mystery", when his elaborate lyrical vision was resolved in the human image of his son. Accordingly, Ivanov here focuses attention on the poet as *person* and explores the possibility of his inner renewal. The protagonist no longer stands for the poet but *is* the poet—the author of the work at hand and a palpable human being. As history assumes flesh and blood in a concrete narrative voice, the reader is able to identify more closely with the protagonist, who inhabits a familiar world (at least compared to that of the Greek heroes). The main allegorical burden is shifted from the narrative proper onto the poem's intertextual references, which are mostly to Pushkin. Moreover, these references are more structural in nature than thematic; significantly, the poem is composed in the peculiar stanzaic form that Pushkin invented for his "novel in verse" *Eugene Onegin*. As a result, of all Ivanov's long poetic works, *Infancy* is least like a mystery play, although it retains the basic structure of an allegorical myth that gestures toward its own origin in the lyric poetry of *The Tender Mystery*.⁷ It is also closely aligned with autobiographical narrative poems by Ivanov's closest coevals: Blok's *Retribution* (*Vozmezdnie*, begun in 1910 and published in 1922) and Bely's *First Encounter* (*Pervoe Svidanie*, 1921).

Like Wordsworth in his "Intimations of Immortality," Ivanov depicts his early childhood as the gradual loss of paradise and the equally gradual revelation of his poetic calling. At first the child exists in a world that consists not of things but of archetypes and symbols. In the pious atmosphere of his mother's family, the boy is surrounded by the heavenly images of Orthodox art:

Где в сретенье лучам Христа
Земная рдеет красота. (*Coll. Works* 1:232)

[Where earthly beauty warmly glows
To meet the descending rays of Christ.]

The word “sreten’e” is most commonly encountered as the name of the feast of the Meeting (or Presentation) of the Lord Jesus Christ (February 2), which celebrates Christ’s recognition as Saviour by the elder Simeon and the prophetess Anna, who represent the Old Testament. The implication is that the future poet’s birth is a comparable event—if on a somewhat lesser scale—in the history of salvation. Growing up opposite the Moscow zoo, young Viacheslav glimpses rare animals in exotic surroundings. This connection to chthonic nature is strengthened by his christening in the Church of Saint George, the patron saint of wolves, and by the fact that he lives in Volkov [Wolves’] Lane. The Ivanovs’ own garden is an entrance (*preddverie*) to this “realm of Eden” (239). The hopes engendered by Alexander II’s Great Reforms of the 1860s cast Ivanov’s infancy in “the last reflections of the robes of this golden day” (236). These “early visions of being” (239) left indelible yet inexplicable impressions in his soul, such as a love for the sea, which he had never seen (240–41) and for “the holy language of silence” (241).⁸

Some of these vague yet vivid images bespeak the impending loss of his childhood “wealth.” The poet recalls the red cloth that flew away like a bird, which his nurse used to represent the breast from which he was being weaned (241). The antediluvian sights of Wolves’ Lane are replaced by the morally ambivalent images of modernity, such as trains and the theater. Suddenly a religious elder stands before him dourly, as if in solemn benediction, like Simeon in the Gospel of Luke. However, instead of dwelling on this allegorical identification, Ivanov paints the elder’s icon:

О чем пророчески грустил?
Что дальним дням благовестил?
Напутствовал на подвиг темный
Ты волю темную мою?
Икону ль кроткую свою
В душе мятежной и бездомной
Хотел навек отпечатлеть,
Чтоб знал беглец, о чем жалеть,—

XXXVIII

Чтоб о родимой Фиваиде,
 Кто в мир шагнул, за скитский тын,
 И лика Божия отъиде,—
 Воспомнил в день свой, блудный сын? (*Coll. Works* 1:249)

[What brought on your prophetic grief?
 What did you tide for distant days?
 Did you charge my obscure will
 With a future labor, more obscure still?
 Was it that you desired to imprint
 Your humble icon in the poor soul
 Of this rebellious and homeless youth?
 —So that the fugitive might mourn;

XXVIII

So that the prodigal son, who left
 His hermitage for the wide world,
 Abandoning the face of God,
 Recalled his native Thebaid.]

It is notable that Ivanov depicts his eternal childhood in the primary colors of pure mimesis, as static icons. However, the story essentially concerns the narrator's struggle to apply these timeless images to his existence in time. Allegorical references to the prodigal son and to Dostoevsky's unwritten "life of a great sinner" foretell young Viacheslav's passage from the symbolic heaven of childhood into the world of allegory and myth. The loss of paradise is the completion of young Viacheslav's birth into the world and alienation from eternal paradise. The image of sanctity that Ivanov will carry within makes memory the vital organ of religious knowledge as he takes up his creative task.

The theme of childhood as a lost paradise remained with Ivanov throughout his creative life. Already in 1904 he had written: "Only childhood, which knows neither death nor fear nor shame, is a kind of echo and continuation of the forgotten paradise of the earth. And it is better that the body die than the soul in that fateful instant when a man once again is exiled from paradise. [. . .] But is it really impossible to be resurrected and to return to the lost paradise of infancy?" (1904: 50). In *Infancy* Viacheslav begins to discern

a means, if not to return to paradise, then at least to counteract his complete alienation from it: poetry. Poetry expands the symbolic icon of the elder into the language of allegory. The rough tool of poetry mines the gold of memory, just as the overflowing Nile reclaims the sepulchral pyramids:

Стихи я слышу: как лопата
Железная, отважный путь
Врезая в каменную грудь,
Из недр выносит медь и золото,
Как моет где-то желтый Нил
Ступени каменных могил . . . (*Coll. Works* 1:245)

[I hearken to the sound of poetry:
As iron spades incise bold paths
Into the stony breast of land,
Exhuming bronze and gold from deep,—
Just as the yellow Nile does wash
The steps of stone sarcophagi.]

The full revelation of the boy's future vocation as poet emplots iconic infancy in allegories of maturity and growth taken from the Psalms:

Мать новолетие встречает,—
Гадает, разогнув Псалтырь:
«В семье отца я, пастырь юный,
Был меньшим. Сотворили струнный
Псалтирион мои персты» . . .
—«Дар песен вещице листы
Тебе пророчат» . . . Неразлучен
С тех пор с душою их завет:
Как будто потаенный свет,
В скудели полрой, мне поручен,—
Дано сокровище нести . . .
Пора младенчества, прости! (*Coll. Works* 1:253)

[My mother started the new year
By fortune-telling from the Psalter:
“Young shepherd, in my father's family
I was the youngest. And my fingers

Did form this stringed Psalterion. . . ?
 The vatic pages prophesy
 The gift of song for you. . . ” Since then
 This testament stayed in my soul:
 It was as if I was entrusted
 A hollow bushel with hidden light—
 I had a treasure to bear forth . . .
 Farewell, o time of infancy.]

As the poet’s mother gives an allegorical reading of the psalm, infancy itself is brought to an end by the all-consuming fire: the divine duty of guarding the light in the hollow pot clashes with a moral impulse to share the light, and with fear of incurring divine wrath for the original theft of fire. One consequence of sharing the light is the diffusion of the poet’s consciousness:

Впервые солнечная сила,
 Какой не знал мой ранний рай,
 Мне грудь наполнила по край
 И в ней недвижно опочила . . .
 Пробился ключ; живой родник
 Лягнется новый мой двойник . . . (*Coll. Works* 1:254)⁹

[All of a sudden solar power,
 Unknown to early paradise,
 Swelled up within my breast
 And motionlessly came to rest there . . .
 A spring burst forth; in the live spring
 There was reflected my new double.]

The poet’s power will be absorbed in objectified expressions that will stare back at their author without recognition, like the prismatic bricks of the glass wall that now surrounds lost paradise.

The Path Back

In many respects the narrative of *Infancy* repeats the theme of self-sacrificial creativity that I discern in Ivanov’s mythical dramas. However, if in *Prometheus* the creative individual is undermined by his offspring, in *Infancy* the creative individual redeems his progenitor. As the young Viacheslav grows,

his father is gradually dying of consumption. The very first stanza of *Infancy* posits an almost causal relationship between the demise of Ivanov senior and the rise of his heavenly son:

Отец мой был из нелюдимых,
 Из одиноких,—и невер.
 Стеля по мху болот родимых
 Стальные цепи, землемер [. . .]
 Схватил он семя злой чахотки,
 Что в гроб его потом свела.
 Мать разрешения ждала,—
 И вышла из туманной лодки
 На брег земного бытия
 Изгнанница—душа моя. (*Coll. Works* 1:231)

[My father was a solitary,
 A lonely man, an atheist.
 A surveyor, across the moss
 Of native bogs he cast steel chains [. . .]
 And caught the seed of bad consumption
 Which then would lead him to his grave.
 My mother waited out her term,—
 Out of a boat all veiled in mist
 Onto the shore of earthly being
 There stepped my soul into its exile.]

The stark juxtaposition between the father's fatal disease and the son's birth immediately puts the father in doubtful stead. Throughout the poem the father appears as a shadow inhabiting the dark corners of the house, in contrast to the mother, who presides over the infantile paradise. His very courtship of the mother is characterized as "weaving webs" (238) and later he hatches a devious plan "to incline the female heart to atheism" (243).

The character of the father is also drenched in allegory. Ivanov calls his father Oedipus, since "divine mystery and pride made battle in his thirsting mind" (243). Ivanov regrets that the child was fated to repeat his father's revolt against God (244). Still, the reference to Oedipus hints that his father is himself merely the victim of ancestral sin and represents an active principle that alone is capable of erasing the stain of its own origins. In his

profession of surveyor he despoils the land by dragging iron chains across paradise. However, like the iron spade that cuts a path into memory, this is a Promethean transgression that, at the very least, is proof of good intentions. Moreover, the profession ties the father both to the land and to the Apollonian idea of measure (the Russian word *zemlemer* literally means “measurer of the land”). The father’s labors parallel the child’s poetic labors. In fact, the child’s birth brings the father’s activity to an end:

Но с той поры, как я родился,
 На цепь и циркуль спроса нет:
 В уединенный кабинет
 Он сел, от мира заградился
 И грудю вольнодумных книг
 Меж Богом и собой воздиг. (*Coll. Works* 1:242)

[But since the day when I was born
 He had no need of chain and compass:
 Sat in his solitary study,
 He closed himself off from the world
 He raised between himself and God
 A heap of free-thinking books.]

The child’s vocation replaces his father’s agency.¹⁰ Ivanov may even have intended the word “surveyor” to evoke associations with the caterpillar, which is also called *zemlemer* since it “inches” along the ground. Just as the caterpillar dies in order to metamorphose into a butterfly, the child-poet hopes that he will redeem the ancestral curse by undergoing the necessary transformation.

Since the road back to paradise passes through Promethean action, the apparent conflict between the elder’s static image and the dynamic obligation to develop his earthly inheritance fades into the background. Through his identification with his father, the poet sees that the road to cosmic reunification and personal redemption lies through the further diffusion of his soul in the prismatic mirrors of his future creations. Carol Ueland has noted that Ivanov links the period of infancy to silence, restoring the etymology of the Latin term *infantia* (literally, the inability to speak; 1992: 350). Accordingly, the poem covers only the silence that precedes speaking, without reaching the time of actual verbal creativity. At the end of the poem a new spiritual battle is brewing, providing a foretaste of the poet’s future activity. Following the

father's death, it appears to the mother as a struggle between evil and blessed spirits for her child's soul,¹¹ and also as two idols vying for his worship:

В старинной церкви Спиридонья
 Родимой тонкого просонья
 Являют новые струи
 Простор пустынной соли
 И два по клиросам кумира:
 Тут—*ангел* медный, гость небес;
 Там—*аггел* мрака, медный бес . . .
 И два таинственные мира
 Я научаюсь различать,
 Принимаю от двоих печать. (*Coll. Works* 1:254)

[New streams of quiet sleepiness
 Revealed a vision to my mother:
 The spacious and deserted altar,
 In the old church of Spiridon
 With two idols astride the altar:
 Here stood bronze *angel*, guest of heaven;
 There *aggelos* of the gloom, bronze demon . . .
 And gradually I learn to see
 The two mysterious domains,
 Accepting the seal of both.]

The first angel is a bronze icon, a likeness and messenger of heavenly realities, evoking reverence not for himself but for his Master. The other *aggelos* (Ivanov's Hellenized orthography suggests its archaic nature) purports to be a divinity but is, in fact, a hollow idol.¹² Although the choice might seem clear, it is not possible to follow the first angel alone. This ambivalence is demonstrated if one traces these images to their source in Pushkin's "At life's beginning I remember school," where the hero recalls being tempted in the park of the lycée by two statues, which he calls "wonderful creations" and "demons." Venus is "a magic demon, deceptive but beautiful," comparable to Ivanov's "bronze angel." Pushkin's other demon, Apollo ("the Delphic idol"), is a more Luciferian figure who, although subject to "terrible pride," represents a life force necessary for the proper apprehension and embodiment of the divine beauty that is passively revealed by Venus. Like Ivanov's father, Pushkin's Apollo represents the active path to redemption,

which will cause the poet to suffer by alienating himself into a series of ambivalent doubles.¹³ The poem itself represents the result of this dual path since it includes specific icons of beauty (the mother, the elder) and an open narrative form, both mediated by the poet's creative memory.

Like *Prometheus*, *Infancy* evokes the creative dilemma of the artist who undertakes the restoration of the primordial cosmos through his own efforts, thus incurring the hereditary sin inherent in any action. Compared to Ivanov's dramas, *Infancy* is much more engaged with its historical and cultural situation due to its roots in biography and literary history. Instead of elaborate ancient myths that force the reader to consult dusty reference works, the tale depends upon its narrative cogency and a panoply of recognizable cultural and historical facts, especially the poetry of Aleksandr Pushkin. While the poem still remains dependent upon its origin in Ivanov's lyrics, it shows him utilizing narrative as a separate medium of meaning.

MAN

The Composition of Ivanov's Man

Viacheslav Ivanov's poem *Man* is at the opposite extreme from *Infancy*, eschewing narrative plot for elaborate intellectual allegory. The cryptic imagery and diction tend toward the oracular, with certain passages sounding like tongue twisters, brainteasers, or puzzles. This is, it would seem, a work not for recital or performance but rather for study and interpretation.¹⁴ Here I argue that it aspires to be a "mysterious instruction" with respect to Aleksandr Scriabin's *Mysterium*, which itself was the consummate ritual of Russian modernism. In other words, Ivanov's *Man* occupies a status similar to that of Scriabin's *Preliminary Act*, conceived as a kind of bridge to the *Mysterium*.

In *Infancy* Ivanov liberated himself from his lyrics by appropriating Pushkinian form and imagery. *Man*, by contrast, is cut from the whole cloth of Ivanov's lyric discourse. It comprises a tapestry of sixty-four lyric poems divided into five parts and woven into complex substructures. The first three parts were composed in less than three months—from 25 May to 15 July 1915 (Shishkin 1992: 53)—immediately following Scriabin's death on 14/27 April 1915. The fourth part and the epilogue, added in late 1918 and early 1919, include lyric poems written (and in one case even published) earlier in 1916 and 1918.¹⁵ When preparing *Man* for publication in the late 1930s, Ivanov added to part 4 a conclusion ("Ephymnion") consisting of two short lyric poems dating from 1916 and 1917 (*Coll. Works* 1:740). The complete

work was published in Paris on the eve of World War II (Shor 1971: 196), which ensured that it went unnoticed by critics and readers alike.

Despite its divisibility into five component parts written over a four-year span and finally assembled only twenty years later, Ivanov's *Man* boasts an extremely tight structure. Parts 1 and 2 are both organized as two parallel series of lyric poems, what Ivanov called the *meloi* and *antimeloi*. Each poem in the first series (the *meloi*) corresponds to a structurally identical poem with the same number in the second series (the *antimeloi*). In part 1, "I Am" ("Az esm"), the two series are numbered (with Greek numerals) in parallel fashion, with each pair of matching poems occupying the same relative position, while in part 2, "Thou Art" ("Ty esi"), the numeration of the second series is reversed, with the two arms revealing a pyramidal shape, hinged on an extra poem entitled "Acme" ("ακμή"). The result in part 2 is a pyramidal structure similar to that which Ivanov projected in his tragedy *Prometheus* (see the section "The Promethean Cosmos"). Part 3, "Two Cities," consists of a garland of sonnets¹⁶ prefaced by a "Prooemion" (originally published separately as "The Last Times" ["Poslednie vremena"]) in the final version. Although part 4 has a pyramidal structure similar to that of part 2, it is only half the length. The epilogue contains nine octaves, numbered sequentially with arabic numerals. The overall formal structure of *Man* is represented in figure 1.

In rough terms, part 1 ("I Am") narrates the fall as a double event: the *meloi* tell of man's fall into sin and its consequences on earth; the *antimeloi* relate the celestial fall of Lucifer. In both cases the cause for the fall is the assertion of selfhood apart from God, who is the root of being. Separation from God makes their selfhood illusory and necessitates cosmic reunion. Both series open with images that Ivanov shares with Scriabin's libretto for the *Preliminary Act*: the wave (*volna*) and the light beam (*luch*). The wave is the feminine cause of the fall on earth. For instance, take the very first lyric:

Когда лазурь—как опахало
 Над Афродитой золотой,
 Как баснословное зеркало—
 Пред нею вод металл литой:

Вдруг как озлобится, захлещет,
 Похитит ветер паруса,
 И море мраком оклеветает
 Безоблачные небеса.

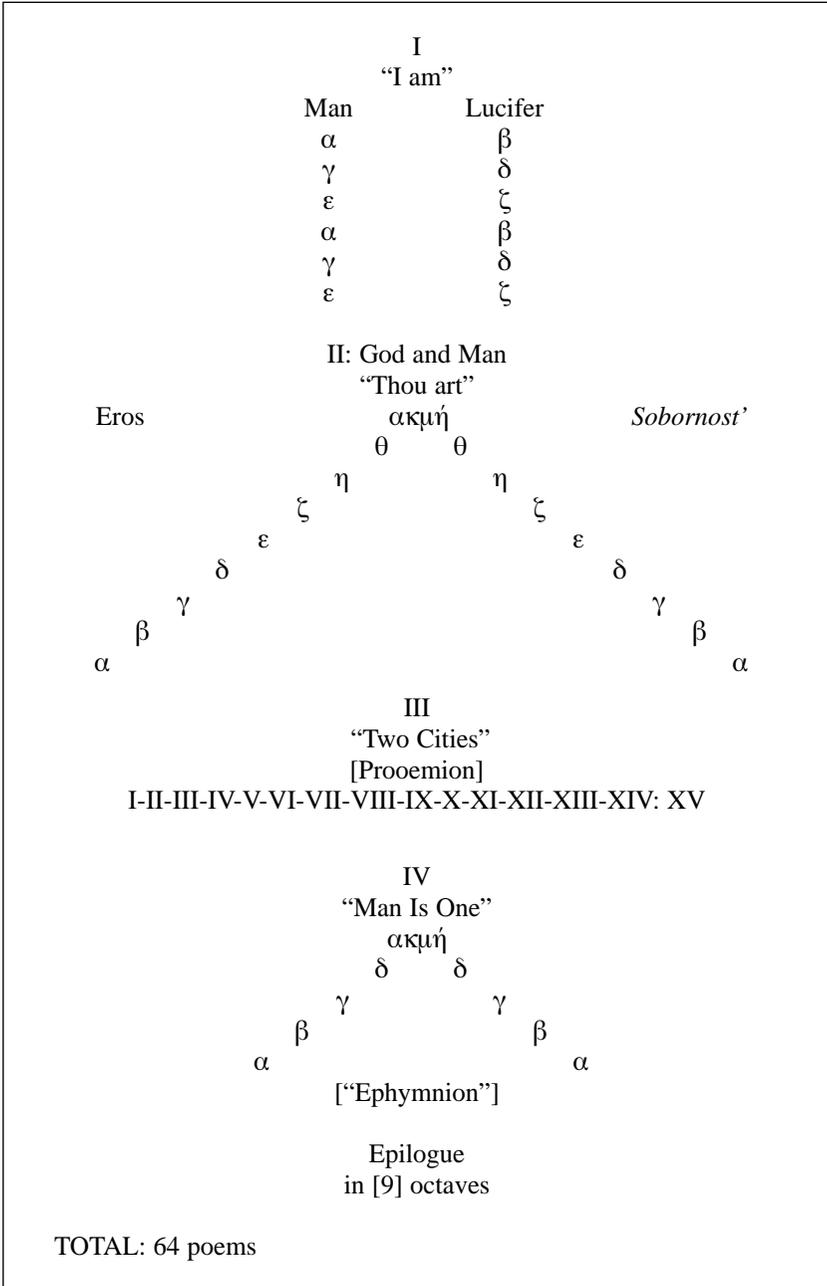


Figure 1.

Так и душе—святыни строя
 Не сотворить в своих мирах:
 Пока не отдан праху прах,
 Не знать волнуемой покоя. . .

Но и тогда (увы, тогда-то
 Еще мятежней, может быть!)
 О берег все, чем дно богато,
 Волною мутной станет бить. (*Coll. Works* 3:198)

[When the azure sky is like a fan
 Above golden Aphrodite,
 While the forged metal of the waters
 Is before her like a fabulous mirror:

Then suddenly the tide becomes furious and whips,
 And the wind steals the sails,
 And the sea slanders the cloudless heavens
 By calling them gloom.

So also the soul is unable to create
 Sacred harmony in its worlds:
 Until dust returns to dust,
 The agitated soul will know no rest . . .

But even then (alas, precisely then
 It may be even more rebellious!)
 All the seabed's riches will beat
 Against the shore as a muddy wave.^{17]}

The sea stands for the soul, viewed through Aphrodite's "fabulous [or allegorical] mirror": seeing its own pristine beauty, creation rebels, the azure sea and tranquil waters rise in a muddy wave, and the soul is forever agitated. In the corresponding *antimelos*, the celestial fall is triggered by the masculine beam or shaft of light (*luch*):

Когда небесная Земля,
 Согрета Солнцем запредельным,
 Благословенные поля
 Вздымала лоном колыбельным,

Неся в лазури первых сфер
 Эфирный сев, Отцом посеян,—
 Был в сердце Розы Люцифер
 Неизреченно возлелеян.

Развертывались чередой,
 Как лепестки, иерархии:
 Он был предмирной литургии
 Дориносимую звездой.

Но преломился бег луча,
 И, солнцем отделясь от стебля,
 Пал Богоносец, мрак влача
 И девять светочей колебля. (*Coll. Works* 3:201–2)

[When the heavenly Earth,
 Warmed by the transcendent Sun,
 Raised the blessed fields
 As a maternal womb,
 Bearing its aerial seed, sown by the Father,
 In the azure of the first spheres;
 Then in the heart of the Rose Lucifer was
 Unspeakably nourished.

The hierarchies unfolded in turn
 Like petals:
 He was the spear-bearing star
 Of the pre-universal liturgy.

But the flight of the shaft was refracted,
 And, separated from the stem as a sun,
 The God-bearer fell, dragging the gloom
 And shaking the nine torches.¹⁸

Here, as it were, we learn the underlying reasons for the earthly fall. The earth, the sun, and the ensuing gloom all have celestial counterparts. Originally at the heart of the Dantean Paradise, emanating celestial hierarchies, Lucifer falls due to some random spark—the refraction of the shaft of light—which turns him to rebellion and imprisons him in the icy separation of nonbeing.

Part 2 (“Thou Art”) tells how being is regained by sacrificing selfhood in

love or passion. The first series (*meioi*) presents this sacrificial act in verses reminiscent of Ivanov's conjugal poetry. Take, for example, the following hymn to Eros:

Тенью по стопам четы
 Реешь ты.
 Учит правнуков канцона:
 «Ночь настанет—приходи,
 Приводи
 Третьим в гости Купидона».
 Третьим ты стоял меж двух,
 Тайный дух,
 Еле взору взор блаженный
 Говорил без слов: «живу
 Наяву
 Лишь тобою, вожденный!» [. . .]
 Розой рдяною процвел
 Мертвый ствол
 В день когда, тобой волнуем,
 Я, затворник немоты,
 Слову «ты»
 Научился—поцелуем. (*Coll. Works* 3:211–12)

[As a shadow along the heels of the couple
 You flutter.
 The canzona teaches the descendents:
 “Night will fall—come
 And bring along
 Cupid as the third.
 You stood as a third among two,
 Secret spirit,
 As soon as your blessed gaze said
 To my gaze without words: “I live
 In reality
 Only by you, whom I desire!” [. . .]
 The dead trunk has blossomed
 As a fiery rose
 On the day when, agitated by you,

I, a hermit of silence,
 Learned the word
 “You”—with a kiss.]

The descending series of *antimeloi* picks up the erotic theme in more allegories and myths that describe the revelation of “the third” as the founding of the Church, the mystical interpretation of the Hebrew alphabet, the casting of the conjugal ring into the watery depths, and the regeneration of Adam and Eve. In the last poem, which matches up with the first, the lyric voice recognizes “my beloved one in the earth” and then, by declaring “Thou art!,” receives news of his soul’s resurrection. This seems a transparent reminiscence of the “tender mystery,” specifically of Lidia’s reincarnation as Vera. Significantly, the poet here identifies himself as a “singer” (*pevets*), which indicates that the rebirth of love and establishment of community is achieved through song.

Part 3 develops the theme that human society is an aspect of the universal and eternal community of souls, that is, of Augustine’s *City of God*, the work from which Ivanov drew the epigraph for *Man* and the source for the title for the garland of sonnets: “Two Cities.”¹⁹ Ivanov affirms that ancient tradition has been forgotten, that it is necessary to resurrect human ancestors and join them in the “camp of the saved.” The cosmic bride, Ivanov writes, needs a full-blooded Man, not the crippled sons of Babel. The theme of unity introduces the motif of the Temple, which was also a key part of Scriabin’s plan for the *Mysterium*. Boris de Schloezer related that Scriabin was ready to use any existing building “as long as it had a round shape.”²⁰ The shape of Scriabin’s temple is echoed in the circular form of part 3, which leads back to the opening insight that “the memory of primeval charms has been erased” (*Coll. Works* 3:224). Toward the end of part 3 a new theme emerges: the song, which becomes “bitter” as it curls back to its beginning (230). There is the hint that, having passed through the parallel lines of part 1, the pyramid of part 2, and an ascent to the level at which music is born, one must reenter the labyrinth and retrace one’s steps.

Part 4 and the epilogue, which were added later, develop the major themes of the fall and the establishment of community into the assertion that “Man [or Humanity] Is One” (“Chelovek edin”) and that the eternal community of souls is the foundation of the historical church. Olga Shor has commented that the epilogue might well have been entitled “Sobornost” (*Coll. Works* 1:737). Indeed, one is tempted to translate much of the work into the language of religious philosophy.

Man as Allegory

The structural clarity and intellectual content of *Man* is compromised by its elaborate skein of allegory. Several recurring symbols gradually become allegorized throughout the first three parts—the azure, mirror, the wave, tiger, snake, shafts of light, the diamond, the ring—all of which receive quite specific cosmological denotations. The allegorization of these symbols somewhat belies the aesthetic program that the poem declares in the second *melos* of part 1:

Творец икон и сам Икона,
Ты, Человек, мне в ближнем свят,
И в звездных знаках небосклона
Твои мне знаменья горят.

Но благолепной плененою
Земля лежит убелена,
Доколе мутною волною
Не размятежится весна.

Так все божницы, все оклады
Расплавит огненный язык,
Чтоб из пылающей громады
Явить нерукотворный Лик. (*Coll. Works* 3:198–99)

[Creator of icons and yourself an Icon,
You, Man, are sacred to me in my neighbor,
And in the astral signs of the firmament
Your symbols burn for me.

But the Earth lies whitened
By a beautiful film,
Until spring rebels
In a muddy wave.

Thus all icon cases and frames
Will be molten by the tongue of flame
So that from the burning mass
There be revealed the Face not made by human hands.]

This iconoclastic sentiment, common to Ivanov's dithyrambs, is quite close to the spirit of Scriabin's *Mysterium*, which also posited the destruction of

all relative images as a precondition for revealing ultimate reality. However, in *Man Ivanov* is not seeking to engineer this transformation of wrought icons into the living Icon but rather striving to explain it as the design of Scriabin's *Mysterium*. Instead of being consumed by the sacramental flame of a new Pentecost, the symbols are developed into allegorical myths in the poet's "fabulous mirror." In the matching *antimelos* of part 1, several of the symbols combine in a story of the fall that illuminates the sky like a laser light show:

Кто «Есмь» изрек, нарекшись «Аз»,—
 Свой, с начертанием глагола
 С тайной Имени, алмаз
 Судил наследнику престола.

А сам сокрылся в глубь небес.
 Но лишь прочел «Аз есмь» Денница
 В луче от перстня, луч исчез,
 И стало сердце—как темница.

Почто «Отец и я одно»
 Ты не сказал, украв, надменный,
 Сей луч, расплавивший звено
 И цепь рассыпавший вселенной. (*Coll. Works* 3:202)

[The one who said "Am" having said "I,"
 Has willed to the heir of the throne
 His diamond inscribed with the verb
 And the mystery of the Name.

But he himself has hidden in the depths of heaven.
 But as soon as the Morning Star read "I am"
 In the light beam from the ring, the beam disappeared,
 And his heart became like a prison.

Since you did not say "The Father and I am one"
 O arrogant one, by stealing the beam
 That melted the link
 And scattered the chain of the universe.]

The symbols come to life in a nascent narrative that constantly reverts to reflective analysis. In the first stanza, God (who said "I Am Who I Am") wills to his human heirs a diamond inscribed with signs of selfhood ("I")

and divine being (“am”). However, in a gnostic move God conceals himself and Lucifer throws the universe out of kilter by affirming his selfhood outside of God, separating “I” from “am.” This theft of divine light upsets the order of the universe. The next poem reveals “I” and “am” to be the “beams of the cross” on which selfhood will be crucified. Lucifer and Christ are thus revealed to be two faces of one and the same essence—and so forth throughout the first three parts of *Man*.

Part 4 and the epilogue are quite different in tone. There are, to be sure, numerous mythological references—mostly to the key stories of Adam/Eve/Cain, Prometheus, and Christ—but these are linked by the clear narrative voice of the poet, who is here an “accidental stranger” happening upon the wake of a old woman fallen victim to the famine (*Coll. Works* 3:215). These are easily recognizable as scenes from the dark days of War Communism in Soviet Russia, and they bear close resemblance to several memoirs of Ivanov’s life in 1918–20 (Ivanova 1992: 77–87; Grechaninov 1951, 1952). The epilogue, by contrast, recalls a dream about the transubstantiation of the divine gifts, ending in a paraphrase of the Orthodox prayer to the Holy Spirit. It is an “epilogue in heaven.” If the first three parts seek to overcome alienation mainly by affirming the common, divine origin of man as revealed in universal cultural myths and new modernist rituals, the existential hope of the last two parts is rooted in the universality of death, the historical community of souls, and the Eucharistic sacrifice. The latter two parts are filtered through the personal memory of the poet, which endows all of its references with a sense of the time and place of its creation and shapes the poem into a personal commemoration of deceased friends and loved ones.

The two chronological layers of *Man* thus reveal distinct discursive strategies. The first three parts join separate lyrics together without a plot, using shards of cultural memory as conventional signs of the author’s metaphysics. The latter two parts, by contrast, unite the lyrical images in a concrete character (albeit that of the poet) and historical context. If the first three parts utilize myths, only the last part comes close actually to creating a myth by emplotting the allegory into a temporal sequence. Taken as a whole, *Man* should be defined as a “mystery play” (*mysteriia*), which is what Ivanov once called the work (Shishkin 1992: 52). According to my reading, however, *Man* does not induct the reader into the Christian sacrament or into the poet’s lyric mysteries. Rather, it is directed toward the transformation of art into sacrament in Scriabin’s *Mysterium*, a synthetic musical, visual, and dramatic event that, over the course of several days, would culminate in the annihilation of all matter.²¹

Man and Scriabin's Mysterium

I have defined Ivanov's earlier narrative works vis-à-vis his lyrics, seeing them as etiological myths intended to explain his lyrical interventions in ritual. I have already noted similarities between the imagery of *Man* and the libretto of Scriabin's *Preliminary Act* and the sketches of the *Mysterium*. Although Ivanov never explicitly linked *Man* to Scriabin, its history is intimately interwoven with Ivanov's comprehensive defense of the composer after his sudden death in April 1915. In fact, in the spring of 1916 Ivanov found himself defending Scriabin's *Mysterium* and his own *Man* in very similar terms.

Ivanov's faith in Scriabin was uncanny. There is little proof of mutual influence until 1913, although much earlier they had shared an enthusiastic Wagnerianism and both completed major works entitled *Prometheus* around 1910. This might be ascribed to the zeitgeist, but between 1913 and 1915 their relationship was intense and not limited, as is sometimes said, to Ivanov's helping Scriabin to improve his poetic skills.²² Scriabin's biographer Leonid Sabaneev claims that Ivanov was instrumental in convincing Scriabin to approach the elusive *Mysterium* more gradually, via the *Preliminary Act*, about which Scriabin and Ivanov apparently conversed at length (Sabaneev 1925: 169).²³ In fact *Man* and the *Preliminary Act* share a basic plot (the genesis of individual consciousnesses and their reunion) and such key images as the light beam, the waves, play (*igra*), and Lucifer.²⁴ They are also inextricably linked in Ivanov's defense of religious art in the years following Scriabin's death in 1915.

The first weighty critique of *Man* was made by critic Nikolai Ustrialov following its 1916 reading at the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society. Ustrialov mostly objected to the use of complex poetic structures to express theology: "[I]t is somehow improper for a Christian mystic to dress his religious revelations in the most difficult and artificial form of the garland of sonnets" (1916a; 1916b). Ustrialov noted that the audience displayed much more interest in Ivanov's theoretical commentary than in the poem itself, which demonstrated both the aridity of the poem and the decadence of its content. Ivanov responded that "in the poem itself form and content are the same thing or, rather, its form is its content" (Ivanov 1916: 5). Furthermore, Ivanov distinguished liturgical art proper from paraliturgical art, "such as medieval mystery plays [*misterii*], paintings with holy subjects, and spiritual oratorios; in this second area a certain freedom of style was not forbidden" (5). In addition, he noted that his innovations were as far from modernism

as the contrapuntal music of Taneev, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or an akathist (a widespread kind of hymn service in the Orthodox Church).

In his reply to Ustrialov Ivanov explicitly compares his plight as a poet to that of Scriabin: "[I]n the life of art there is an inner morphological law which is often inaccessible to nonartists. Due to this law Scriabin, for example, *must* be innovative, while in the opinion of outsiders it is not that he must be but that he *wants* to be; what to him is necessity to them seems caprice" (Ivanov 1916: 5; cf. *SE* 171, 212). Ivanov's reply to Ustrialov echoes an open letter he addressed to Leonid Sabaneev less than a month later (12 May 1916). In his first book on Scriabin, published soon after the composer's death, Sabaneev lamented that "if there was something demented about Scriabin, it was that at a certain moment he ceased to be conscious of his limits and powers" (1916: 4). The reason for Scriabin's delusion was that for him "religion and art became a single sphere [. . .] and art in its physical form was a *path* to active religious initiation" (68). In a passage that recalls the motifs of Ivanov's poetry (see "The Tender Mystery"), Sabaneev calls the Tenth Sonata an "immersion" in "the lust and orgies of Eleusinian spring" (74). He later made explicit the accusation he merely intimates here, namely, that Scriabin's "mystical friends," including Ivanov, had irresponsibly encouraged the composer's mania.

Forced once again into a defense of the artistic integrity of religious art,²⁵ Ivanov disagrees with Sabaneev's characterization of the *Mysterium* as egomaniacal:

He did not imagine that he would unite people *through himself* but most definitely despite himself, outside of himself, by an automatic and miraculous movement of the collective spirit in those who had gathered, for whom he prepared in his *Mysterium* only a kind of material for a sacramental rite.

And his very writing of the *Mysterium* was for him an inward impossibility until the hour when his "I" had melted and been destroyed and his theurgic hand had become but the obedient tool of the Divine Will that had accepted the sacrifice of his person. (1917: 19–20)

Positing Scriabin's *Mysterium* as a new "sacramental rite," Ivanov tirelessly devoted himself to a defense of its legitimacy in the years following Scriabin's death. *Man* presents this defense in two forms: first as a tapestry of allegories and then as the confession of one who, in the darkest days of Russia's troubled history, recalls the unfulfilled *Mysterium* as a promise of future redemption. Speaking to a workers' group in 1919, Ivanov claimed that just

as the Sturm und Drang heralded “a tempest that turned old Europe upside-down,” so “modern Russian art has been conditioned by a presentiment of the revolution. This can hardly be doubted, at least for those who understand Scriabin’s music.”²⁶ In *Man Ivanov* plays Prospero to Scriabin’s Ariel, transcribing Scriabin’s *Mysterium* into allegorical poetry precisely in order to help people “understand Scriabin’s music.” Consequently the composite poems of the first three parts cannot be read as lyric poems but only as part of an epic transposition of Scriabin’s impossible ritual.

THE TALE OF SVETOMIR-TSAREVICH

Ivanov’s Historical Epic

Ivanov’s extended poetic narratives all focused on the creative individual, who sacrifices himself to restore authentic religious and social rituals. Ivanov certainly had experience of such sacrifice, at least in the sense of being underappreciated. Although he always had trouble getting readers to pay careful attention to his narratives, in emigration Ivanov found himself in a situation of almost complete artistic isolation. Paradoxically, his “transcendental” vantage point vis-à-vis Russia helped him to couch his defense of modernist creativity, in terms of Slavic history and myth. In fact, the move from mystery play to history is consistent with the medieval idea of history as a divine drama (Benjamin 1998: 77).

The result was *The Tale of Svetomir-Tsarevich*, which Ivanov began in 1928 as the culmination of an artistic idea he had been toying with since at least 1894. As in his dramas, a certain direction was provided by earlier lyrics that Ivanov incorporated into the text; however, it is much more difficult here to specify any particular intent for the allegorical narrative. There is reason to believe that it was conceived precisely as an open and unachievable posthumous work. For example, in a letter to C. M. Bowra dated 1 October 1946 Ivanov calls *Svetomir* “similar perhaps, as intention, to Milton’s *Arthuriad*”²⁷—a work that Milton never even began! *Svetomir* integrates into a single mythic narrative the various rituals with which Ivanov had dealt throughout his long creative life, resulting in a work that is at once autobiography, saint’s life, chronicle, and romance.

The story is complex. A fairy-tale “white kingdom and Christian state” is ruled by King Vladar (or Volodar), originally known as Lazar, the son of Prince Davyd Lazarevich of the Gorynia clan, who traced his descent from the sisters of Saint George the Brave. The family lands continue to enjoy the protection of Saint George, particularly through a spring located in the forest

near their homestead. Lazar's mother, Princess Vasilisa Nikitishna, was descended from Mikula Selianinovich, hero of old Russian *byliny*. Saint George had appeared to the young Vasilisa in a dream that was taken to prophesy motherhood. Vasilisa and Davyd spent the next twenty-two years waiting for their firstborn, when Saint George again appeared and instructed her to drink from the forest spring. Lazar was born on the springtime feast day of Saint George. A shrine was erected at the spring, with an old oak felled to form a cross, which symbolizes the Christianization of the pagan world tree.²⁸

Having grown up to be a fine and pious prince, Lazar pursues the hand of his cousin Gorislava, who loves Lazar but eventually accedes to her father's wish that she marry Lazar's friend Simeon Igorevich Upravda (again following Saint George's instruction). This happens only after both Lazar and Gorislava are repeatedly tempted to kill Simeon. On one such occasion Simeon awakes just in time and relates a vatic dream:

I didn't see anything, but it sounded as if a smith were forging metal
 deep underground with a heavy hammer, forging and saying:
 "I forge three crowns,
 I give two at once,
 The third I give alone
 After difficult times;
 And the first crown is for a young bridegroom,
 The second with it for a martyr for Christ,
 And the third, alone, for an earthly Tsar." (*Coll. Works* 1:269)

Soon after receiving the crown of marriage, Simeon receives a second crown when he is martyred at the hands of the Turks. Gorislava also dies after giving birth to a daughter, Evfrosinia or Otrada ("Joy"), at Saint George's spring, in what an elder tells her is "a labor [*podvig*] of maternity" (274).

Before Simeon's death, Lazar dreams that Saint George pierces his loins with a spear, and when he awakes he is paralyzed from the waist down. His mother urges him not to despair, saying that "God is free both to mortify and vivify the flesh, but the soul is man's to destroy" (271). Before leaving with Simeon, Gorislava also foretells that Lazar is destined "to be the master of all the earth" (272). After the death of Simeon and Gorislava, Lazar's spirits are sustained only by his contact with Otrada, who brings Lazar azure flowers (*lazorevye tsvetiki*, a play on Lazar's name; 281) from her deceased mother, with whose spirit she remains in constant communication. Lazar's failing health is restored by the elder Parfeny, who performs a

kind of baptism, or ceremony of rebirth, at Saint George's spring, the locus of birth and death.

Before retiring to a monastery, the "great emperor" of the land chooses Lazar as his successor. Having assumed his destined name Vldar ("ruler"; 259, 304), the hero marries Otrada, whom Parfeny has dissuaded from entering a convent by convincing her that she, like her mother, had to perform the heavy labor of maternity (305). This prophecy comes to fruition when Otrada gives birth to a son, Svetomir (also known as Seraphim), and then to a daughter Fotinia ("or in our dialect Zareslava ['glory of the dawn']"; 312). Soon Vldar receives guests from Greece, where his cousin Radivoi occupies a high position at court, having married the princess. One guest, the wizard Simon Khors, reveals to Vldar that his dynasty is fated to play a key role in universal history, and that his heir would accept his crown from the Virgin Mother and rule the world as the "White Tsar-Maiden" (317). Soon after the fall of Constantinople Radivoi (now blinded and widowed) and the Greek dowager empress arrive and bestow the Roman crown on Vldar, completing the transformation of his land into the Third Rome.

Crown prince Svetomir behaves like a holy fool and incurs the wrath of the boyars, so Vldar sends him off with old Radivoi and the latter's daughter, Radislava. They receive a fortuitous epistle from John the Presbyter, ruler of (Christian) White India, who describes the wonders of his land and invites Svetomir to take refuge there. Here Ivanov's text spanning five books breaks off, although Olga Shor relates that in the next four books Svetomir would cure Radislava of demonic possession; be initiated into the order of "the sealed" (cf. Rev. 7); return to find his mother dead; set off on a Faustian expedition throughout Europe, meeting such mythical heroes as Philoctetes and Sir Galahad; and eventually return to prepare for his chiliastic rule over the White Kingdom.

The connection between this story and the autobiographical themes of *The Tender Mystery* and *Infancy* is quite striking.²⁹ The powerful master marries his wife's daughter, who gives birth to a son representing the archetypal man—the poet. In contrast to previous poetic explorations of these themes, *Svetomir* sets the archetypal drama of birth-death-rebirth in a broad eschatological context, showing the new man's role in bringing human history to a close.³⁰ The eclectic historical references of *Svetomir* create the general picture of an "organic" Orthodox-Slavic kingdom that simultaneously remains conscious of its indebtedness to Hellenic culture. There are clear references to Serbian history, especially the "redemptive" defeat of Prince (or Tsar) Lazar by the Turks at Kosovo in 1389. Lazar's son Stefan Lazarević inherited

not only a (vastly diminished) kingdom but a national myth that, in the words of one of the Serbian national songs recorded by Vuk Karadžić, signified Serbia's choice of an eternal "empire of heaven" instead of the temporal "empire of the earth," which continues to define Serbian national identity.³¹ Other Serbian features include certain personal names (Gorislava, Radivoi, Svetomir) and the prominence of double naming (Lazar/Vladar, Svetomir/Serafim, Otrada/Evrosiniia), which calls to mind Simeon/Sava, the great ruler and saint of the Serbian nation.

In addition to Serbianisms, however, *Svetomir* abounds in clear references to events drawn from Russian history. Here belongs the crown bestowed by the Byzantine empress Zoe on Vladar, reminiscent of the "crown of Monomakh" worn by Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh (1053–1125), born of a marriage between the prince of Kiev and the daughter of the Byzantine emperor. When not called "Ishmaelites" (associating them with Serbian history), the major enemies are identified as the "horde of the Khan." The 1380 Battle of Kulikovo—at which Dmitry Donskoi, the prince of Moscow, defeated the Mongols and laid the basis for an independent Russian state centered on Moscow—is suggested by the spiritual guidance of a hermit-saint (Sergius of Radonezh in history; Parfeny [Parthenius] in *Svetomir*) and the appearance of two warrior-monks who contribute to victory (302).

The defining historical references in *Svetomir* might be interpreted as a prescient depiction of the late-fourteenth-century "Byzantine Commonwealth," a historical concept that took shape only after Ivanov's death.³² Not all of the historical events implied by the narration are consistent with this interpretation.³³ The beginning of the tale depicts Vladar's accession to power as the result of a nationwide referendum with ecclesiastical sanction after a devastating foreign invasion, an event reminiscent of Mikhail Romanov's rise to power in 1613 (257). The description of events surrounding the beginning of Vladar's reign ("conflicts and treaties with neighbors, land charters, city building, and much shipbuilding; the transformation of laws and mores, the refinement of learning and arts, and a new type of state organization"; 306) provides a clear reference to the Petrine epoch.³⁴ Citations of the apocalyptic prophecies of Saint Seraphim of Sarov refer the reader to Russian monasticism of the nineteenth century.³⁵

While they might not permit one to specify time or place, the events in *Svetomir* from both Serbian and Russian history share an important element: they refer to the establishment and retention of political unity through politicians' subordination to spiritual guidance. Vladimir Monomakh's testament to his feuding sons; Prince Lazar's choice of the heavenly kingdom;

Dmitrii Donskoi's coterminous reliance on the blessing of a hermit; the election of the Romanov dynasty after foreign invasion—all are central political events defined by the rulers' rejection of political means. Moreover, from the perspective of the twentieth century, references to Peter the Great and Seraphim of Sarov implicate the modern Russian state and intimate a *future* synthesis of temporal and spiritual power. This view of post-Petrine Russian history as caught uneasily between the thesis of Peter and antithesis of Seraphim was shared by many Russian thinkers at the turn of the century (Dotsenko 1996: 97–98). In other words, the historical panorama of *Svetomir* is less chronological than *typological*: this is a past and potentially future time when political leaders feel the profound ethical and religious burden of their power. The typological element also outweighs any spatial denotation: this is a place where Christian mysticism is combined with a universal consciousness, where the boundaries of the Slavic commonwealth stretch not only to Byzantium but even to India and Rome. The central role of the Slavic nations is posited not in the name of exclusivity but precisely because their lasting sisterhood (and their sibling rivalry) heralds the formation of a universal commonwealth.

The events described in *Svetomir* are laden with references to diverse mythological systems.³⁶ Although the myths expand and develop the plot by implicating supernatural levels of action (e.g., the central locus of Saint George's spring), they do not obscure the central narrative since they form a typological whole contiguous with that of the historical material. Even if such prominent strains as Saint George's chthonic protection, the Mother of God's cosmic veil, and Simon Khors's wizardly charms produce a certain religious tension between pagan, Christian, and esoteric strains in the work, their common thrust can still be recognized and appreciated. These are myths concerning political and national foundations under the protection and guidance of the holy Earth.

The general theme of foundation that is found in *Svetomir*, however, is tied to the overarching myth of the mystical connection between Rome and Russia. The complex of chthonic myths involving Saint George and his taming of the wolves and dragons is tied to Rome through the image of the wolf (Venclova 1997: 126). Ivanov also refers to the myth of Moscow as the Third Rome, which he understood (as have recent scholars) as "grounding the ecumenical aspirations of the Russian church."³⁷ In the following passage from "On the Russian Idea" (1909), Ivanov applied his detailed study of Roman messianism to Russia, including a famous testament from Vergil's *Aeneid*: "Even if there was a certain truth in the name 'Third Rome,' the

very christening of our universal idea (for ‘Rome’ is always ‘the universe’) with the name of the ‘Third Rome,’ the ‘Rome of the Spirit,’ reveals to us: ‘You, Russian, remember one thing: universal truth is your truth; and if you want to preserve your soul, do not be afraid to lose it’” (*SE* 133; *Coll. Works* 3:326).³⁸ On the one hand, to say that Russia is Rome is merely to assert the universal nature of its national idea. On the other hand, to assert that Rome is now Russia would appear to shift the center of universal history to Russia.

The Epic as Apocalypse

Sergei Averintsev has called *Svetomir* “the most complete realization of the program outlined in Viacheslav Ivanov’s theoretical works.”³⁹ However, there can be no single key to the work, whether literary or mythological, and it is precisely this that marks its most radical departure from the rest of Ivanov’s oeuvre and from modernist mystery plays in general. Instead, “stylization turns into a phenomenon of the grand style” (Venclova 1997: 118): *Svetomir* brings together different types of discourse and requires that the reader take the work as precisely that—a *discourse*.

This new literary discourse is hinted at in Ivanov’s 1931 essay about *The Discourse of Igor’s Campaign* (henceforth cited as *The Igor Tale*).⁴⁰ The wizard Simon Khors, whom Tomas Venclova has linked with Simon the Sorcerer from Acts 8:9–24 (1997: 121), can also be identified as Khors, the Slavic pagan god of the sun (in most interpretations), who is mentioned in *The Igor Tale* in connection with the pre-Christian culture, which is symbolized by the old singer Boian and opposed by the narrator of the tale (*Entsiklopediia Slova* 5:187–88). Furthermore, comparison of names used in both works indicates the possible origin of the characters Gorislava (cf. Gorislavich, the nickname of Prince Igor’s hapless grandfather Oleg Sviatoslavich) and Davyd (cf. Prince David Rostislavich, who gave up his princship and died a monk, like the “great emperor” of Ivanov’s *Svetomir*).⁴¹ *The Igor Tale* was discovered in a manuscript collection that also contained *The Tale of the Indian Kingdom* (*Skazanie ob Indeiskom tsarstve*), which might have suggested or confirmed to Ivanov the link between a tale of old-Russian unity and the mystical East.⁴²

Ivanov, however, is less interested in borrowing specific names and themes from *The Igor Tale* than in appropriating its genre, which rests on the overt opposition of the singer to the traditions of Boian. Ivanov compares the poetic diction of *The Igor Tale* to that of the Psalms. He states that this “betrays the cultural changes of a transitional epoch,” expressing “the dotage

and infirmity of heroic epolyrhic poetry, which before its final demise is allowed to stiffen into regular and conventional forms, and an as yet undefined desire to replace a decrepit art form with a new and vital one. It is of the essence of the new art form that once it is called to existence, it must choose the model of narrative prose at the first hesitant⁴³ foretaste” (Ivanov 1937b: 662).

Ivanov also notes elements of liturgical language (e.g., the “homiletic” opening and the final “Amen”; 663) and the Byzantine provenance of the title, which can be translated back into Greek as “*logos peri tes strateias*.” All of these observations can be transferred to Ivanov’s own *Svetomir*, this work belonging to a “transitional epoch” in which the poet seeks out a new “art form” on the basis of prototypes culled from various organic ages. One can apply to Ivanov what he noted about the hypothetical author of *The Igor Tale*: “Only reluctantly and not without a glance back in time, the creator of *The Igor Tale* leaves the path of lyrical tradition, which ‘moves through the limbs’; he has been refused the chance to pause at the old” (663).

To these generic considerations Ivanov adds that “the form of the work was mediated by its political goal” of unifying the Russian princes, which “could not easily be achieved in a purely lyrical work” (665). Ivanov stresses that in *The Igor Tale* Russia is an “outpost” of Christianity. Igor’s forces are “a kind of pan-Achaean alliance of the Trojan age” (665–66). Similarly, Ivanov does not seek to achieve a particular view of Russian spiritual history but rather to make it present in its entirety to modernity, to experience it anew. Linguistically Ivanov returns to the Pushkinian epoch when the modern Russian literary language was formed from elements of Church Slavonic, Russian, and foreign borrowings and calques.⁴⁴ This synthetic approach can even combine Russian and Church Slavic phrases in a single sentence.⁴⁵ At the same time, the various strands of discourse do not strive toward absolute status but happily compete in an open-ended interplay. The allusions to *The Igor Tale* also return us to this age, when the medieval poem was first brought to light and entered into nascent Russian national consciousness, becoming “the cradle song of modern Russian poetry” and “the dreamworld of our childhood” (Ivanov 1937b: 661). This return to literary and national origins is not an attempt to restore pre-Pushkinian discourse. Rather, by making present the substratum of Russian spiritual history as it is evidenced in literary tradition, Ivanov reveals the gap between this legacy and the modern situation. In response to the question of whether the tale is narrated by a chronicler, Ivanov replied: “Most likely. . . . But perhaps he is not alone” (Shor 1971: 159). Just as Ivanov’s orientation toward history dictated a partial

return to pre-Pushkinian literary language, so the apocalyptic tale of new man demanded more than a single chronicler of the type of Pushkin's Pimen, to whom Ivanov compares himself in the introduction to *Infancy*. The final glory enshrines all types and all points of view in their proper place. In this sense *Svetomir* provides a starting point for a literature that would subsume premodern and modern elements in a postmodern organic age.

Within *Svetomir* the shift from old forms of discourse to an emergent epic discourse is reflected in the preface to book 3:

1. It is for historians [*deepisateliam*] of the kingdom to preserve memory of state affairs and to proclaim glory; it is for them to relate the exertions of Vladar at war and at peace;
2. Hard challenges and fatigue, and new strength from on high; the vicissitudes of the Lord's time and the ultimate triumph of the ruler's standard;
3. The submission of the infidel kingdoms, the overcoming of princes' treason and boyars' sedition, the revenge on mutinous nobles and lords; the disbanding of appanages and the strengthening of monarchy;
4. Conflicts and treaties with neighbors, land charters, city building, and much ship-building;
5. The transformation of laws and mores, the refinement of learning and arts, and a new type of state organization.
6. For us in Volodar's life there is the guidance of Divine Providence, the shining of spiritual grace in the regal heart from the very beginning, then its waning and the ensuing pacification;
7. But even more is it meet to narrate the beginning of Svetomir's labor on the earth, and of his many torments and sufferings. (*Coll. Works* 1:306)

Past history and lives (*vitae*) provide instruction of the law; the almost messianic tone used in connection with Svetomir intimates that his tale is a kind of New Testament that exceeds the law of old. If applied to Russian history, this lesson dictates the synthesis of Petrine statehood and pre-Petrine spirituality. By extension, if, despite all of Ivanov's folk and archaic stylization, the Pushkinian literary language is sufficient for Vladar's tale, then Svetomir's "narration" would require a language encompassing all epochs of Slavic-Russian literature. This is perhaps an impossible balancing act, but it is in this interval between memory and future creation, between chronicle and imperative, that *Svetomir* finds its form. As Tomas Venclova notes, *Svetomir* "is finished and unfinished; it must be completed, and cannot be completed" (1997: 138).

Ivanov's Theory of Discourse

METAPHYSICS AND MUSIC

The Lyric Mode in Russian Symbolism

The tension between lyric and epic in Ivanov's poetry was typical for Russian symbolism, which came to prominence in the 1890s through the lyric poetry of Valery Briusov, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Konstantin Balmont, and others. These bold lyric voices resounded strongly, issuing a challenge to the prose writers who dominated Russian literature at the time, from Lev Tolstoy to Gleb Uspensky. In 1892 Merezhkovsky proclaimed: "Literature rests upon the elemental force of poetry just as world culture rests upon the primitive force of nature. [. . .] Any literary movement begins with poetry" (1914: vol. 18:177, 178). As a movement, Russian symbolism advocated not only the rejuvenation of lyric poetry as such but also its extension into other genres, sponsoring the rise of so-called impressionistic or subjective approaches to criticism. Again Merezhkovsky: "The poet-critic reflects not the beauty of real objects but the beauty of poetic images that reflect these objects. It is the poetry of poetry" (198). Its subjectivism and proximity to music made the lyric not only the main genre of symbolism but also its prevailing mood. Viktor Gofman, one of the first serious students of Russian symbolism as a school, maintained that "[e]ven outside the lyric the language of the symbolists often displays structural features typical of lyric speech" (1937: 77). At the same time, the Russian symbolists were not disavowing the social engagement of most prose "realists." Rather, they developed their subjective visions into extensive metaphysical and social ideologies in the belief that the "elemental force of poetry" would power a new ethics and pragmatics. This new ethics was liable to be seen as a betrayal of the pedagogical mission that many Russian critics had ascribed to literature in the

late nineteenth century. This tradition was still alive in modernism. For example, at the height of modernism the critic Semyon Vengerov called for "a return to the great simplicity of Russian realism, to the sincerity of Russian literature, to its sacred desire to achieve not only aesthetic perfection but also to be the conductor of moral beauty" (2000: 1:20). I shall argue that although Ivanov concurred with this traditional "epic" bias of Russian writers, he regarded it as rooted in the cathartic power of lyric discourse.

The symbolist movement in all its international manifestations was characterized by a tension between its lyric inspiration and its theoretical concerns. This tension is illustrated, perhaps inadvertently, in the definition of C. M. Bowra: "Symbolism [. . .] was in origin a mystical kind of poetry whose technique depended on its *metaphysics* and whose first popularity was due to the importance that it gave to the poet's self and to the element of *music* in his art."¹ The *metaphysics* of the movement contradicted its lyric bias by claiming for symbolism an objective relevance in such realms as philosophy and social policy. If in nothing else, the symbolists were united in their common, perhaps hubristic belief in their ability to influence the very course of history *precisely as lyric poets*. This belief was borne aloft as an imperative; as Ivanov wrote in 1904 at a time of great social tumult: "[F]rom now on the poet will bear full responsibility if he fails to scorch the crowd with his dithyrambic flame: the crowd has gathered and is obediently awaiting the revelations that have been prepared in the quiet of recent solitude. Will the poet utter something important, true, necessary?"²

In essence, Ivanov and the other symbolists came to view lyric poetry as intervening in the rituals (whether religious or social) that stood at the heart of their volatile historical situation.³ Symbolism formulated its theoretical pretensions at a time when Russia was making a transition from an uneasy, borrowed *modernity* to an even more uneasy *modernism*, a period I describe as the "self-consciousness of Russian modernity." Insofar as it presupposed a movement beyond or back from modernity, modernism was inextricably tied to opposition politics, whether of a radical socialist or a traditionalist bent. Coming after two hundred years of intense Western influence under the imperial tsars, modernism in Russia was both a result of coterminous processes in the West and an indigenous search for alternatives to Western civilization as such. As Stephen C. Hutchings has written, "The turn of the century marked the point at which Russian literature entered the next stage of its accommodation to European art, breaking free from both the strait-jacket of Western artistic conventions, and the need to negate those conventions from within" (1997: 77). Part of this newfound independence was

the assumption by modernist writers of the unifying role previously performed in Russia by religion. In a ritualistic culture that had been deprived of its ritual authorities, literature effectively adopted the function of ordering life in lyric poetry and grounding this order through historical narrative and theoretical conceptualization.

In some cases (e.g., Fedor Sologub or Valery Briusov) the modernists were led by their questioning of inherited values to a solipsistic and even nihilistic outlook that alienated them from broad cultural processes.⁴ In others the rejection of modernity led to a rediscovery of religious and communal values and an attempt to reinstate religious rituals, whether Orthodox or heterodox, at the center of Russian culture. The first representative of this traditionalist trend within Russian modernism was Vladimir Solovyov, who had an inestimable intellectual and spiritual influence on the younger symbolists (e.g., Ivanov, Andrei Bely, Aleksandr Blok, and Sergei Solovyov, the philosopher's nephew) and on a related movement of religious philosophers (from Nikolai Berdiaev to Pavel Florensky). However, it proved difficult to discover an authentic Russian culture untainted by Western influence, with the ironic result that the Russian modernists' idealization of premodern Rus' often owed its greatest debt to the European romantics' medieval utopias, with their erotic mysticism and chivalric esotericism, which had limited relevance to the reality of Russian life.

A vivid illustration of the modernist bind is provided by Ivanov's characterization of J. K. Huysmans, the prototypical decadent writer: "Catholicism possessed in him an incomparable interpreter-artist, and one can only wish the Eastern church one equal to him in the flexibility, insight, the genius of his perceptivity and powers of representation: through its own Huysmans Orthodoxy would make countless hidden riches of liturgical beauty and mystical art accessible to our consciousness and available for future generations; otherwise they might be lost due to the modernization and rationalization of ritual tradition" (*Coll. Works* 2:564). Thus Ivanov and the other religious modernists preached the *preservation* of traditional religious ritual by means of its radical *aestheticization*. It has sometimes been commented that the symbolists' lyric fecundity was matched by their impotence as historical agents. It was the tragedy of these religious modernists that their romantic worldview both posited and prevented engagement with "the people." As Theodor W. Adorno has noted, "The danger peculiar to the lyric [. . .] lies in the fact that its principle of individuation never guarantees that something binding and authentic will be produced. It has no say over whether the poem remains within the contingency of mere separate existence" (1991:

38). Irrespective of their intentions, the Russian modernists' lyric interventions in ritual tended to make them resemble a coterie of decadent elitists or the putative leaders of some weird cult.

These cultural frustrations were expressed most clearly in the symbolists' attempts to create works of greater scope than lyric poetry, from novels to autobiographical narrative poems. In the words of Vladimir Markov, "[T]he Russian poetic renaissance of the twentieth century started lyrically and ended epically" (1962: 36). In line with my definition of the symbolist lyric, I believe that the motivation for these larger narrative works lay in the symbolists' need to provide etiological accounts or explanations—*myths*—for their interventions in ritual.⁵ Usually these etiological myths were allegorical in nature, correlating the artistic vision with such nonartistic structures as history, a philosophical outlook, or even the artist's own creative biography. Hence modernist narratives were often unabashedly autobiographical and meta-aesthetic, concerned with how the artist came to create his or her lyric work and how it achieves its effect. The artist is portrayed as a messianic figure, the originator of a new cult. This is equally true for plays such as Blok's "lyrical drama" *A Puppet Show* (*Balaganchik*, 1906), novels such as Bely's *Petersburg* (*Peterburg*, 1913), and autobiographical narrative poems such as Ivanov's *Infancy* or Blok's *Retribution*. As the symbolists learned, however, it is necessary to ground new rituals in common historical and social concerns and not just in the individual creator's biography. The only really successful symbolist epic was Blok's poem *The Twelve* (*Dvenadtsat'*, 1918), which engaged the Bolshevik Revolution on a pre-theoretical, almost primal level and sat uneasily with most other symbolists, including Ivanov (Aliansky 1969: 48–49). As I argued in chapter 2, Ivanov's narrative works largely remain akin to allegorical mystery plays about the suffering artist, although they were increasingly successful in correlating the artist's plight with broader historical or temporal processes.

Ivanov on the Lyric

Ivanov's first published article on literature, "The Poet and the Crowd" ("Poet i chern," 1904), begins with an affirmation of the importance of genre: "Genre [*rod*] predetermines the spirit [*pafo*s] and conditions the choice of words" (*Coll. Works* 1:709). The genre Ivanov privileged above all others in his early theoretical pronouncements was lyric poetry, which he understood as the most direct and authentic expression of the modern "state of consciousness" and the source of new collective rituals. While he typifies modern individualism in his method of work, the lyric poet provides a new apprehension

of premodern collective life: “The Poet wants to be alone and detached, but his inner freedom is the inner necessity of a return to and communion with his native element. He invents something new and achieves something ancient” (*Coll. Works* 1:714). Lyric poets were to reveal *symbols*, which in their emplotment in history would give rise to *myths*, which in turn would feed “popular song and church fresco, the choral rites of tragedy and mysteries” (714). The individualistic lyric was thus a temporary stage on the path back to “grand” or “universal” (*vsenarodnyi*) art, when the latter would return to its origins in ritual.

In his aphorisms “On the Lyric” (“O lirike”) from 1908, Ivanov gave the ascendancy of the lyric an even more global interpretation: “The epic and drama are occupied with temporal events, and with the decisions of opposed wills. For the lyric there is only one event—the chord of the moment, which is carried by the strings of the universal lyre” (*Coll. Works* 3:119). The lyric is therefore concerned with an “event” that supersedes the world of history, casting it in a new light. Ivanov was attempting not to broaden the scope of the lyric but, on the contrary, to restore it to its ancient status of hieratic language (*Coll. Works* 3:121). He spoke explicitly of “the atavistically surviving lyric energy that has [...] defined symbolism in Russia (insofar as it was not merely derivative) as poetry’s memory of its original tasks and means” (1910: 41). Thus, the lyric embodies an ancient energy that allows it to perform its ritual purpose to unique effect.

By defining genre more in terms of its spirit than its structure, Ivanov means *lyricism* rather than *lyric*, what Brigitte Peucker has called “an orientation of the imagination that is at once (ambiguously or simultaneously) inward-looking and epiphanic.”⁶ Consequently one can only go so far in formalizing Ivanov’s theory of genre since, despite investing literary genres with broad cultural significance, he was quite capricious in his definitions. Ivanov’s most precise discussion occurs in his introduction to his translations from Alcaeus and Sappho, where he defines the lyric as “an artistic song-confession, a melodic pouring forth of the thoughts and feelings of an individual who is able to make his emotional agitation a musical agitation and a universal spiritual value” (1915:9). Historically Ivanov ties the emergence of the lyric to a particular moment in the history of human consciousness: “[T]he individual’s sense of himself became a ‘melos,’ i.e., a melody, and the individual soul began to pine and sing—in the epoch when the chorus performed on the square, a chorus still foreign to epic creativity, a chorus which with its many-voiced melodic word and harmonized movements praised the gods and heroes, and likewise meritorious citizens

and politicians who had pleased the people, opening a space for the lyrical self-definition of the all-national state" (10). Thus, lyrical self-expression was linked to the rise of individual consciousness and even of democratic institutions. As I shall show, it also led (via the dithyramb) to tragedy, in which individual consciousness underwent a crisis and was restored to the community. The epic, by contrast, was generally associated with the tyranny of reason or some other supreme principle inappropriate for a "democratic" art.⁷

However, there was also in Ivanov a glimmer of hope that future "mysteria" would lead to a more authentic type of epic capable of codifying and preserving new rituals for a modern humanity. Applying this prescription to modern drama, Ivanov wrote: "[E]lements of sacred Rite, Sacrifice, and Mask, after long centuries of lying dormant in the drama, have now been revealed in it on the strength of the tragic worldview that has matured in people's minds, are gradually transforming it into a Mysterium, and are returning it to its source—the liturgical *service* at the altar of the Suffering God" (*Coll. Works* 2:77). In Ivanov's day, as in his picture of ancient Athens, the lyric was moving ritual out onto the public square to facilitate participation by sovereign individuals in fictional narratives. These would help to form a collective consciousness and shared cultural memory, contributing to the building of a new nation, which in turn would see the rise of new, syncretic forms of the "grand style": "epic, tragedy, mysterium" (*SE* 49; *Coll. Works* 2:602). Curiously, the resurgence of narrative genres was contingent upon social changes that could only be inspired by the lyric.

Ivanov provided a remarkable example of how the lyric achieves its extensive reach in a 1905 essay on Friedrich Schiller. He quotes a friend of Schiller's who describes a memorial service prematurely held by the poet's friends in 1791. One attendee intoned Schiller's "Ode to Joy": "The chorus picked up the song, and a liturgical dithyramb of future humanity, free and beautiful, was prayerfully performed by a community of the faithful, who grieved in their hearts but celebrated in their spirit. [. . .] It is truly meet for contemporary generations [. . .] to sing in the spirit his 'Ode to Joy' and with flutes of love and longing to summon his shade, which is separate from us but near and palpable" (*Coll. Works* 4:169). In this way, Schiller's lyric gave rise to a ritual of commemoration that bonded a new community, eventually inspiring two disciples, Beethoven (in the Ninth Symphony) and Dostoevsky (especially in *The Brothers Karamazov*), to create new narrative forms that remained true to the spirit of tragedy. Schiller's "sentimental" poetry is "either the prophecies of a holy teacher, the tale of a rhapsode, or—which

is especially dear to us—the song of the leader of sumptuously crowned choruses. [. . .] All of his poetry is the poet’s constant communing—whether in priestly or tragic clothing, in a crown or in a mask—with his ideal community-nation” (180). The modern lyric effects a ritual ordering of communities by relating the poet’s own epiphanic sacrifice, illustrating the modern ascendancy of aesthetic expression—especially lyric discourse—over religion.

In view of Ivanov’s ambivalence toward the epic mode, it is important to outline why it nevertheless remained an important type of discourse in his works. There is a telling exchange in Ivanov’s correspondence with his young acolyte Aleksei Skaldin, who oversaw the printing of Ivanov’s poetry collection *Tender Mystery* in 1912 while the author was abroad. In his letter Skaldin quite impertinently questions whether Ivanov shouldn’t rewrite the poem “The Stallion Arion” (“Kon’ Arion”) in “epic form” since “in this poem the form is not fused with the content (or vice versa)” (Skaldin 1998: 168). Ivanov’s indignant answer sheds much light on his view of the lyric and epic:

Recall Pushkin’s dithyramb “Arion”. . . (True, there Pushkin is speaking not of the stallion Arion but of the poet Arion). Great lyric tension, and a condensed epic narration of the moment of the lyric event. My poem “The Stallion Arion” is also a dithyramb of the same type. To turn it into a pure epic, as you mistakenly advise, is unthinkable due to the essence of the events it describes. The epic is foreign to Dionysus. There is no point speaking about a lack of correlation between “form” and “content” since everything is exhausted by the fullness of the narrated experiences, which exclude any other transcription. Everything that is truly Dionysian thereby ceases to be symbolic, which might also be said about everything that is truly mysterious, whenever one is dealing with mystical realities. (Wachtel 1990: 131)

Ivanov equates the Dionysian (as evident in lyric inspiration, the dithyramb, and tragedy) with an event of mystical reality itself. Moreover, the lyric expresses this level of intuition directly, without the mediation of symbols and without compromising the integrity of the mystery.

Nevertheless, Skaldin’s subsequent explanation perceptively and boldly asserts the limitations of such a complete reliance on the lyric mode: “Of course, the poem ‘The Stallion Arion’ is something only indirect, but at the same time something mystically real for you. . . and for me. But what about for others? [. . .] I shall only note that although the epic is foreign to Dionysus, the epic still speaks of Dionysus: recall the Homeric hymn about

Dionysus turning the Tyrsenian pirates into dolphins" (Skaldin 1998: 173). Skaldin admits that the lyric may allow for a kind of sacramental participation of the reader in the poet's experience and thus for a new ritual, but he feels that it is insufficiently discursive to communicate the full range and significance of this experience in terms of extra-aesthetic experience. The lyric relies on the epic to codify, interpret, and transmit it.

Ivanov resolved the tension between epic and lyric in two ways. First, he sought a type of narrative that would be capable of incorporating historical and ideological orders of reference while remaining true to the spirit of tragedy. Ivanov's narrative works—from *Tantalus* to *Svetomir* and the *Roman Diary of 1944*—all borrow their aesthetic charge from his lyrics. Second, over the course of these narrative works Ivanov gradually developed a reflective standpoint outside of his lyric persona, permitting him to incorporate his lyric vision into an interpretive tradition while preserving the integrity of its revelations. This reduced the ideological pressure Ivanov exerted upon his own poetry, allowing readers the freedom to interpret his poetry and his theory outside the charmed circle of his lyric vision. In a subsequent analysis I describe this development as shifting the fulcrum of his theoretical position from symbol to myth, and from tragedy to epic. As will become clear in part 2, this shift is a key factor in Ivanov's formulation of a communicative philosophy in the hermeneutic tradition.

Hermeneutical Ambiguity

In the foregoing I have defined Russian modernism as the self-consciousness of Russian modernity, a period of reflection on centuries of rapid and traumatic cultural change. The shift from modernity to modernism in Russia was an exegetical crisis, and Ivanov (like the other symbolists) was fundamentally a hermeneutician in two senses. First, he took the creative process to be the verbal explication of prelinguistic, transcendent revelations. Lyric discourse provided the most immediate expression of this silent revelation, but the lyric required explication in discursive language. One of Ivanov's models for this process was Dante's *New Life*, in which the poet traces the creation of his poems from original vision to poetic embodiment and then discursive explication (*SE* 69–74; *Coll. Works* 2:628–33). Ivanov was also a hermeneutician in a different sense insofar as the expression of his most intimate thoughts was often couched as interpretations of others' works, as seen in his appropriation of Dante. Ivanov's own writing about transcendent realities is always a reading of others' texts, and vice versa.

Ivanov's manifold process of interpretation causes what Tomas Venclova

has termed a snowball-like accumulation of meaning by means of the translation or recoding of an initial intuition (1997: 111; cf. Venclova 1989: 211). This recoding could occur “among various genres, various cultural spheres, various systems of thought and existence separated by time and space (one could say, in general, among various languages). [. . .] According to Ivanov, the lyric could and should be translated into the language of tragedy, tragedy into the language of scholarly description, a scholarly-philosophical concept into the language of everyday behavior” (Venclova 1989: 208; 1997: 108; cf. Sapov 1994: 311). However, there was a clear hierarchy of modes of discourse, with lyric symbols occupying a privileged position vis-à-vis myth, philosophy, etcetera (*DP* 266).⁸ One can apply to Ivanov’s oeuvre Paul Ricoeur’s dictum: “The symbol gives rise to thought” (1969: 347ff.), which is especially apt in the case of the Russian symbolist who aspired to construct a full and inwardly consistent intellectual edifice on the shifting basis of his lyric symbols and epic myths.

It is instructive to compare Ivanov’s frequent but contradictory appeals to Tiutchev’s dictum that “[a] thought that is spoken is a lie.” In his early essays Ivanov interpreted Tiutchev’s line to mean the utter ineffability of intuitions, underscoring the transcendent origin of the lyric (*Coll. Works* 1:712). He also used it both as a description of the desultory state of modernity and as a call to develop the spiritual communication typified by Tiutchev’s mysterious lyrics: “Tiutchev’s own poetry does not so much *communicate* directly to his listeners his inner world of ‘mysteriously magic thoughts,’ as it brings them to *participate* through signification in his own fundamental mysteries” (*SE* 36; *Coll. Works* 2:589).

Subsequently, however, Ivanov came to disagree with Tiutchev outright. As he wrote to Mikhail Gershenzon in *The Correspondence from Two Corners*: “I am not an architect of [abstract] systems [. . .] but I do not belong to those timid souls who imagine that everything spoken is a lie. [. . .] There is verbal signification for inner experience, and this experience seeks it and pines without it, for the lips speak from the abundance of the heart. (*Coll. Works* 3:386; cf. 4:638; Ivanov 1916) In his mature view of the hermeneutic situation, therefore, Ivanov stresses the transcendent origin of meaning but admits the legitimacy of a rule-based method for its interpretation.

In his reliance on rule-based interpretation, Ivanov subscribes to what Tzvetan Todorov has called “philological exegesis,” which the latter contrasts with the faith-based “patristic exegesis” common in premodern interpretation (1982: 137, 139). Patristic or ideological exegesis relies on textual content (semantics), while philological exegesis follows the structure of texts

(their syntax) in order to ascertain their meaning (139). The philological method has been characteristic of modernity since Spinoza, insofar as, "in the absence of any common transcendence, each text becomes its own frame of reference, and the critic's task is completed in clarification of the text's meaning, in the description of its forms and textual functioning, far removed from any value judgment" (1987: 7). The philological method has reached its apogee in structuralism and poststructuralism, which subordinate meaning to the text's internal rules. The postmodernist age, with its hostility to master narratives, has further discredited patristic exegesis, although the latter has enjoyed a rich afterlife in such guises as academic Marxism or Bakhtinian "dialogism."⁹

Ivanov is quintessentially modern in his adherence to the philological method of interpretation. He stresses the "ways" (*puti*) of understanding, the *principle of mediation* between the transcendent and the immanent. In his early writings Ivanov often referred to this view in Nietzschean terms as the privileging of the "how" over the "what" (*HR* 3:39; *SE* 181). For example, in a 1919 essay on the role of culture in a revolutionary society, Ivanov begins with the example of Socrates, who was able "[t]o turn his exposing of his own and others' poverty of knowledge to the benefit of knowledge: instead of preaching positive truths he reveals to his listeners the ways and means of seeking truth; instead of ready knowledge he offers a METHOD, while he defines his own vocation not as the activity of a teacher and master but as the craft of the 'midwife,' who is called to help the human soul in its efforts to give birth out of the inner content of its consciousness to some rudimentary understanding of the main rights of being."¹⁰ Conversely, Ivanov's celebration of method was tempered by a Platonic certainty that interpretation would result in consensus. If the cultural crisis of the beginning of the century precipitated a conflict between the patristic/ideological tradition and the structural methods that were gaining increasing dominance, then Ivanov should be seen as trying to synthesize these two interpretative strategies. He posits art as an autotelic source of spontaneously generated meaning, while stipulating that the results of its conceptual interpretation should coincide with those of the Christian and realist worldview in which he consistently proclaimed his faith. For Ivanov all stories, if told properly, should coincide with the grand narrative of Christianity.

Critiques of Lyric Reason

Based on my description of the exegetical crisis in Russian modernism, the major critiques of Ivanov's oeuvre by contemporaries can be divided into

two groups, reflecting the patristic/ideological and philological methods. There were those who felt that Ivanov the thinker had placed excessive faith in the veracity of his poetic revelations and had become their hostage. These critics appealed to nonaesthetic sources of meaning, such as extraliterary reality or the church, to challenge Ivanov's self-interpretations. In the second group there were those who found Ivanov's theorizing offensive to the purity of poetry. These critics were more likely to defend Ivanov's poetry from the conceptual determinacy of its theoretical outgrowth.

The first kind of critique issued from various quarters, including religious philosophers with whom Ivanov allied himself throughout his creative life. Semyon Frank commented: "A refined and truthful analyst of his own dreams, a wise interpreter of literary fantasies that obscure reality—that is how one might define the genius of this philosophizing poet" (1910: 29). Lev Shestov took a more accusatory tone: "[Ivanov's] entire task is radically to sunder ideas from reality and breathe into them their own, independent life, which, although it is not similar to their usual life, is still their own—luscious and luxurious" (1993: vol. 1: 247). Boris de Schloezer wrote in a similar vein about the discrepancy between Ivanov's thought and expression:

At times, all of this crimson and gold, this measured, tense beauty is capable of irritating or even angering one. One feels like smashing this brilliant shell and getting to the hidden, living heart, tearing off the brocade, scattering the diamonds and pearls, and touching the body that must be hidden under them. One feels that Viacheslav Ivanov must really think differently and that this beauty is only a mask that he has to keep on himself by force. But Ivanov is sincere; if he did ever wear a mask, it has now become a part of his being and has been grafted onto his face. What is this—blindness? heartlessness? naïveté? or the greatest heroism?¹¹

These critiques basically question Ivanov's grasp of reality, viewing him as imprisoned in the sumptuous world of his poetry, a line of criticism that is consistent with Carl Schmitt's concept of political romanticism (see the section "*Sobornost*" in the introduction).

The negative response to modernist aestheticism has issued not only from more conservative contemporaries but from the ranks of the postmodernists. An extreme example of the postmodern hostility toward master narratives is Jean Baudrillard's picture of "simulacra and simulation" closing off access to the real. Ivanov himself warned: "In the romantic outlook, it is not life, new and unknown, that stands in opposition to living reality but rather

dreams, *simulacra inania*, that oppose life" (*SE* 97; *Coll. Works* 2:88). From the vantage point of Baudrillard's critique, Ivanov's fine weave of symbols, inspired by the myths he has intuited as lying at the base of the world, would constitute just such a replacement of reality by its virtual simulacrum, a move characteristic of the modern world. Baudrillard complains that as meaning dissolves into "systems of signs," the real is denied the chance "to produce itself." Nothing really occurs in this world, which "no longer even gives the event of death a chance" (1994: 2). Baudrillard captures the basic indifference of Ivanov's global allegories, in which the originary event is dissimulated in self-replicating matrices of signification. I intend to demonstrate, on the contrary, that Ivanov's intellectual gesture was not just the simulation of reality and dissimulation of ritual but rather that his writing was grounded in memory and that it stimulated action. This grounding in history and praxis finds much in common with contemporary hermeneutics and is a viable alternative to the suspicion of intellectual vision common in much postmodernist thought.

It is not difficult to find critiques of Ivanov from the opposing standpoint—in defense of the purity of artistic cognition. Even the civic-minded critic Semyon Vengerov was troubled by the encroachment of Ivanov's ideological project in his poetry: "[E]verything spontaneous has been diligently expelled [from Ivanov's poetry], and the entire task of poetry is reduced to the scholastic-abstract symbolization of phenomena of life and nature. [...] In reality, both the 'difficulty' and the unique outer form of Ivanov's poetry are but the results of a certain theory; in those few cases when he forgets about the theory he writes simply, with talent, and poetically."¹²

This line of criticism was most consistently presented by other modernist poets, beginning with Valery Briusov's reviews of Ivanov's early poetry, in which he noted that "the author is more artificial [*iskusen*], he is concerned more with understanding [...] than with simply abandoning himself to creativity."¹³ The latent friction between Ivanov and Briusov gradually became an open dispute, culminating in the 1910 "crisis" of symbolism, when Briusov accused Ivanov of subordinating art to religion.¹⁴ To a certain degree, Briusov's view of pure poetry was inherited by the acmeists. Nikolai Gumilev's changing reception of Ivanov, for instance, shows how "the post-Symbolist poets assimilated certain features and techniques of Ivanov's verse while revoking its close association with the transcendent system of symbolist aesthetics."¹⁵

The general tendency of criticizing Ivanov's oppressive dogmatism was inherited from the acmeists by the critics associated with Russian formalism,

in particular by Viktor Zhirmunsky. In fact, Zhirmunsky had begun his career as literary historian by establishing a strong case for the underlying identity of Russian symbolism and German romanticism; moreover, he strongly sympathized with both. However, his conviction that symbolism and romanticism were basically identical later led him to reject both in favor of acmeism, which by “overcoming symbolism” fulfilled the symbolists’ own desire to “overcome romanticism” by engaging with historical reality.¹⁶

Both critiques of Ivanov assert the autonomy of art vis-à-vis religious and social concerns and lead to the charge that his innate romanticism obliterated difference and, along with it, the texture of real life. However, Ivanov’s differentiation of lyric and epic modes of discourse enabled him to avoid the conflation of lyrical revelation and dogmatic presumption and to focus instead on the means by which lyric revelation becomes communicable in other kinds of discourse. Investigating this emphasis on communication and interpretation will allow the texture of reality to be restored to his intellectual vision.

THE DIALECTIC OF GENRE

Lyricism and Tragedy

In his theoretical writings Ivanov usually subsumed the lyric under the broad category of the tragic (as illustrated above by the account of Schiller’s mock funeral), which he defined in opposition to the epic. In his historical studies Ivanov tended to identify tragedy as Dionysian ritual, as was common practice in his day. Ivanov’s use of the tragic model accounts for the influence of the lyric on social and religious life.

Ivanov’s advocacy of tragedy—or, more accurately, of the tragic or of “tragism”—referred less to the literary genre than the philosophical category. Ivanov revered Aeschylus and Sophocles as pinnacles of literary art, as evidenced by his translations of most of Aeschylus’s tragedies. Yet, as I have previously argued, his own dramas were not true to these models, nor did Ivanov ever provide much in-depth analysis of specific tragedies.¹⁷ Instead, Ivanov considered the foremost representative of tragedy to be Nietzsche, who “turned the funereal yearning of pessimism into the flame of a heroic funeral repast, into the Phoenix fire of universal tragism. He gave life back its tragic god . . . ‘*Incipit Tragoedia!*’” (*SE* 179; *Coll. Works* 1:717). Ivanov’s hypostatization of tragedy places him among an entire pleiad of twentieth-century thinkers, from Max Scheler and Nikolai Berdiaev to Miguel Unamuno. Ivanov goes a step further, however, by restoring the modern

philosophical concept of tragedy to the realm of artistic discourse and developing it into a new conception of lyric poetry as intervention in ritual.

Of course, in a historical sense Ivanov differentiated between the genres of lyric and tragedy. For Ivanov tragic drama emerged from the dithyramb, which, in turn, was the basic form of the primordial lyric.¹⁸ However, Ivanov dwells not on the typological difference between dithyramb and tragedy but on their substantial congruity and chronological sequence. "Tragedy" denotes any communication of a sacrificial attitude, whatever the particular function of the discourse. The moment at which the lyric mood attained fullest expression was the instant at which, in Ivanov's words, "incipit tragoedia."

[T]he tragic element [. . .] appears when one of the participants in the Dionysian chorus is separated from the dithyrambic throng. The impersonal element of the orgiastic dithyramb gives rise to the sublime image of the tragic hero, who is revealed as an individual personality and is condemned to death precisely for being separated and exposed. For the dithyramb was originally a sacrificial service, and he who stepped into the middle of the circle was the sacrificial victim.

In any ascent—"incipit Tragoedia." (SE 7; Coll. Works 1:825)

All tragic art enacts the memory of vicious primitive religious sacrifices: "That which since time immemorial was reality turned into a sacrificial tragedy, into the ritual depiction of heroic suffering" (RD 2:120). As Ivanov firmly stated in his later book on Dionysus, "Tragedy was ritual" (DP 250). Ritual bestowed on lyric poetry and tragedy their primary means of expression: mimesis. In Ivanov's most common definition, ritual mimesis denotes the replacement of the sacrificial victim by the priest, which implies the identity of the two (HR 2:52, 4:138–39). Aesthetic mimesis further substitutes the tragic actor for the priest (then the lyric poet for the tragic actor, and then the lyric work for the poet; RD 1:208).¹⁹ Thus, the formal structure of sacrifice is preserved throughout a series of mimetic shifts that displace the ritual from the religious realm into that of fiction. Such mimetic substitutions are possible because Dionysian religion was a system not of conceptual beliefs but of "emotional states" (HR 3:39), primarily that of ecstasy: "[I]t is not ecstasy that arose from one or another idea about a god but the god that appeared as the personification of ecstasy" (HR 9:48). Tragedy satisfies the ecstatic religious state through the ritual cleansing achieved by catharsis (HR 3:50). Here Ivanov adopts Jacob Bernays' interpretation of tragic catharsis as "healing," although he adds a mystical twist: tragedy heals

by “elevating the original (we would say elemental-musical) ecstasy to a level at which it resolves into ‘correct,’ healthy frenzy” (*HR* 3:50). As late as 1916 Ivanov could declare: “Theater is outside the realm of aesthetics. [. . .] Theater corresponds to forms of religion that contain [. . .] the principle of ecclesiality and, even if for mere instants, fuse the many souls of people into the single body of the suffering God, the true Hero of divine and universal passion, who is immanent to all but transcendent to all” (*Coll. Works* 2:213, 214). The fundamental aesthetic categories of mimesis and catharsis therefore belong genetically to the religious realm, and it is this religious source that ensures the authentic power of art, even as it enters into the realm of fiction.

Attributing the origin of art to ritual was a commonplace in Ivanov’s time. For example, Jane Harrison argued that ritual and art share the same impulse, namely, “to utter, to give out a strongly felt emotion or desire by representing, by making or doing or enriching the object or act desired.”²⁰ Ivanov was also referring to a rich Russian tradition of thought that viewed the origin of secular art in the “disintegration of ritual,” to quote the eminent Russian philologist Aleksandr Veselovsky (1940: 430).²¹ According to the latter, syncretic ritual included an element of popular poetry where “music and dance are not yet separated from song” (459). These songs gave rise to “a short lyrical-epic cantilena that corresponded to the pathos aroused by the event [of the ritual]” (433); containing a narrative kernel, this cantilena later developed into the “grand epic” (433; cf. 464). The myths that resulted from the epic cycles fed a new tradition of tragic drama that reinstated the original synthetic ritual: “In the poetry of ritual, as in a Greek drama, there is mimicry, orchestics [dance], music and song. The difference is only that in the former there is no mythology, no Olympus, while in the latter everything is related precisely to mythology” (434). Interestingly, Veselovsky lamented that medieval ritual was not given a chance to acquire a popular mythology and rise to the level of tragedy (442); he wrote that medieval mystery plays “originated not from popular sources but against and opposed to popular ritual play” (242). In Russia, moreover, folk ritual had remained vital for longer and had therefore never developed into drama at all.

Veselovsky conflates the beginning of art with ritual, but his key distinction between ritual song and tragedy points to a distinction that has been accepted in recent years. To wit, tragedy incorporates elements of fictional narrative (myth), which was absent from the earlier ritual song (the lyric or dithyramb). This distinction has been given classic expression by Jean-Paul Vernant, who declares straight out that “[t]he documents to which appeal is made in order to root tragedy in the sacred rituals of the past are

uncertain, equivocal, and often contradictory” (1990: 183). Returning to the *Poetics*, Vernant notes that Aristotle traces the origin of tragedy to dithyramb only in order to establish the difference. If dithyramb was still within the limits of ritual, Vernant sees tragedy as a manifestation of a secular public culture that brought into question public religion and public virtues. Unlike rituals, tragedies were not annual events but unique performances. Moreover, their authorship was attributed not to religious authorities but to individual writers.²² Vernant concludes:

Tragedy's connection with Dionysus lies, not so much in roots that, for the most part, elude us, but rather in whatever was new in what tragedy introduced, in whatever constituted its modernity for fifth-century Greece and, even more, for us. [. . .] Tragedy thus opened up a new space in Greek culture, the space of the imaginary, experienced and understood as such, that is to say as a human production stemming from pure artifice. (1990: 187)

Tragedy is the moment at which individuals achieved a questioning consciousness and applied it to the inherited hierarchy of values and beliefs. It is a historical rupture that has remained expressive of the conflict between individual (the “tragic subject”) and ritual community (Vernant 1990: 237–47).

Tragedy, then, is not ritual, but an aesthetic form of discourse oriented towards ritual (although not necessarily depicting rituals explicitly). Tragedy is a mode of discourse that employs fiction (i.e., the mask) as a means of intervening in religious practice. Vernant's reconceptualization of tragedy and ritual highlights similar elements in Ivanov, perhaps inherited from Veselovsky:

The idea of passion in original Dionysianism and the heroic cult [. . .] could not be translated directly into life unless tragedy, which was still half-liturgical but already blossoming with Dionysian artistry, became the expression of this idea and the powerful intermediary between the mystical depths of religious experience and the popular outlook. Having become art, [tragedy] remained true to its roots and took up the role of interpreting all sacred history of paternal gods and heroes in the spirit of Dionysus, understood as the god of divine and heroic passion. (DP 217)

When describing the origin of tragedy Ivanov often has recourse to the triad (or some variation thereof) of “mask, hero, act.” These accoutrements of tragedy actually describe the *emplotment* of the ritual experience in a fiction.

The mask denotes the mimetic replacement of the actual god by his or her fictional representation. Removed into the realm of fiction, the actions of the god become the narrative of a human individual or hero. This narrative is then enacted for viewers as a dramatic action. The three elements of “mask, hero, act” thus indicate how the ritual folds out into artistic discourse of various kinds while remaining congruent to ritual.

What distinguishes Ivanov’s concept of tragedy from Vernant’s is that he applies it back to modern literature via the lyric mode of discourse. In a 1905 review of Blok’s debut collection, Ivanov celebrates Verlaine’s slogan “de la musique avant toute chose” as the means to express the “tragism of life.”²³ By linking lyric poetry to the philosophical category of the tragic, Ivanov is able to apply to it the ritualistic language that has been applied to tragedy since Aristotle, in particular the term “catharsis.” These concepts, divorced from their religious context, explain how aesthetic works are able to affect nonaesthetic aspects of human life, renewing and revising practices in social or religious spheres. Indeed, they help explain why Ivanov believed that in his secular era aesthetics presented the most effective way to reform society and religion. Ivanov’s equation of mystical experience, Dionysus, tragedy, and the lyric allows him to view the modern lyric as the bud of a new mysticism and of renewed Christianity.

In conclusion, I will propose the following provisional definition of ritual and of the manner in which Ivanov conceived the lyric’s intervention in it: ritual is a stereotypical expressive act that achieves contact between the individual participant and a greater whole, be it social, cosmic, or transcendent.²⁴ Among the rituals that concerned Ivanov most were marriage, social initiation, sacrifice, burial, and prayer. In contrast to ritual, literary art is an individual verbal expression that asserts an attitude toward the whole that is not binding but requires active comprehension and application. Lyric discourse, in Ivanov’s view, bridges the gap between ritual and imaginative literature. The lyric directly mimics ritual and causes in its audience a cathartic state, while preserving aesthetic detachment from ritual reality. This dialectic of ritual engagement and aesthetic distance enables the lyric to intervene in the experience and interpretation of ritual. Thus, a love poem may affect the reader’s attitude toward courtship, just as a religious ode may affect one’s prayer. Altering rituals in this way is a serious business and often requires justification in the form of a narrative: the reader may tell a story of how his feeling of love was changed or the prayer changed. In this manner the symbolic intervention of the lyric gives rise to verbal narratives, which Ivanov termed *myth*.

Epic and Myth

In the words of Theodor Adorno, “[N]o narrative can partake of truth if it has not looked into the abyss into which language plunges when it tries to become name and image” (1991: 27). Likewise for Ivanov any nonlyrical work must originate in an authenticating experience beyond language in the transcendent realm. It is not just that rituals are useful for narrative art as convenient “beginnings and endings” (Redfield 1994: 166). Rather, narrative art owes its very origin to a ritual experience—what Ivanov calls “tragedy” (even when he means the lyric).

Ivanov always favored the tragic. In his lengthy introduction to a 1912 edition of Homer Ivanov's main concern is to demonstrate that the Homeric epics are basically tragedies.²⁵ He writes: “[T]he oldest work of Greek poetry, the *Iliad*, is a tragedy not only in its spirit and attitude, as Aristotle held, but also in its content (as the tale of Achilles' suffering fate) [. . .] [T]he tragedy that developed afterward was, in the eyes of the spectator, merely the staging of those very same epic heroes in material personifications and holy burial masks” (1912: xviii–xix). Ivanov classifies the *Iliad* as a tragedy based on its cathartic power: “Tragedy [. . .] is the return of the heroic epic, in Dionysus and through Dionysus, to its pre-Dionysian source” (*DP* 254). The actual dramatic form of tragedy, it would seem, is incidental to its cathartic effect.

In his 1916 essay “The Two Moods of the Russian Soul” Ivanov provides a schematic psychological analysis of the tragic and epic modes of being.²⁶ On the one hand, “The tragic man's consciousness coincides with the very creative juices of life; he is woven of life's living, pulsing, sensitive threads” (*Coll. Works* 3:349). On the other hand, the epic man sees life “as a series of consummate, self-enclosed processes” (349). Despite his partiality for the tragic, Ivanov concludes that both moods are necessary: “[D]ue to its normative tendency, a one-sidedly epic outlook may sometimes find any enthusiasm harmful for one's health, while a one-sidedly tragic outlook, in its purely Russian hysteria, is capable of smashing even the most beautiful Greek vase” (350–51). Likewise in art the tragic and epic modes must work together, ensuring sublime power and conceptual breadth. Ivanov refers to Dostoevsky and Tiutchev's “holy tragism” as models of the interpenetration of epic and tragic principles. Similarly, in his 1914 article “On the Limits of Art” Ivanov claimed that the symbolist must be “an artist as much of the drama and the epic as of the lyric” (*SE* 80; *Coll. Works* 2:639).²⁷

Definitions of the epic are as varied as those of the lyric and tragedy. In Ivanov's historical scheme the ancient epic forms were admitted to be

chronologically prior to tragedy, but in his basic logic Ivanov followed such philologists as Veselovsky in deriving the epic mode from an originally synthetic discourse, closer in spirit to tragedy or the lyric. However, within the limits of Ivanov's creative universe the epic can be defined quite precisely as an etiological narrative supporting lyric interventions in ritual, that is, as myth. This etiological myth codifies new rituals, justifying and explaining them through a narrative of origins. This broad definition encompasses most of the characteristics traditionally attributed to the epic, such as totality, diegesis, detached point of view, and a convergence with sacred texts. It also accounts for the traditional subject matter of epics, such as myths (especially origin myths) and heroic feats.²⁸ If lyrics, like rituals, communicate an anagogical transcendence of temporal limits, narratives perform a pedagogical function vis-à-vis the lyric. If lyrics are marked by tragic beginnings, then reflection from the middle—narration from the midst of things (in medias res)—is the epic. Already in 1904 Ivanov had written of “grand, universal art” as “secondary art,” where the artist is “the completer, not the initiator” (*Coll. Works* 1:727). In a sense, all of Ivanov's nonlyric writings, including his scholarly monographs, are the product of such epic reflection on a lyric beginning. Indeed, as Friedrich Schlegel once opined, “Philosophy is an *epos*, [it] begins in the middle.”²⁹

In this regard, epic discourse is related to Ivanov's concept of myth, as explicated in an excursus to his 1911 essay “Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy”:

We define myth as a synthetic proposition where the subject-symbol is attributed a verbal predicate. In the oldest history of religions such is the type of the Ur-myth that conditions the original rite. Only later out of the rite there blossoms a luxuriant mythologeme, usually etiological, i.e. geared toward making sense of a cultic phenomenon that is already given; examples of Ur-myths are: “the sun is born,” “the sun dies,” “god enters man,” “the soul flees the body.” If the symbol is enriched with a verbal predicate, it has received life and movement; symbolism becomes mythopoesis. (*Coll. Works* 4:437; cf. *FTL* 50–51)

In *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism*, where he significantly expands this definition, Ivanov adds that “the mythologeme is created for the etiological explanation of the preexisting rite, but once created it may, in turn, change the rite” (*DP* 203). The “etiological myth,” concludes Ivanov, “reproduces [. . .] the rite in the ideal projection of a mythologeme or in the ideal-historical projection of a tale” (270).

Ivanov's concept of the epic mode of discourse can best be understood by transferring the genetic relationship between ritual and myth to the conceptual dyad of tragedy and epic. When expressed as tragedy or lyric poetry, the ritual experience unleashes "all the symbolic energy of the whole" in a single event (*Coll. Works* 4:437). According to Liudmila Gogotishvili, Ivanov's lyric poetry "is not directed toward the achievement of a referential 'relation' to some possible real event but is itself made an event by language, is 'played out' as an event" (1999: 362). When introduced into some external context, however, the revelation acquires epic characteristics and becomes myth. Then myth is "an underlying intuition of suprasensible realities that predetermines the epic fabric of action in the sensible world" (*Coll. Works* 4:437). This "fabric of action" may just as easily take the form of a conceptual argument as that of a fictional narrative. In any case, it is intended as the etiological myth that provides historical grounds for the poet's tragic lyrics. In this way, just as tragic discourse appropriates the vocabulary of ritual, so epic discourse is associated with the concept of myth.

The tragic is nontemporal: with a flash of eternity and timelessness it illuminates mortality and birth. The epic arises from the broadening of perspective to see the temporal context, gathering the work into a processual vision. The tragic involves participants in the creative act, while what the epic attains is set out in the light of day for all to appropriate. The tragic is the source of aesthetic power, whereas the epic communicates this power to people and transforms it into ethical-historical action. Finally, the tragic *intervenes* in social and religious ritual, while the epic provides an etiological explanation of ritual, codifies it, and transmits it.

IVANOV'S THEORY OF DISCOURSE

Romantic Genre Theory

In the preceding discussion I have argued that Ivanov began with the symbolic lyric and developed a separate artistic language for narrative works. I have suggested that this movement be viewed as beginning with intervention in ritual and culminating in the explanation of this intervention. Perhaps as a result of reflection on his own poetry, Ivanov's thinking about genre centered on the originating and authenticating role of lyric creativity, which he linked to tragedy and viewed as prior to narrative. In this section I contextualize Ivanov's thoughts about genre by tracing their roots and comparing them to the theories of discourse of Ivanov's contemporaries, Georg Lukács and members of the Bakhtin circle. I conclude that while Ivanov's

theory of discourse owed a great debt to Aristotle, his privileging of lyric/tragic discourse as the cathartic engine of all artistic discourse should properly be traced to German and Russian precedents.

Ivanov's delineation of the two basic genres of tragedy and epic follows a prominent tradition in literary criticism that has repeatedly resurfaced in opposition to the more common tripartite generic schemes. Both bipartite and tripartite traditions are sanctioned by Aristotle's *Poetics*; although he lists tragedy, epic, and comedy as the basic genres (1447a), he clearly privileges the two modes of drama and epic (1449b, 1459a–1460a). As Gérard Genette has shown, by late antiquity Aristotle's two basic modes had become augmented into a triad of lyric, drama, and epic, which then entered into diverse combinations with specific literary forms, from the sonnet to the novel. At the origin of modern European literary theory, neoclassical poetics developed a complex catalogue of specific forms that were integrated into the by-then standard triad of lyric, dramatic, and epic modes (Genette 1992: 35–36); “elegy” was thus considered a genre alongside tragedy and the epic. The distinction between discursive modes and literary forms was reinstated by the romantics and became standard in Russian literary theory (where they are generally known as genus [*rod*] and species [*vid*]). The German romantics added a teleological vector to the classification of literary forms by privileging either tragedy or the novel above all other genres or modes.

Although Ivanov anticipates Genette's critique by returning to Aristotle's two modes of discourse, he also gestures toward the romantic legacy by assigning each mode and each specific form a particular role in the teleological unfolding of aesthetic consciousness.³⁰ The inspiration for Ivanov's return to the two basic modes of literary art can be traced directly to Goethe and Schiller. Schiller's “On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry” (1795–96), which classified poets according to whether their intuition of nature was immediate or reflective, grew into an essay, jointly written with Goethe, entitled “On Epic and Dramatic Poetry” (1797). Here Goethe and Schiller distinguish two basic modes according to their subject matter: objective poetry (epic) focuses on external events, in contradistinction to subjective poetry, which is based on individual suffering (drama or tragedy) (Goethe 1967: 101). The two kinds of poetry are also opposed in terms of their temporal vector: epic is tied to the past, whereas drama depicts the present (100–101). Crucially, Goethe and Schiller distinguish the means by which the two modes affect the listener: while the epic rhapsodist uses his authority as an impartial observer or chronicler to act upon the listeners' imagination, the dramatic

actor "stimulates" the listener to share his own sufferings, suppressing the listener's imagination and causing him to forget himself (102–3). Despite the evenhanded treatment of the two modes, one easily senses the privileging of tragedy.

The romantic partiality for tragedy is most striking in other schemes that retain the tripartite generic division. For instance, Friedrich Hölderlin's essay "On the Difference of Poetic Modes" (ca. 1800) elucidates three moods of poetry: lyric (idealistic and sensuous), epic (naïve and heroic), and tragic (heroic and energetic).³¹ Calling tragedy "the metaphor of an intellectual intuition," Hölderlin practically turns it into a philosophical category (Genette 1992: 40–41). According to Genette, "all of Schlegel's and Hölderlin's successors agree that drama [i.e., tragedy] is the form that is mixed or [. . .] *synthetic*, and thus unavoidably superior" (41).

In his preference for tragic discourse, which both packs the stronger aesthetic punch and verges on philosophical profundity, Ivanov seems the archetypal romantic. However, he also appropriates several later ideas of particular importance. For the Russian tradition prior to Ivanov, probably the most influential theory of genre belonged to Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter), whose *School for Aesthetics* (1804) had a powerful influence on Vissarion Belinsky, the father of Russian criticism. Jean Paul follows his romantic colleagues in classifying the genres both according to subject (event, action, feeling) and temporal vector: "The epic presents the *event* which develops out of the *past*, the drama the *action* which extends to the future, the lyric the *feeling* which is enclosed within the present" (Richter 1973: 196). Instead of a teleological progression, Jean Paul interrelates the three genres by identifying the lyric as a substratum common to the other two: "The lyric properly precedes all other poetic genres, since feeling in general is the mother and tinder-spark of all poetry, the formless Promethean fire which gives limbs and life to forms. Outside the two forms or bodies of the epic and drama, the freely developing flame of lyric, like that of an actual fire, takes no circumscribed fixed shape but blazes and flickers as an ode, dithyramb, or elegy" (196–97). In Jean Paul's view, modernity required lyric energy to be objectified in drama or in the protean novel, which he calls the modern epic (179–82). Still, as in Ivanov, the *lyric mode proper* inhabits all literary discourse while remaining outside the system of conventional forms.

Belinsky followed Jean Paul in his important essay of 1841, "The Division of Poetry into Genres and Species," which presents the tripartite division of genres (lyric, epic, drama), with drama appearing as "the supreme genre of

poetry and the crown of art” (Belinsky 1953: vol. 5: 10). Using Jean Paul’s vocabulary, Belinsky compares the epic and the drama: “Despite the fact that both the drama and the epic display an *event*, they are opposite in essence. In the epic the *event* reigns supreme, whereas in the drama it is *man*” (16). Like Jean Paul, Belinsky considered the epic to be possible in the modern age only in the form of the novel, “this true epic [of modernity]” (vol. 7: 406; see also vol. 5: 39–42).³² The model for the Russian novel was *Eugene Onegin* by Pushkin, who “realized that the time of epic poems had long since passed and that for the depiction of contemporary society, in which the prose of life had so deeply penetrated the very poetry of life, one needed a novel, and not an epic poem” (vol. 7: 440).³³ Like Jean Paul and Ivanov, Belinsky retains the lyric in the role of the nourishing undercurrent of all artistic work; he quotes the characterization of the lyric as the Promethean fire within all literary works, adding that “[w]ithout lyricism the epic and drama would be too transparent and coldly indifferent to their content, just as they become too slow, static, and poor in action as soon as lyricism becomes the predominant element in them” (vol. 5: 14). This lyric bias can be seen in many other critics of Ivanov’s time, including Aleksandr Veselovsky (1940: 243–44) and the positivist critic Dmitry Ovsianiko-Kulikovsky.³⁴

Adopting Goethe’s dichotomy of literary tragedy and epic modes, Ivanov follows Jean Paul and Belinsky in seeing the lyric as “Promethean fire” that grants aesthetic efficacy to all literary forms. Moreover, Ivanov recasts this lyric power in terms of Aristotelian tragedy. This explains why, when he turns his attention to modernist narratives, he will call for the novel (understood as the modern epic) to be imbued with the spirit of tragedy. For Ivanov this is simply equivalent to saying that it should be art.

Ivanov’s “Novel-Tragedy”

The clearest example of Ivanov’s theory of discursive modes is also his most famous discussion of genre, namely, his definition of Dostoevsky’s novels as “novel-tragedies,” which he first presented in a 1911 essay and then in his 1932 German-language book on Dostoevsky, translated into English as *Freedom and the Tragic Life* (1952). While the term may appear to indicate a mechanical hybrid of traditional forms (indeed, Ivanov was taken to task by Bakhtin for just this), Ivanov explains the interrelation between tragedy and narrative in Dostoevsky in innovative ways that characterize his mature hermeneutic position. In the section of his essay entitled “The Principle of Form,” Ivanov treats Dostoevsky’s novels as a cycle, like Balzac’s epic *Human Comedy* (*Coll. Works* 4:403). Most novels remain “demotic” (i.e., popular)

art, meaning that they are “akin to an eye of the nation, lit up in an individual soul but trained upon the entire nation so that the latter might examine itself and become conscious of itself” (404). Dostoevsky's novels, by contrast, reach “to the height of the universal epic and the prophetic self-definition of the national soul” (404). Dostoevsky achieves these heights by reinstating the ancient syncretic art that Veselovsky had claimed as the primordial form of literature (409).³⁵ Unlike the pale narrative of the demotic novel, Dostoevsky's new epics are charged with a tragic power that endows them with universal appeal and a prophetic orientation toward the future.

Ivanov avers that the modern novel, whose humble origins he finds in “the Miletian fairy tale” (404), grew into the epic via Renaissance individualism.³⁶ The conflict between individual and society in such novels as *Don Quixote* introduces a specifically tragic element (405). Ivanov then prophesies that “the novel will live until there matures in the national spirit the only rival form that is capable and worthy of replacing it—Queen Tragedy, who has already sent into the world the first heralds of her solemn return” (*Coll. Works* 4:406). Thus, in the space of several pages the novel is declared to be both epic and tragedy. The key to the coexistence of both generic modes is that the modern novel is “a tragedy of the spirit,” much as Homer's *Iliad* was “inwardly a tragedy, both in conception and plot development and in the spirit that animates it.” Ivanov continues: “The epic form that we call the novel [. . .] rises in Dostoevsky's novel to include pure tragedy within its forms” (409). Ivanov writes that Dostoevsky used the narrative technique of the naïve epic “for the architectonics of tragedy,” much as “a composer brings us to the perception and psychological experience of the whole work as a unity” by using contrapuntal development (410). The novel-tragedy is a narrative punctuated by tragic moments, all leading up to a final “tragic catastrophe.” According to Ivanov, “each cell of this tissue is itself a small tragedy within itself; and if the whole is catastrophic, so is each knot catastrophic on a small scale” (411). This, Ivanov writes, accounts for Dostoevsky's unique “epic rhythm,” which “turns his creations into a system of tense muscles and tight nerves, [and] which makes them so exhausting yet grants them such power over our souls” (411). Referring explicitly to Aristotle, Ivanov attributes to the tragic elements in Dostoevsky's novels the power of catharsis: “Dostoevsky's cruel muse (cruel, because tragic to the final prick) mightily elicits terror and tortuous compassion from the depths of our souls, but he always leads us to cleansing, thereby sealing the authenticity of his artistic action” (411). Thus, the tragic spirit of Dostoevsky's novel achieves in the reader the affect of catharsis, but only after the narrative has led him

through “the tortures of hell and the sufferings of purgatory to the threshold of Beatrice’s palaces,” so that “we have long since reconciled ourselves to our stern guide and no longer complain of the difficult path” (412).

The catharsis created by the tragic catastrophe authenticates the narrative without influencing the actual *form* of the artwork. Ivanov even takes Dostoevsky to task for needlessly importing into the novel elements of dramatic conflict and dialogue. Ivanov refuses to hypostatize the novelistic form, calling Dostoevsky’s works “narrative poems” (*poemy*; 417). For its part, the narrative aspect justifies and interprets the tragic catastrophe it contains in three distinct ways: as a clash between good and evil in people’s souls; as the result of human psychology; and as the result of external events. Dostoevsky’s success in creating such an explanatory narrative enables his tragic spirit to communicate particular truths—for instance, that “everyone wills and acts in accordance with his deepest free will, which lies in God or resists God and separates itself from Him” (413). Dostoevsky’s kinship to Dionysus endows him with “ecstatic and clairvoyant penetration into another’s *I*” (417). Yet Dostoevsky is also a forger of souls, a shaper of history—and Ivanov proceeds to the “principle of worldview” in order to elucidate Dostoevsky’s influence upon extraliterary reality. Ivanov’s delineation of two modes of discourse—tragic and epic—explains aesthetic efficacy and historical agency in art, providing the basis of his hermeneutic philosophy.

Lukács and the Bakhtin Circle

Ivanov’s reading of Dostoevsky exerted a palpable influence on Bakhtin, yet ever since the West discovered Bakhtin Ivanov has suffered from the association. The imbalanced treatment of the two thinkers can be ascribed, in part, to Ivanov’s hieratic tone, which is liable to obscure his success in describing the way literature engages with social and historical issues. I would like to highlight the pragmatic aspects of Ivanov’s theory of discourse by comparing it to the discourse theories of Georg Lukács and the Bakhtin circle, who were more frankly concerned with the social engagement of literature.

In his 1915 book *The Theory of the Novel* the then Hegelian critic Georg Lukács presented an innovative interpretation of genre as the locus of interaction between society and artistic form. In his view, genres rise and fall together with specific social structures. Within the terms of this historicism, however, Lukács basically returns to the standard triad of lyric, drama, and the epic, which he sees as positive principles or “moods,” each with its own “structural laws” (1971: 45). Moreover, in his actual analysis Lukács largely dispenses with the lyric as a literary genre. Instead, like Jean Paul, he views

“lyricism” as a formative element in tragedy, which for Lukács is typified by “loneliness”: “Such loneliness is not simply the intoxication of a soul gripped by destiny and so made song; it is also the torment of a creature condemned to solitude and devoured by a longing for community” (45).³⁷ In opposition to tragedy is the epic, which instead of the “intensive totality of life” presents its “extensive totality” (46). The epic’s “indestructible bond with reality *as it is*” distinguishes it from tragedy: “World destiny, which in tragedy is merely the number of noughts that have to be added to 1 to transform it into a million, is what actually gives the events of the epic their content; the epic hero, as bearer of his destiny, is not lonely, for this destiny connects him by indissoluble threads to the community whose fate is crystallized in his own” (67).

History, it would appear, was on the side of tragedy, insofar as the rise of individualism preserved tragedy “with its essential nature intact, whereas the epic had to disappear and yield its place to an entirely new form: the novel” (41). Essentially, then, just as Schlegel and Jean Paul had argued, the novel is the modern epic.³⁸ Thus, as with Ivanov, it is possible to break down Lukács’s triad into a dichotomy of tragedy/lyric and epic: tragedy and the lyric account for the existential power of art, while epic grounds its communicative universality. Lukács’s main concern was to harness modernism’s tragic power into a new communicative art: the novel. Lukács’s later revision of this view, in line with the Stalinist idealization of “true epic greatness,” was, in my view, consistent with the earlier formulation in its basic inspiration.³⁹

Mikhail Bakhtin followed Lukács by conceiving of genre as a form of mediation between language and social reality (Tihanov 1997: 281). Bakhtin declared the novel not the *modern* epic but rather a suprahistorical form opposed to the epic, which happened to be particularly relevant in modernity. Bakhtin often seems irritated by the very word “epic” (278, 286; Tihanov 2000: 56). Indeed, it was not enough that the novel succeed the epic; Bakhtin insisted on the epic’s “destruction” (Bakhtin 1981: 23, 35). In fact, the novel subsumes all other forms by “novelizing” them (6, 39). This scheme obviously stems from the teleological genre theories of the romantics, except that in this case it is not a mode of discourse but a discrete literary form that appears as the final destination. In this regard, Galin Tihanov has suggested that the novel for Bakhtin corresponds to drama (or tragedy) in the romantic typologies (2000: 52). However, Bakhtin’s concept of the novel also borrows particular features from the epic, such as narrative, as well as the idea of objectivity or impartiality that Goethe noted in the epic. In the

final analysis, Bakhtin's motivation is similar to that of Lukács: to translate the power of modern individualistic art into a more broadly communicative mode of discourse, which was traditionally the domain of what Bakhtin calls "epic discourse" and which achieves its reach through "impersonal and sacrosanct tradition, [. . .] a commonly held evaluation and point of view" (Bakhtin 1981: 16). However, this leaves Bakhtin's discussions of genre looking decidedly one-sided insofar as he fails to account for dramatic or lyric literary forms, or to provide any account of what unites literary discourse across the boundaries of form and genre. There is no counterpart to Lukács's "lyricism" or Ivanov's "tragedy" to serve as the universal source of aesthetic efficacy. There is only the novel, which redeems all other genres by infusing them with "semantic open-endedness" (7).⁴⁰

The lack of any counterweight to the novel may explain Bakhtin's later introduction of the concepts of laughter and carnival, which, as candidates for a "proto-genre" and the "corrective of rigidity," help to explain the origin of the novel's power (Brandist 2002: 137–40). Laughter, in particular, is similar to Ivanov's concept of tragedy not only in the sense that it reinvigorates nondramatic genres but also in that it posits a certain intervention in ritual. For Bakhtin, according to Brandist, "[t]he rigidification of the symbolic world and of the social hierarchy are presented as 'illnesses' of social life, which laughter treats, pricking the pretension of the hierarchical discourse by bringing it into contact with the 'unseemly' creative organs of the social body" (140). However, if laughter inverts social rituals, it relies upon hierarchical discourse for dissemination. Galin Tihanov has analyzed the way that Bakhtin develops laughter as the dialectical partner of the novel, its "Other," which grants it its power yet is formed only as discourse within the novel (2000: 151–52). As such, carnival becomes "something more than genre," while the novel as a form is reabsorbed into epic discourse (2001: 73–77). Laughter and polyglossia turn out to be mutually necessary conditions of the novel, structurally equivalent to the tragic and epic modes of discourse in Ivanov's genre theory.⁴¹ In this way Bakhtin's concept of the novel not only begins with an underacknowledged debt to Ivanov (Bakhtin 1984: 10–11, 14), but, in its later version, continues to develop in line with Ivanov's ideas.

The Bakhtin circle as a whole was close to Ivanov in its general orientation, as is demonstrated by Pavel Medvedev's book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928). Here Medvedev singles out genre as a key concept in discourse, determined by "the direct orientation of the word as fact, or, more precisely, [. . .] as an historical achievement in its surrounding

environment" (Medvedev 1978: 131). From this vantage point Medvedev distributes literary forms among the three basic modes of drama, lyric, and epic, each of which commands its own thematic range and its own "definite principles of selection, definite forms for seeing and conceptualizing reality, and a definite scope and depth of penetration" (131). In other words, human understanding depends not on language but on the "form of utterance," which is a kind of "inner genre" (134).⁴² If the aesthetic work seeks a completed depiction of reality within itself, then human consciousness turns to aesthetic works not for utopian self-completion but in order to *understand* itself in temporal life (134). Thus, genre describes how an aesthetic work enters "historical life" and becomes "an active factor in it" (127). Medvedev's theory of genres makes an explicit transition to a hermeneutic theory of discourse that explains how statements are created, understood, and translated into real action. It is a premise of my book that Ivanov achieved a similar feat a decade earlier.

Galin Tihanov has presented Lukács's and Bakhtin's theories of genre as perched precariously between historicism and essentialism (2000: 60). Their hypostatization of specific genres or modes displays an "essentialist" tendency, at the same time as they seek to define genre as the interface between literary form and extraliterary history. This tension is most palpable in romantic and postromantic critics' treatment of the novel, a qualitatively new genre that called into question both the manifold of forms in the neo-classicist arsenal and the bi- or tripartite schemes of literary mode in romanticism. Either the novel had to be subsumed into an existing mode or else the modes themselves had to be seen to be evolving over time in interaction with each other. Lukács subsumed the novel under the epic, whereas Bakhtin essentially destroyed (or ignored) the inherited system of genres in order to reconstruct it upon other categories of discourse (laughter and polyglossia). Earlier than either of these thinkers, however, Ivanov formalized the roles of the tragic and epic modes as universal principles of artistic communication. It was Ivanov's singular achievement to recast literary theory as a hermeneutic theory of communication that, unfolding organically from his mature intellectual outlook, posited art as the source of ethical and existential knowledge for the individual and community.

PART 2



HERMENEUTIC THEMES IN IVANOV'S THEORETICAL UNIVERSE

This form, this face, this life
Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me
Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken,
The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships.

—T. S. Eliot, “Marina,” from *Ariel Poems*

I am glad that I have freed you,
So at last I can really believe I can die.
For under your influence death is inconceivable. [. . .]
Now, Ariel, I am that I am, your late and lonely master,
Who knows now what magic is:—the power to enchant
That comes from disillusion.

—W. H. Auden, “Prospero to Ariel,” from *The Sea and the Mirror*

INTRODUCTION

Ivanov's theoretical essays belong to the epic mode of discourse insofar as they originate as narrative explanations of his lyric world. The cosmology in Ivanov's lyrics underlies all of his works on religion and aesthetics: man is alienated from God but can overcome the false world through erotic and aesthetic experience. As cosmology, this scheme could tend toward pantheism or Gnosticism and imperil the integrity both of historical being and of the transcendent divinity whose existence Ivanov often professed. I view Ivanov's growth as a thinker precisely in his increasing appreciation of the way transcendent truths remain inaccessible unless mediated by history. Just as ritual must be approached through narrative, so the eternal memory of cosmic unity must take its place in the narrative memory (i.e., the life stories) of concrete human individuals.

Ivanov's intellectual growth can be divided into three periods, which roughly correspond to the following three chapters. Until about 1907 Ivanov's thought was dominated by the intuition that artistic creativity was the privileged means for restoring cosmic unity. The creative act was viewed as a Dionysian frenzy that destroyed discrete forms. From 1908 to about 1912 Ivanov's thought swung in the opposite direction as he elucidated the way artistic creativity becomes frozen in symbols that approximate the Platonic forms of things. Here art is represented by Apollo, the god of form, and is called theurgy. Lastly, from about 1913 onward Ivanov developed a balanced view of art as affecting people through form and inspiring them to action. This period was personified by Orpheus, who partakes of both divine principles as human and artist. I define this more mature aesthetics as both personalist and hermeneutic insofar as it is oriented toward understanding and action.

The following three chapters are not strictly chronological. Rather, they deal with Ivanov's most successful formulations of the ideas from each period. In chapter 4 I examine the place of memory and history in Ivanov's initial cosmology. It inspired an aesthetics centered upon tragic experience, cathartic effect, and lyric expression, all of which fall under the aesthetic category of the sublime. In chapter 5 I focus squarely on Ivanov's mature aesthetics, which eventually arrives at a hermeneutic theory that addresses not only the sources of creativity in memory but also the productivity of the artwork vis-à-vis the future. Lastly, in chapter 6 I explore how this hermeneutic theory yielded a theory of history. Ivanov approached art as a primary factor in historical consciousness, not only as a reflection of existent conditions of life but also as a formative principle of history. Consequently, Ivanov's hope for a new Russian history led him to seek out innovations in the very way literature is written and read in Russia. The progression of Ivanov's ideas is summed up in a triad of concepts he introduced in 1909: catharsis–mathesis–praxis.

Catharsis

THE MANY AND THE ONE

Dionysus and the Goddess

Ivanov announced his theoretical program in terms of a return to a “mythological period”: “Regardless of the veracity of metaphysical insights, it is important to establish that they are of the same nature as myth” (1904: 48). In Ivanov’s conception, myth is formed to communicate an inexpressible truth, which it envelops in narrative, just as nocturnal dreams are comprehended by being translated into daytime categories. Therefore, the first task of philosophical reflection is to “rediscover myth in the world” in order to approach the original experience through myth. Using the terminology (and many of the ideas) of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Ivanov described human life as the result of individuation. The secession of separate parts from the primordial all-unity cleaves individuated monads from the source of their being. Since the resulting plethora of phenomenal existence is illusory, man can achieve no true self-affirmation except by passively acceding to unity with the cosmic whole. For the individual, the surrender of the monadic self entails a passion in either sense of the word, whether through suffering or love. The rupture of individual borders in passion merges the individual with the universe and dissolves the isolated will in the impersonal, feminine whole. Loss of self becomes the fulfillment of self in the source of all being.

The principle of self-sacrifice is embodied by a plethora of suffering heroes and gods, primarily Prometheus, Dionysus, and Christ. Ivanov discovered Dionysus in Nietzsche, but he instilled the figure with a decisively un-Nietzschean religious awe.¹ Dionysus’s prominence in Ivanov’s theory issues less from the god himself than from his unique connections to tragedy, which he understood as a cathartic art open to religious knowledge. The principle that Dionysus personifies is actually consistent with the New

Testament: “[T]he religion of Dionysus is a mystical religion, and the soul of mysticism is the divinization of man, whether through the grace-bearing approach of the Divinity to the human soul, which results in their complete fusion, or through an inner insight into the true and eternal essence of the *I*, into the ‘Itself’ in the *I* (the ‘Atman’ of Brahman philosophy). Dionysian frenzy is itself the divinization of man, and he who is possessed by the god is already a Superman” (*SE* 185; *Coll. Works* 1:723).²

Ivanov rarely spoke explicitly about Dionysus’s place in the larger scheme of things, but intimations of a greater whole are constantly present, as in the concluding words of *The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God*: “[T]he religion of Dionysus is the religion of the divinely suffering Earth” (*RD* 2: 148). I interpret this statement as a description of how tragedy and religion interact through the mediation of memory, a force aligned with the earth. This view—and Ivanov’s “religion” generally—can best be understood through an analysis of his 1909 essay “Ancient Terror,” which both sums up Ivanov’s thinking in his initial period and elevates it to an entirely new level.

In “Ancient Terror,” ostensibly a commentary on Lev Bakst’s painting *Ter-ror Antiquus*, Ivanov presents a highly synthetic picture of the evolution of Greek religion, which he traces to an original belief in a single, supreme goddess and christens thelymonotheism. The single goddess has many aspects, incorporating Mnemosyne (Memory), Ananke (Necessity), the Moirae (the Fates), Aphrodite (Beauty), and Gaia (Mother Earth). A full register of her names would also include goddesses from other ancient cultures, from Hera to Sais, who was “a hypostasis of the Virgin-Athena, and who was called Neith in Egyptian” (*SE* 157; *Coll. Works* 3:104). This goddess was both chthonic and celestial: “All female divine hypostases are varieties of the one goddess, and this goddess is the female principle of the world, one gender raised to the absolute” (*SE* 156; *Coll. Works* 3:103). Despite Ivanov’s evocation of a transcendent God, he claims that divinity is revealed to humanity only through the mediation of the cosmic goddess’s various aspects: “They knew only the absolute within her faceless essence, and they knew that she was one” (*SE* 154; *Coll. Works* 3:102). As long as these various divine forces were united in a single essence, they preserved cosmic harmony. However, the Olympian gods, led by Zeus, overthrew them and imposed an artificial order based on masculine self-assertion instead of primordial feminine harmony. In “Ancient Terror” the Dionysian principle of reunification with the divine cosmos is primarily represented by the figure of Prometheus. He is the son of Themis-Gaia, who is “one though her names are many,”³ and in her name Prometheus sacrifices himself by resisting Zeus’s supremacy.

Despite some scholarly turns of phrase, Ivanov's advocacy of a historical scheme of Greek religion in "Ancient Terror" is not to be taken literally. The usurpation of cosmic power by the Olympian gods serves Ivanov as an allegory of man's false self-divinization, the creation of idols according to his own fallen image, and also the falsification of mystical experience in institutional religion. In the final analysis, it legitimates the modernist intervention in ritual through art. The creation of idols removed divinity to a supraterrrestrial heaven, dulling man's consciousness of his divine origin and destiny and depriving his self-affirmation of its necessary ground in the divine Mother Earth. In Ivanov's view, "transcendentism" is tantamount to atheism since both sever man from the authentic divine realm. Heroes such as Prometheus illustrate ways to rediscover and regain the lost paradise by bursting the limits of individuated being in the passion of love or suffering. Their sacrificial death affirms and reveals the unity of the divine cosmos for those remaining on the tenebrous earth. The memory of martyred heroes becomes an affirmation of god, of immortal being, the overcoming of time, and the source of all culture (*SE* 145–46; *Coll. Works* 3:92–93). Memory, therefore, is the source of creative energy and guidance, at least for the pre-Christian world. In a way that remains quite obscure—at least in "Ancient Terror"—Ivanov avers that Christ's death instituted a new, eschatological kind of knowledge and a creativity oriented toward the future.

Ivanov draws an analogy between modernity and Atlantis, whose sad fate demonstrates the consequences of any attempt to replace the feminine divinity of fate and justice with masculine ideals of sovereignty and power. By repudiating the goddess, the kingly and patriarchal society of Atlantis not only alienated itself from the divine realm but also lost the ability to remember (since Mnemosyne/Memory is an aspect of the goddess).⁴ The Greek conquerors of Atlantis also succumbed to the false Atlantean religion and abandoned the veneration of the divine earth. In the same way, Ivanov insists, modern humanity has not only forgotten its gods but has also forgotten its old victory over rigid patriarchal ritualism in Christianity, which once again illumined earth's divinity. Ivanov regards this as the New Testament capitulating before the Old. He finds evidence of the repressed memory of the divine earth in the 1908 earthquake in the Italian port of Messina, which shook the world's confidence in civilization:

We all feel that we live at a time of the waning and taming of the world's elemental forces and humanity's elemental energies, but we still hear, somewhere below the level of conscious and superficial life, a distant, deep song of

native chaos.⁵ We do not believe it; we do not even believe it when the world suddenly begins to settle and open beneath our cities in unexpected fits of long quieted fever. Thus, it would seem that we are distant from *horror fati*, the terror of destiny. But two or three Messinas would be enough for “ancient terror” to become for us the terror of today. (*SE* 148; *Coll. Works* 3:95)

Ever the classicist, Ivanov recognized the event as the reemergence of vengeful Scylla, which for Homer was a cavern in the Messina straits that gobbled up whatever came within its grasp. The difference between Atlantis and Messina, or between antiquity and modernity, lies in the pivotal event that divides them, namely, Christ’s Incarnation. In “Ancient Terror” Ivanov not only attempts to restore to the modern soul a sense of the divine earth as goddess but also a sense of the cosmic reconciliation achieved in Christ, the new mediator between once-distant God and the world. However, this emphasis on the *history* of salvation is belied by Ivanov’s relentless allegories, which reduce historical difference to the same old oppositions of female and male divinities. Even Christ is seen as just another incarnation of the self-sacrificing hero, alongside Dionysus and Prometheus.

Philosophical Cosmology

A closer consideration of Ivanov’s arguments in “Ancient Terror” reveals many aspects of his early religious thought and, most important, some indication of how they may be understood. First, one encounters references to Plato’s *Timaeus*, the classic work of philosophical cosmology and cosmogony. Plato describes a dualistic cosmos consisting of, on the one hand, the Demiurge with its world of forms and, on the other, a mysterious “receptacle” that has been variously interpreted as space, primal matter, and a repository of Democritian atoms. The passive, spatial level of reality is decidedly inferior to that of the active forms, but formless space is nevertheless endowed with some kind of independent existence. At first glance Ivanov’s cosmos would seem similarly dualistic, with a shadowy realm of passive space awaiting illumination by children of God. But Ivanov shifts Plato’s dichotomy, merging the images of “Demiurge” and “receptacle” into a single, feminine World Soul, against which stands humanity as the sole active principle. He refuses to ground the world of forms on an independent principle, calling it “a shadow and the dream of a shadow” (*SE* 161; *Coll. Works* 3:108).

Indeed, in *The Hellenic Religion* Ivanov explicitly ties many of these negative images to Plato’s idea of nonbeing: “In this world of appearances, which we call reality but which is “nonbeing” (μη ὄν), [Plato] saw nothing more

than the dubious and imperfect reflections of the world of what is, and people he called captives in a cave. [. . .] Already Pindar, made wise by Orphic wisdom, had said ‘Man is the dream of a shadow,’ which is in full accord with Plato” (*HR* 2: 73). This discussion of Plato supersedes much of the Schopenhauerian terminology that peppers Ivanov’s earliest works. Ivanov’s use of the term “nonbeing” or “μη ὄν” for the world would appear to contradict any notion of an abiding substratum, resulting in a stark, black and white universe in which divine light always conquers darkness and being always triumphs over nothingness.⁶

Like the opposition between the passive World Soul and the creative principle, other basic polarities in Ivanov’s cosmology also collapse upon closer scrutiny. At first the term “individuation” is destructive of the divine-cosmic whole. It later transpires that the world as such is only the visible expression of the self-alienation of the divine, a process that Ivanov also terms individuation. “Dionysus is the divine all-unity of ‘What Is’ in its sacrificial separation and suffering transubstantiation into the many-faced Nothing (μη ὄν) of the world, which flutters spectrally between appearance and disappearance” (*SE* 180; *Coll. Works* 1:718).

Later Ivanov elaborated: “The world is the suffering modus of unified being, and Dionysus is the name of this modus in the absolute” (*DP* 190). This first, negative sense of individuation leads Ivanov to a second, positive sense: the disintegration of the alienated personality and its reintegration with the unified basis of the cosmos.⁷ According to the Orphic cosmogony, Dionysus’s passion and death returns the divine flame to the widowed earth, from which the god is to arise anew as part of a transfigured creation (*HR* 1: 122). The two senses of individuation are therefore alternating phases of the single process of ascent and descent.⁸ A similar conclusion can be made concerning Ivanov’s occasional distinction between monad and dyad, represented by Apollo and Dionysus. In fact, Apollonian form is inauthentic and can only be redeemed by immersion in Dionysian chaos.⁹ In all of these cases, the state of division is merely a temporary and inauthentic state of unified being and consciousness.

Ivanov claims that man is a bipartite being, comprising a soul and a divine ego, or “seminal logos” (*SE* 161; *Coll. Works* 3:109). The ego is caught in an eternal state of becoming. The soul, by contrast, is the abiding substratum or receptacle of existence, which seeks to accept its divine ego and grant it form. Neither aspect can exist in alienation from the other. If the libidinal soul sets itself up as its own divinity and accepts a false ego, it becomes “painless, widowed life, abandoned by the seeds of spirit,” whose

existence is eternal torture (*SE* 152; *Coll. Works* 3:100). If the ego attempts to assert itself without the soul, it is proven groundless and impotent. Without any creative synthesis, the way to harmony lies solely in submission to the feminine cosmos, which could take the form of sexual union or death and burial in Mother Earth.

As cosmology, all of this implies pantheism since any being is necessarily divine. In his 1907 essay “Thou Art” (“Ty esi”) Ivanov utilizes the terminology of the Lord’s Prayer to identify the two components of man as the “Sky” and “Earth” within us, both of which await the revelation of the Son, again “within us” (*Coll. Works* 3:268). Citing the Orphic cosmogony, Ivanov states that “the world is the unfolding of [man’s] microcosm” (268). A. Iu. Dorsky has remarked that in Ivanov’s conception “[t]he conflict between man and God is essentially transferred from the transcendent sphere to the immanent, and the divine-human dialogue turns out to be a dialogue between various agencies of the human being (1997: 6–7). At any rate, Ivanov concludes that “a reunification by grace in the Spirit has become possible for the human individual only in miraculous and sacrificial moments of correct religious ecstasy” (*Coll. Works* 3:268).¹⁰ The upshot of Ivanov’s cosmology is therefore the need for humans to institute rituals capable of reuniting man with the goddess, whether in desire, in passion, or in death.

Ivanov’s Religion of Death

Whether Ivanov’s cosmology is regarded as religion, aesthetics, or psychology, it is centered on the fact of death as catharsis. Psychological death occurs when the intellectual ego yields to the corporeal soul and man is freed from one-sided rationalism. Death in the metaphysical sense reunites the individual ego with the abiding basis of being—the earth. Thus, the religion of the living is founded upon communion with the departed, who go forth as messengers into the cosmic night and shine as beacons of normative immortality. Life is an illusory exile from this greater being, which can be reached only by departing beyond life’s bounds. If Ivanov’s Dionysianism is a religion of death, his Christianity supersedes its pagan precursor only by revealing a further level of meaning within death itself, an even more radical catharsis—*kenosis*—the individual’s ascetic emptying of his selfhood on the model of Christ.

Ivanov’s argument may be elucidated by referring to some of his sources. He was particularly influenced by Erwin Rohde’s study *Psyche*, which traced Greek religion to an innate human sense of immortality. The worship of Dionysus and the Eleusinian mysteries satisfied this inner yearning by

facilitating the psychological sense of enthusiasm and ecstasy, that is, inspiration by the spirit, escaping the bounds of the self, and experiencing otherness: "The veil of the world was torn aside for the inspired worshiper; the All-One became sensible and intelligible for him; it poured into his own being; the 'deification' of the Mystai was realized in him" (Rohde 1925: 266). For Rohde each individual soul is a monad seeking harmony with other monads; it can open a window onto the whole only in a state of ecstasy, that is, in the act of self-sacrifice or death. Self-sacrifice is self-discovery, the result of the soul's substantial identity with the divine cosmos or World Soul.¹¹ What is important here for Ivanov's understanding of religion is the primacy of the individual human experience. Without the individual's living experience of otherness in religious ecstasy, the divine is as good as dead to the world and souls are deprived of being. In "Ancient Terror" the contemporary world is repeatedly compared to the Hades of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, where souls are bereft of substantiality and become mere "shadows" of reality, faint memories of what once had been.

It is precisely this fallen and divided cosmos that Nietzsche, Rohde, and Ivanov take as their starting point. Unlike his predecessors, however, Ivanov is unable to stop at the state of division. To get beyond phenomenal existence he is forced to elucidate a conception of the transcendent about which he is frequently quite vague. The Dionysian experience is said to unite one with the "suffering aspect of the cosmos" since suffering is an element of the divine cosmos or World Soul. In *The Hellenic Religion* Ivanov compared Dionysian orgasm to Prometheus's "hollow cane, where the heavenly flame is concealed" (*RD* 2:139; cf. *Coll. Works* 2:161), but he did not elucidate the nature or origin of this divine spark. In this respect "Ancient Terror" clarifies the general picture by hinting that the ancient, immanent view of the divine cosmos was insufficient, and that we will begin viewing it with terror "unless the Love unknown to those ancient people blossoms in us, love which does not know fear; if in spirit also we are only the degenerate descendants of a waning world, the belated children of an Earth that is exhausted by its futile efforts to give birth to children of the Sun who would be worthy of their father's light, an Earth that is exhausted by its endless *miscarriages* [. . .] (*SE* 148; *Coll. Works* 3:96). The cyclical and purely immanent sphere of ancient culture did not allow any single hero to reverse the fall. The ancients' lack of hope stemmed from ignorance of true Love, manifested by the Christian God.

Rohde and Nietzsche are obviously incompatible with Ivanov's Christian premises. Against Rohde he affirms not a subjective sense of immortality

in the human community but the conscious (and genuine) knowledge of the immortality of the soul. Ivanov's polemic with Nietzsche is also based on his faith in the transcendence offered through the Dionysian experience. For example, Nietzsche wrote that Prometheus was Dionysian in his sacrilegious revolt against the Olympian gods but not in his "demand for justice," which would only replace the gods with another external ideal (1967: 70). Ivanov also does not recognize the divinity of the Olympians and therefore concurs in seeing Prometheus's revolt as justified: self-proclaimed gods deserve no veneration. Against Nietzsche, however, he sees justice (Themis) as an element of the primordial heritage of female monotheism that Prometheus seeks to restore. Prometheus's revolt is therefore a reverent affirmation of true cosmic order.

To be fair, in parts of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche intimates a similar understanding of man's union with the whole:

Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man. Freely, earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey of the rocks and deserts approach. [...] Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of *maya* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity. (37)

It is passages such as these that allowed Ivanov to number Nietzsche among the prophets of the future synthesis. However, in the larger context of Nietzsche's writings they remain isolated flights of rhetoric. For Nietzsche the final reality remains man as a psychological being, who awakes from "primordial unity" as from a dream to confront the same godless world he started in: "In Dionysian art and its tragic symbolism the same nature cries to us with its true, undissembled voice: 'Be as I am! Amid the ceaseless flux of phenomena I am the eternally creative primordial mother, eternally impelling to existence, eternally finding satisfaction in this change of phenomena!'" (104).

In 1904 Ivanov had viewed Dionysianism in the light of Nietzsche's idea of eternal return. Dionysus is eternally reborn from the earth: "making everything at every instant simultaneously eternal and newly revealed" (*SE* 187; *Coll. Works* 1:724). Dionysus's eternally recurring resurrection is a bestowal of hope; he is "Dionysus the sacrifice, Dionysus the resurrected,

Dionysus the comforter” (*SE* 181; *Coll. Works* 1:719).¹² In “Ancient Terror,” by contrast, the redeeming quality of the Dionysian experience is found to be its restoration of primordial memory. Even this, however, leaves man trapped “within the walls of the old prison which paganism also foundered in” (*SE* 160; *Coll. Works* 3:108). What is needed—and what Ivanov claims to have been granted in Christianity—is a new infusion of Spirit, the bestowal of hope for cosmic redemption not just in the past but also in the future.

TIME AND MEMORY

History as Theogony

The pantheistic nature of Ivanov’s basic cosmological intuition yielded a call for the restoration of unity in both the psychological and religious senses. This ideal, in turn, clearly raised the problem of time, both as a factor in the disintegration of the cosmos and as a means of its reintegration. In this connection one quickly sees why Prometheus occupies pride of place in “Ancient Terror.” Prometheus allows Ivanov to incorporate the Dionysian principle of religious experience into a myth with clear allegorical meaning and with temporal features. On the one hand, Prometheus actively battles to bridge the widening gap between humanity and divinity, a gap that arose within the span of the Titan’s memory and can be overcome in a foreseeable future. On the other hand, his struggle is an affirmation of continuity between the old goddess and the human Earth, which bears memory of archaic truth. Ivanov thus links the myth of Prometheus to primeval religious beliefs that in his view remain a precondition for any future religious experience. Time is seen as the medium both of tradition and of progress, which become interdependent—perhaps even coextensive—concepts.

As was mentioned above, Ivanov arrived at a disdainful view of the pre-Christian cosmos as locked in fallenness and oriented only toward the past, even if this past was capable of restoring some measure of primordial harmony. In “Ancient Terror” he presents the following view of the Fall: “The Serpent tempted Eve with the promise of self-knowledge. She thought to achieve it through matter and ate of the fruit and gave it to Adam, becoming the beginning of guilt [Gen 3:6]. And Adam fell into slavery to the flesh. [. . .] In her maladies, the Universal Woman began to give birth to feeble offspring” (*SE* 161–62; *Coll. Works* 3:109). These offspring are too weak to restore the primordial order of things, but Woman is also a mere shadow of the original World Soul, having devolved from a spiritual receptacle into a material one. Cleopatra, who abandoned Mark Antony at Actium, and Helen,

whose abduction led to the downfall of Troy, are two such shadows of the World Soul (*SE* 150, 152; *Coll. Works* 3:97, 100). In her fallen state the single goddess appears to men not in her highest capacity, as Life-Giver, but also as a cosmic femme fatale—"Fate-Death, Fate the Destroyer" (*SE* 154; *Coll. Works* 3:101). The goddess first incites men's erotic desire to overcome the constraints of worldly life and then punishes them for their feeble attempts to do so.

All male energy together lacks the power to fulfill the measure of the many-faced goddess's immortal desires, and thus she destroys her lovers, from whom this many-breasted Cybele gives birth only to premature fetuses and miscarriages; she destroys and re-forms anew in the hope of a true marriage, but there is too little of the Sun's impoverished power in its sons, these husbands of Jocasta, and once again they perish, blinded like Oedipus, i.e., bereft of the sun. But the goddess continues to await true insemination from the Sun. (*SE* 156; *Coll. Works* 3:104)

The masculine principle—fully relative, transient, and human—remains in a subordinate position; even male divinities appear "in the aspect of a principle that is subject to disappearance and experiences death," acquiring traits of "the suffering god, like Dionysus and Osiris" (*SE* 157; *Coll. Works* 3:104–5).¹³ It is notable that, at least with respect to males, the distinction between god and man is moot since both must strive to attain authentically divine status through the cathartic surrender of selfhood to the cosmic whole.

Female domination is linked by Ivanov to a particular period of religious history: "Female monotheism corresponds to Adam's subordination to Woman as matter" (*SE* 162; *Coll. Works* 3:109). Then, Ivanov postulates, "there followed new retribution for Eve's sin, and the male element began to dominate over the female, and a new sin was committed—the sin of Woman's enslavement. This enslavement saved nothing, only exacerbating the extent of the calamity" (*SE* 162; *Coll. Works* 3:109). The "all-encompassing dogma of the One World Goddess" (*SE* 155; *Coll. Works* 3:103) was replaced by "timorousness and piety" before a distant god. The rule of Zeus inspired the rise of a patriarchal civilization erected in imitation of his outer might, but this was based on a mere denial of the female forces it had tamed, which "flowed in the lunar streams of enchanted Hecate" (*SE* 158; *Coll. Works* 3:106). The rebellions of Prometheus, Tantalus, Niobe, Antigone, and others were tantamount to pleas for loyalty to the primeval cosmic force of Beauty/Fate. Even Orpheus's suffering death on behalf of the Olympian Apollo reunites

him with the true substratum of life, making him a Dionysian martyr. Yet none of these gestures toward unity dethroned the Olympians or brought humanity closer to Mother Earth, and there continued a constant slide toward alienation and injustice.

Influences: Bachofen and Solovyov

All of these developments in the realm of religious belief were mirrored in Greek society, in which a primordial matriarchate was replaced by a patriarchate that sought to control elemental human drives through formal law. Ivanov cites the Swiss historian Johann Jakob Bachofen, who held that the matriachate itself had overcome an earlier period of "hetaerism" and "Amazonism," in which women had despotically ruled over men. These destructive tendencies reemerged periodically, in particular under the influence of Dionysian religion, which, although masculine in principle, attracted women with its emphasis on sensuality (Bachofen 1967: 101). In contrast to the excesses of Amazonian rule in hetaerism and Dionysianism, the matriachate affirmed the socially constructive cult of Demeter. Bachofen seems to find the later patriarchate just as agreeable as the temperate Demetrian social structure.

Ivanov accepts the idea of a matriarchal epoch, saying that Bachofen's "immortal works have enriched scholarship not with a hypothesis, but with a solid discovery."¹⁴ Reading between the lines, however, Ivanov takes exception to Bachofen's rejection of extreme hetaerism and its attendant Dionysianism. The words *eusebia* and *deisidaimonia* that Bachofen used (with reference to various ancient witnesses) to characterize typical female religiosity (85) are instead attributed by Ivanov to the Olympian religious system (*SE* 158; *Coll. Works* 3:106). Accepting Bachofen's connection between hetaerism and Dionysianism, Ivanov posits full-blown hetaerism as the authentic and archaic form of Hellenic religion and society. According to Lionel Gossman, Bachofen was attempting to find a solution to the following "double bind": "To the degree that man ceases to desire and long for the divine and to be guided by it, as the mariners of old were guided by the stars, he loses an essential part of his humanity. But equally, in attempting to realize the divine in the historical, he also loses his humanity."¹⁵ Ivanov, by contrast, firmly believed that only by realizing the divine within the historical could man achieve divine sonship. It was the virtue of hetaerism that it provided an authentic apprehension of the divine Other. Its failure lay in its inability to crystallize its dogmatic content into myth that could be passed down as tradition.

The greatest direct influence on Ivanov's cosmo-theo-anthropogony was the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov, particularly as presented in the 1878 *Lectures on Divine Humanity*. Solovyov bases his account of the cosmos on the idea of a godhead that is both unity and totality. As unity, the godhead is divisible into three persons: spirit as self-subsistent being; its "eternal and adequate manifestation, the essential Word"; and the Spirit, "returning to itself and thereby closing the circle of divine being" (Solovyov 1995: 96). As totality, however, the divinity contains all the ideas of creation in potentiality, everything that is and could be. This aggregate of ideas, the being of God, is called Sophia or the world soul, and is the intelligible manifestation of God's content, just as the Word manifests God's Spirit (108).

In his rather Gnostic cosmogony, Solovyov finds the cause of creation to be Sophia's desire to exercise her autonomy: "[T]hereby the world soul necessarily loses its central position, falls out of the all-one center of divine being, and ends up at the multiple periphery of creation, losing its freedom and power over this creation, for it possesses such power not from itself but only as mediator between creation and Divinity" (133). Solovyov continues: "When the world soul ceases to unite all with itself, all things lose their common bond and the unity of cosmic creation breaks up into a multitude of separate elements: the universal organism is transformed into a mechanical aggregate of atoms. [. . .] All of creation is thus made subject to the vanity and bondage of corruption not willingly but by the will of that which has subjugated it: by the will of the world soul, as the one free principle of natural life" (133–34).

The fallen world soul is powerless to rectify the situation, being itself a blind receptacle of being. It needs to be guided toward reunification by a rational being capable of making incarnate the divine spirit—man: "In this union, the divine principle constitutes the active, determining, formative, or fertilizing element, while the world soul is the passive force that receives the ideal principle and gives to what is received matter for its development, a shell for its complete manifestation" (138). Before this can happen, humans further the discord by excluding the divine principle from their consciousness and falling "under the power of the material principle" (143). In a phrase that Ivanov would later echo, Solovyov ponders why all this evil and pain is necessary: "Why all these abortions and miscarriages of nature?" (138; cf. "Ivanov's Religion of Death"). The point of the entire cosmic drama is for ideal all-unity to be freely reaffirmed as reality.

Like Ivanov, Solovyov also allegorizes his cosmogony as a theogony, "that is, the development of ancient mythology" (145). In their attempts to achieve

unity, humans model gods on cosmic forms. First there appears worship of a star-god, who is transcendent, “incommensurate with humanity, and therefore alien, incomprehensible, and terrible to it” (145). Then there arises the suffering god of the sun, symbolizing both life and death (Solovyov mentions Dionysus as an example; 146). Finally, man achieves self-consciousness “as a spiritual principle, free from the domination of natural gods and able to receive the divine principle directly, not through the mediation of cosmic forces” (147). The positing of Christ as God reveals the cosmos’s original form as the being of God or Body of Christ. Thus, Solovyov’s cosmogony is recapitulated as the history of religion, culminating in Christian revelation.

Ivanov’s explanation of how Christianity changed the destiny of the cosmos was similar to Solovyov’s in that he saw Christ as a revelation of pure transcendence in the world. Joining oneself to Christ therefore makes one a real son of God and real bridegroom for the World Soul: “If the will of the human *I* becomes His will, then Christ will be born in man, and he will become worthy of being called the Son of Man. Then his Earth will have found her Bridegroom, and the Son of Man his Bride, and the prayer will have been fulfilled about the will of the Father being accomplished not only in Heaven, but also on Earth” (*SE* 160; *Coll. Works* 3:108).

Moreover, since Christ was a man, he can be accessed in ritual, by means of the spirit, as well as through historical memory, by means of the sensuous soul. The memory of Christ, in turn, bestows Hope, a sense unknown to the Greeks, who had memory only of pre-temporal cosmic unity but not of its reinstatement within history. Despite its evident shortcomings, Ivanov’s understanding of the anthropological principle of Christianity includes a historical moment and is thus differentiated from the model of eternal Dionysianism. “Ancient Terror” consolidates two important elements in Ivanov’s pantheistic cosmology that would be utilized when he turned to an examination of the shared being exhibited in art and history: the Earth as the immanent divinity Memory, and the Spirit as the eschatological epiphany of transcendent God. These two divinities point toward an overcoming of extreme religious individualism by grounding man’s soul and spirit in two distinct realms of a greater whole: historical being and transcendence.

It is possible to see in Ivanov’s cosmology the roots of his hermeneutic thought. Ivanov (together with many of his fellow modernists) saw established Christianity as falling into the pattern of the Old Testament religion of the law and set his sights on restoring New Testament spiritual freedom through cathartic experience in renewed rituals. Seeing modern man as “bereft of the muse and illiterate,” like the post-Atlantis Hellenes, Ivanov

identified sources of religious memory that could become “the treasure-trove of ancient knowledge and the ark of humanity’s hereditary memory” (*SE* 147; *Coll. Works* 3:94). He tells the story of man’s tragic history in order to renew the rituals that can restore cosmic union. The cathartic reliving of history as narrative leads to the experience of eternity. Thus, the main religious organ becomes “the force of visionary contemplation in memory,” that is, allegorical art that marries the sensuous world to that of the spirit (*SE* 152; *Coll. Works* 3:98, 100). Ivanov’s historical narrative concerning God in the world was thus intended to issue in direct religious action.

AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES

Chaos and Form

In his first published essays on aesthetics, Ivanov formulated the basic tension of his work as a rivalry between radiant Apollo and dark Dionysus. Following Nietzsche, Ivanov posited a symbiotic relationship between Dionysian and Apollonian principles in art, just as he had in his cosmology and psychology: “Both gods complement each other, just as the golden vision of Apollonian charms calms the ecstatic violence of musical intoxication, as the guarding measure and limit saves the human *I* in its centrifugal self-alienation, as the correct objectification of our inner chaotic turbulence curatively and creatively-productively resolves the correct madness of a spirit that has emerged from its crowded limits in a frenzy” (*RD* 2:130).

However, on the basis of the foregoing analysis of Ivanov’s cosmology, one notes a central difficulty that Ivanov inevitably encountered in the practical application of this Nietzschean thesis. The Apollonian may be defined as “correct objectification,” but Ivanov’s cosmology precluded objective being in the phenomenal world. For Ivanov authentic being is possible only in the realm of formless unity, with the result that for him the “Apollonian trappings of art were seen as a necessary evil, a dilution of the pure vision, useful only for non-communicants” (Senelick 1981: xxxix). Ivanov’s attempts to account for worldly being in his cosmology would eventually lead him to a more extended consideration of the problem of the artwork as a concrete entity. This would result in his theory of theurgic symbolism, perhaps the best known period of his thought (see chapter 5). Only later would Ivanov reintegrate his psychology of creativity with his ontology of the artwork in a comprehensive hermeneutic theory.

Ivanov’s first overview of his aesthetics, contained in the 1905 article “On Descent” (later amended and renamed “The Symbolics of Aesthetic

Principles”), identifies a triad of principles in art: Titanic ascent, humble descent, and unifying chaos. They correspond to the three hypostases of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty: Aphrodite Urania (Asteria), Aphrodite Pandemos (Popular), and Aphrodite Anadyomene (Born-of-Foam). Alternatively, they can be symbolized by three different divinities—Apollo, Aphrodite, and Dionysus—or as the properly aesthetic principles of the sublime, the beautiful, and the chaotic.

The interchangeability of Ivanov’s terminological triads demonstrates that none is final or basic. Most fundamental is the pyramidal trajectory of creation that unites the three concepts: ascent from the chaos and descent back down into it. In fact, the three elements of the pyramid can be simplified even further into an underlying drive toward suffering and chaos. This means that, regardless of how they are represented, each of the three stages of creation is linked teleologically to the god Dionysus and the aesthetic principle of chaos. After all, Aphrodite must always be born of the foam in order to shine on high. For example, Apollo personifies ascent, which Ivanov defines as “a labor [. . .] of detachment from one’s own and from one’s self for the sake of what hitherto was alien, and for the sake of a new self” (1905b: 28; *SE* 6; *Coll. Works* 1:824). However, Apollo is subordinate to Dionysus, the god of suffering, and ascent is proper only if it is inspired by a “love for suffering, a free self-affirmation of suffering,” only if it leads to a descent back into chaos (1905b: 28; *SE* 6; *Coll. Works* 1:824). Descent also has a Dionysian substrate since it presumes the hero’s kenotic acceptance of suffering and rejection of selfhood. As an illustration of this, Ivanov compares the beauty of graceful descent to the wedding of Harmony and Cadmus, a coupling that engendered three daughters, one of whom, Semele (or Thyone), became the mother of Zeus’s child Dionysus (1905b: 29); this links beauty to Dionysian ecstasy and suffering. Although it displaces Aphroditean beauty, Dionysian chaos is still an affirmation of the feminine cosmos, as Dionysus fertilizes the Earth, which had been rejected in the masculine ascent to the heavens: “Our perception of the beautiful is formed when we perceive an inspired victory over earthly decay together with a new turn toward the bosom of the Earth. For us these delights are like the Mother’s own breathing: sighing out toward Heaven, she once again breathes Heaven itself into her breast” (1905b: 30; *SE* 9; *Coll. Works* 1:827). Thus, both the sublime and the beautiful are imbued with a Dionysian love for the primordial chaos of the feminine cosmos. In aesthetics this means that *tragedy* is the sole source of cathartic power in art. As Aage A. Hansen Löve has noted: “Understood in a Dionysian way, the rehabilitation of chaos as the telluric-chthonic womb

of rebirth in the process of the Dionysian man's self-alienation denotes a stage, a metamorphic phase, that is permanently reprised and restaged in tragedy (and in all great art)" (1991: 186; cf. 198).

The third aesthetic principle of chaos is therefore the properly Dionysian element of art. Chaos is the moment when Apollonian abundance or Promethean hunger dissolves: "This is not the kingdom of sun-gold and diamond-white elevation into the azure, nor that of pink and emerald returns to the earth. It is rather the dark-purple kingdom of the netherworld" (1905b: 35; *SE* 10; *Coll. Works* 1:829). If ascent is Aphrodite Urania and descent Aphrodite Pandemos, chaos is the very womb of Aphrodite. If ascent is masculine and descent feminine, chaos is "androgynous, masculine-feminine Dionysus [. . .] where becoming unites both genders with the groping touch of dark conceptions" (1905b: 34; *SE* 11; *Coll. Works* 1:829). Ascent thirsts for truth and descent reveals beauty and the good; chaos "is truly a shore 'beyond good and evil'" (1905b: 34; *SE* 11; *Coll. Works* 1:829). It is a merging with the absolute Other, with God.

One may fairly ask what any of this has to do with aesthetics.¹⁶ In fact, the chaotic itself has no discernible aesthetic value whatsoever; it is precisely an anti-aesthetic and iconoclastic force that breaks sensory being down into nascent transcendence. To stop here would endanger Ivanov's entire theoretical enterprise. As Gustav Shpet later commented: "If one ontologizes the aesthetic spirit or turns it into a state, or if one turns aesthetic 'enthusiasm' and 'mania' into objective thing-hood, one would lead to a mystical pseudo-ontology in aesthetics, while the realization of its underlying idea would lead to a metaphysics of pseudoknowledge."¹⁷ Yet for Ivanov the chaotic is a necessary precondition for authentic aesthetic expression. Without chaos ascent would not be sublime, and without the sublime there would be no beauty. The dichotomy between beauty and sublimity, feminine Aphrodite and masculine Apollo, is rooted in the impersonal element of Dionysus, whence they both spring and whither they both return.

Music and Representation

The practical application of the three aesthetic principles confirms that they actually present an underlying unity rooted in pregnant chaos. A similar reduction can be performed with the discrete forms of art. Apollonian ascent is associated with the plastic arts, Aphroditean descent with the visual and harmonic, and the chaotic element of Dionysus is preeminently music (Ivanov 1905b: 35; *SE* 11; *Coll. Works* 1:829). However, Ivanov quickly breaks these three classes down into two: music and its objectifications in plastic

or visual form. Ivanov writes: “[I]n music itself from the harmonic waves there suddenly arises a plastic form of sun-lit melody that stands as an Apollonian vision above the dark-purple depths of orgiastic vibrations. There is stasis in music and dynamism in the plastic arts” (*SE* 101; *Coll. Works* 1:92). The sources of this privileging of music are clearly Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, for whom music was best able to express the unified substratum of the cosmos (“the Will”). For Ivanov, however, the very dichotomy is unstable since music is palpably present even in works of architecture. This is best illustrated toward the end of his sonnet on the Sistine Chapel:

И храм исполнь громов и рева
Явленной музыки колеблемый сосуд. (*Coll. Works* 1:622)

[And fill the temple with thunder and howls,
The shaken vessel of manifest music.]

Architecture, if only it is true architecture, is rooted in the Dionysian element of music. When Ivanov defines music as “liquid architecture” for our architecture-less age (*Coll. Works* 1:730), one is once again reminded how the two types of art pass one into the other.¹⁸ Within the dichotomy of the arts, however, the dynamic Dionysian element is clearly more fundamental than the static Apollonian element of form. Music was not only the most powerful kind of art in modernity, replacing “static” architecture as the pre-eminent expression of the epoch’s style, but was destined to serve as a vehicle for artistic creation in all spheres (*SE* 101; *Coll. Works* 2:91–92). Music and the entire Dionysian sphere were for Ivanov the formless and irrational *womb* of art, the source of its cathartic power, and as such remained the invisible and inaudible basis of all art.¹⁹

Although Ivanov ultimately neutralizes the Apollo-Dionysus dichotomy, his concern with the spirit of music shows the persistence of Nietzsche’s influence, especially of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In general, despite his emphasis on the artist’s creative freedom, Ivanov’s aesthetic scheme ends up being less a *description* of art as it exists than a *prescription* for future art,²⁰ which is called upon to assume an ethic of self-sacrifice by ascending/descending into the realm of music. The pulsating rhythm of chaos is to gather a throng of like-minded people, and out of the throng will emerge the hero—the artist. The artist will shape the experience into words, giving rise to dithyramb and, eventually, to the tragedy of the self-sacrificing artist. Following the logic of “On Descent,” the cathartic revelation of sublime chaos would

eventually produce an image of beauty, which would transform humanity and inspire new artistic expression: “Any aesthetic experience draws the spirit out of the limits of the personal. The ecstasy of ascent affirms the supra-personal. Descent, as a principle of the purest beauty and, at the same time, of the good, turns the spirit toward what lies outside the personal” (Ivanov 1905b: 34; cf. *SE* 11; *Coll. Works* 1:829). The function of art is thus seen as instigating personal transformation, understood both in the psychological and metaphysical senses.

Although these expectations were very high, Ivanov did not demur from holding the artist to them. He often described creative personalities as tragic heroes who sundered themselves from the masses only to return therein with revelations of beauty. However, in Ivanov’s view many great artists, like Schiller or Nietzsche (and, later, Mikhail Vrubel and Aleksandr Scriabin), have expired in vulnerable solitude, unable to surrender themselves fully to Dionysian chaos. Instead of concentrating on their works, Ivanov viewed their very biographies as tragedies capable of inspiring catharsis in the sympathetic observer and provoking further artistic creations.

I have already noted how Ivanov regarded one of Schiller’s supreme achievements to be inspiring Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” in the Ninth Symphony, where “the extreme daring of the individual spirit passes into its opposite: into the negation of the individual for the sake of the universal idea” (*Coll. Works* 1:731). Ivanov continues: “Hence follows the inner contradiction and, as it were, tragic antinomy of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, this double betrayal of its creator and double sacrifice: for it is a betrayal of music itself [. . .] and a sacrifice of its unutterable mysteries to the Word, as the commonly comprehensible symbol of the universal unanimity of thought,—a betrayal of personality and a renunciation of its highest claims in the name of love and universal truth” (*Coll. Works* 1:730). Music, like chaos, is pregnant with its antipode—form and rationality (the Word)—yet in his early aesthetics Ivanov focuses primarily upon the inculcation of Dionysian chaos in the hope and expectation that it will inspire transformative art. In the final analysis, Ivanov is indifferent to the form—whether it be poetry, music, or the artist’s biography as captured in scholarly investigation—as long as it preserves its tragic impetus.

The Birth of the Tragic and the Sublime

In his psychology of creativity Ivanov aimed at elucidating the criteria for a rebirth of artistic expression without imposing a particular form upon it. His early works therefore describe an aesthetic hiatus, a moment of reflection,

yet also one of prophecy and anticipation. Ironically, as with his view of religion, it was Ivanov's orientation toward the future of art that caused him to search for an aesthetic tradition, terminology, and specific artistic precedents to which he could appeal. In a word, Ivanov saw the future of art in the resurgence of the tragic (although not necessarily of tragedy per se) and of the sublime.

Shakespeare, Schiller, and Beethoven were the first portents of the future. Closest to Ivanov both in time and in spirit was Wagner, whom Ivanov repeatedly defended against Nietzsche's criticism by presenting him as "the second, after Beethoven, initiator of new Dionysian creativity, and the first forerunner of universal mythopoesis" (*Coll. Works* 2:83).²¹ However, echoing the Gospels (and anticipating a line in his own tragedy *Prometheus*), Ivanov adds that "it is not given to the initiator to be the completer, and the forerunner must decrease" (*Coll. Works* 2:83; cf. John 3:30). If Beethoven's symphony discovered its verbal expression in Schiller's "dithyramb," Wagner's music is "many-mouthed and still mute Will." Ivanov was not wholly satisfied with the way Wagner's music was objectified "in the Apollonian dream of the stage" (*Coll. Works* 2: 83–84); he often cited the following lines from Wagner's opera *Die Meistersinger*:

Remember this single testament:
The poet is born to be a dreamer;
The spirit grasped all that is truth
In an instant of somnolent reverie, a seeing instant;
And all art of harmonious words
Is the interpretation of vatic dreams.

(*SE* 73, 152; *Coll. Works* 3:99,2:632, 1:731)

Yet in Wagner's music "the Apollonian visual and personal principle was dominant [...] because his chorus was only primordial chaos and was unable effectively to counter the self-affirmation of its heroic protagonists" (*Coll. Works* 2:84). In other words, Wagner's chaotic music failed to find human forms capable of communicating tragic catharsis.

Ivanov's dissatisfaction with most aesthetic crystallizations of musical chaos makes one wonder why he even bothered to include Apollo or Aphrodite in his aesthetic schemes, which, by and large, seem to be a justification of the artist's creative process but not of artworks. Paradoxically, it is precisely in "Ancient Terror," that rich appreciation of chaos, that Ivanov first attempts to incorporate a specific aesthetic object—Lev Bakst's *Terror Antiquus*—into

an account of the tragic and the sublime. The distance between a painting and the genre of tragedy only reinforces the impression that, in the final analysis, Ivanov understands tragedy less as an artform than as the very experience of creativity, regardless of its final result.

To be sure, apart from passing references to tragic characters, there is little explicit indication that Ivanov's "Ancient Terror" is about tragedy at all. A major clue is Ivanov's citation of a scene from Lucretius, where shore-bound crowds feel relief at watching others die in a shipwreck (*SE* 149; *Coll. Works* 3:98). Comparing this sense of alienated observation to Bakst's depiction of a cosmic cataclysm, Ivanov asks: "Is it morally permissible for the tranquil spirit to achieve such harmony before the spectacle of universal disharmonies?" (*SE* 150; *Coll. Works* 3:98). Both the image from Lucretius and the anguished question are taken from Schiller's article "On the Tragic Art," in which he investigates "the pleasure that people take in painful emotions" (1993: 2). Schiller finds the key in the emotion of pity, which comprises equally horror and sympathy. Tragedy is the artform that has as its goal "a literary imitation [. . .] that shows us human beings in a state of suffering and has the purpose of arousing our pity" (16). This is a basically Aristotelian understanding of tragedy, but Schiller differs from Aristotle in his Kantian conception of the artist and viewer as trapped in an inauthentic world of imposed order. Tragedy for Schiller was the sublime art par excellence, capable of reaching the preconscious depths of the viewer.²²

The effect for Schiller would not merely be that of an instantaneous epiphany. Tragedy reveals to the horrified viewer "the presentiment or rather [. . .] a distinct consciousness of a teleological connection among things, a sublime order, a benevolent will" (9). Tragedy therefore directs human action in accordance with a greater imperative. In "Ancient Terror," Ivanov seems to share this view: "[T]herein lies the artist's superior right (which is also an obligation), to use purely artistic means to turn conflicts of ethical consciousness into the harmonious concord of a soul reconciled to divine law, a soul that says *yes* to divine law with an inner intuition of beauty, before this *yes* is wrenched from within the rebellious spirit by an ultimate understanding of the truth" (*SE* 150; *Coll. Works* 3:98). Paradoxically, chaos gives rise to sublime order and tragedy engenders moral beauty.

This is where Apollo begins to play a central role in Ivanov's aesthetic. Ivanov introduces Apollo as the formative principle that allows the artist to communicate the catharsis of his own tragic experience without dissimulation (*SE* 150–51; *Coll. Works* 3:98; cf. Schiller 1993: 10). Ivanov writes: "Antiquity adored tragic myth; all that is sublime in drama and lyric, painting and

sculpture, was the re-creation of fatal destinies, the mask of terror. But art made it possible to behold the Gorgon's head with impunity. The Apollonian veil protected the mortals' gaze from the baneful arrows of the transcendent gaze" (*SE* 152; *Coll. Works* III 99).²³ The aesthetic object, produced through the combined powers of Dionysus and Apollo, mediates the transcendent experience of the artist for the viewer, inducing catharsis without undergoing destruction.

The meaningful role Apollo plays in "Ancient Terror" confirms the essay as a landmark on Ivanov's path away from iconoclastic individualism and toward a positive appreciation of the cosmos as objective being—at least in a limited sense. Although Ivanov does not introduce any new elements into his cosmology, he exhibits a greater appreciation of the continuity of human culture in memory and history. Artistic form stems from the dual sources of memory: the primordial memory of the Earth, personified by Memory and her daughters, the Muses; and narrative memory, which exists in the temporal categories of human consciousness. Together they give rise to what Ivanov terms "*the force of visionary contemplation in memory*" (*SE* 152; *Coll. Works* 3:100). As in his later lyric poetry, Ivanov subordinates his cosmic myth to a historical narrative that grounds the myth in common experience and renders it communicable. Apollonian form is the means by which Dionysian power is communicated among people and across time. Moreover, Dionysus is concerned with the constitution of personal identity, whereas Apollo sponsors intersubjectivity.

Ivanov still tended to regard Apollonian art as rooted in the past, whereas he sought an art for the future. Ancient art is sacerdotal, for in it "divine service is oriented toward the past and is commanded to preserve the tradition of sacred treasures" (*SE* 146; *Coll. Works* 3:93). It was necessary to transform the art of the past into the prophetic art of the future, but this could be accomplished only by true Christianity, which in modernity had been consigned to oblivion (*SE* 160; *Coll. Works* 3:107). The key for Ivanov was to restore the ancient *power* of art in order to renew a forward-looking Christianity. Antiquity, Ivanov claimed, "prophesied in Memory the way Christianity prophesies in Hope" (*SE* 150; *Coll. Works* 3:97). Thus, narrative memory leads to the reconstitution of cosmic memory, which is always a prophecy of hope.

Despite the importance he attributed to the aesthetic experience, Ivanov's view of the aesthetic object remained desultory in his early works. Bakst's painting, on which Ivanov bestows rather fulsome praise, remains "a pale magic mirror of the incorruptible world" (*SE* 151; *Coll. Works* 3:100) and "the

somnolent haze of a spirit undergoing incarnation” (*SE* 153; *Coll. Works* 3:101), which “reveals the action of beauty, but not its incomprehensible, unportrayable Image” (101). Ivanov’s aesthetic remains peculiarly iconoclastic (in the historical sense).²⁴ It is left unsaid precisely how Christian art of the future could achieve a more authentic representation of humanity, but this seems to be the role Ivanov assigns to symbolism as a movement.

In sum, Ivanov’s early aesthetics can be reduced to a call for artists to surrender themselves to elemental creativity, which would inform their works with sublimity and invoke catharsis. Although Ivanov’s attempts to prophesy the forms of this tragic revival remained sketchy, what stands out most vividly is the expectation that they would engender social and ethical transformation. Borrowing an image from Augustine’s *Confessions*, in 1907 Ivanov wrote:

In my aesthetic studies of the symbol, myth, the choral drama, of *realiorism* [. . .] I am similar to one carving a chalice out of crystal in the belief that a noble liquid will be poured into it, perhaps even holy wine. The wine will be the religious content of the national soul. [. . .] I anticipate that this content will coincide with the bases of our correct religious consciousness, but I do not subscribe to the populist view that we are to seek God among the people: God is discovered in people’s hearts. [. . .] If the theater truly changes as I desire it, this change will be an indicator of a profound, inner effect that has taken place in people’s hearts.²⁵

While acknowledging the severe limitations of Ivanov’s early thought, it is possible to recognize the roots of his later aesthetics. By 1909 Ivanov had overcome his exclusive cult of Dionysus and had supplemented the aesthetic principle of chaos with Apollo as “visionary contemplation in memory.” This balance eventually led to a view of art as authentic communication, where the transformative power of catharsis is harnessed to concrete narrative forms. However, before reaching this personalistic aesthetic, the kernel of what I will term Ivanov’s hermeneutic philosophy, Ivanov attempted to secure the objective existence of artworks by swinging quite radically from his Dionysian psychology of tragedy to the Apollonian ontological symbolism that dominated his theoretical works from 1908 to 1912.

Mathesis

THE SYMBOL

The Apollonian cult of form that began to displace Dionysian chaos at the heart of Ivanov's aesthetics around 1908 was centered on the concept of the symbol. The latter, however, proved singularly malleable and elusive. In his 1906 article "Portents and Presentiments" Ivanov proclaimed: "Our symbols are not names; they are our silence" (*SE* 97; *Coll. Works* 2:88). A grab bag of transcendence, the symbol denotes the mimetic presence of an elusive *otherness*, more than any particular quality of the artwork itself. Since it is based in the creator's erotic force and communicates a unifying energy, it is "the creative principle of love" (*SE* 51; *Coll. Works* 2:606) and "the principle that connects separate consciousnesses" (*SE* 27; *Coll. Works* 2:552). The symbol is also "simulacra and significations of higher realities, forming the living tissue of any true art" (*SE* 221; *Coll. Works* 3:182); "energies" (*Coll. Works* 1:713); "the flesh of mystery" (*Coll. Works* 2:569), and "the principle that destroyed individualism" (*SE* 125; *Coll. Works* 3:75). Symbols "were from the beginning deposited in the souls of singers by the nation as certain original forms and categories, in which and only in which any new revelation could be accommodated" (*Coll. Works* 1:712). Finally, while the individual symbol is "inexhaustible and unbounded in its meaning" (*Coll. Works* 1:713), it is also true that "any thing [. . .] is already a symbol" (*SE* 27; *Coll. Works* 2:552).¹ Rather than extend Ivanov's dizzying array of definitions, I propose to focus on the concept of mimesis, which informs his most detailed discussion and which helps us to see how his concept of the symbol underwent an important change around 1912. In the essays Ivanov wrote during the heyday of symbolism (1908–12) the symbol is a thing partaking of transcendent reality, whereas after 1912 it is regarded as the communication of higher

existence that directs man's spiritual labors. The shift in Ivanov's aesthetics from *mimesis* (representation) to *mathesis* (communication) lays the groundwork for the broad hermeneutic theory he elaborated beginning in 1912, which I view through the triad catharsis–mathesis–praxis.

Transformation and Transfiguration

Ivanov's first extended consideration of the symbol was his 1908 essay "The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism." The title is usually taken to refer to the distinction Ivanov makes between the idealistic and realistic tendencies in modernist art, the latter of which he emphatically endorses. Only realistic symbolism provides earnest representation of transcendent reality, whereas idealist art remains tied to its creator's psyche. However, at the beginning of the essay Ivanov gives both idealistic and realistic elements an ostensibly positive connotation, since both are founded upon aspects of mimesis: "[I]mitation (*mimesis*) is an essential ingredient in artistic creation, the main drive utilized by man, insofar as he becomes an artist for the satisfaction of two essentially different needs and demands: to signify things, to reveal them simply in form and sound, or *emmorphosis*, on the one hand; and to effect a transformation of things, or *metamorphosis*, on the other" (*SE* 15; *Coll. Works* 2:540). *Emmorphosis* denotes the ontological status of the symbol as a sensible signification of essence; in *emmorphosis* the artist is passive, "engulfed by the sense of [the thing's] real being" (*SE* 15; *Coll. Works* 2:540). *Metamorphosis* represents the symbol's functional aspect, its activity vis-à-vis the human agent. Ivanov further defines *emmorphosis* as a "feminine, receptive type (realism)," while *metamorphosis* is "a masculine, initiative type (idealism)" (*SE* 16; *Coll. Works* 2:540). Ivanov notes that once unleashed, the metamorphic artist's "personal daring" will inevitably lead to an imperious fantasizing and a "revolt against truth" (*SE* 17; *Coll. Works* 2:541). In his creative universe, of course, the feminine principle is always privileged.

Still, the active principle also has a role, and in his initial consideration Ivanov posits the necessity of both ontological and functional aspects in the symbol: "Like a ray of sunlight, the symbol cuts through all planes of being and all spheres of consciousness, *signifying* different essences in each plane, fulfilling a different *function* in each realm" (*SE* 13; *Coll. Works* II 537; emphasis added). As "*signs* of another reality" (*SE* 13; *Coll. Works* 2:538), symbols connect things to their transcendent essences, bringing the former in line with the latter. Here the artist is a passive midwife, "eas[ing] the process of labor" that leads to "the revelation of beauty" and "the "birth of the word"

(*SE* 14; *Coll. Works* 2:539). The artist, in short, is a “theurgist,” or creator of divine reality in the world (*SE* 14; *Coll. Works* 2:539). In their functional aspect, by contrast, symbols instruct the artist how to direct his own creative energies toward the transformation of the quotidian world in the light of these transcendent signs. Here the artist is a teacher and an agent of the divine.² Three times in the essay Ivanov quotes Vladimir Solovyov to the effect that “not only will [artists of the future] be possessed by the religious idea, but they themselves will possess it and consciously guide its earthly incarnations” (*SE* 14, 32, 35; *Coll. Works* 2:538, 557–58, 560).³

The idea of the artist as the mimetic transformer of the world is carried over from Ivanov’s Dionysian aesthetics. Ivanov first mentions metamorphic mimesis as “the ritual imitation of the god” in Dionysian ritual; the sacrificial victim is mystically transformed into the god (*HR* 4/1: 39). Similarly, in Ivanov’s earlier aesthetic scheme the artist first ascended from the unreal world to an amorphous divine realm and then descended back down as an agent of god and a divine hero. In these early writings Ivanov paid little attention to the actual artwork, whether as thing or as sign. The theurgic stage of Ivanov’s aesthetics provides a quite different set of terms. Here even the world is thought of as the wrought image of a static realm of ideas. The task of the artist is, correspondingly, to ease the reunification of the two worlds, akin to reuniting the image with its prototype. If Dionysianism implies a kind of iconoclasm, realistic symbolism is nothing if not iconophile. According to realistic symbolism, signification of divine essences allows the things of this world to bathe in the energies of their divine ideas. It unleashes both “the creative efforts of the World Soul” (*SE* 14; *Coll. Works* 2:538) and “the hidden will of essences” (*SE* 14; *Coll. Works* 2:539), reuniting the seminal logos with its material substratum. Emmorphic mimesis is therefore a revelation of the innate structure of the world, which, once it is brought into view, is actualized as reality. Artistic creation is equated to the Creation itself. In contrast to the “transformation” (*preobrazovanie*) of the world engineered by the subjectivist artist, Ivanov proposes its “transfiguration” (*preobrazhenie*). The term “transfiguration” bears religious connotations: the artwork is seen as a conduit of the divine light revealed on Mount Thabor (cf. Matt. 17:1–9).

While “emorphic” transfiguration is presented as the more pious artistic method, it excludes any consideration of the artwork’s effect on the beholder or on the artist. As James West has commented, “[T]he *creative* contribution of the artist to the process of representation belongs only to that tendency which [Ivanov] calls idealist” (1970: 52). Yet at the origin of

this construct lies the concept of transformative mimesis. The idea of art as the metamorphosis not of the world but of man is rooted in Ivanov's Dionysian mysticism, but it also reaches toward a more balanced theory of art that considers both the ontological status of the artwork and its reception by living human beings. In Ivanov's mature conception, as in Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, mimetic activity culminates in a teaching, effected through catharsis, completed in communication, and issuing in action (Ricoeur 1984: 70–71).

Symbol and Myth

The understatement of the functional aspect of the symbol also led to complications in Ivanov's initial argument with respect to myth. As it stands, in "The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism" both symbol and myth are defined as "the objective truth concerning what is" (*SE* 29; *Coll. Works* 2:554) and "a universally-accepted form of aesthetic and mythical perception of [a] new truth" (*SE* 30; *Coll. Works* 2:555). Ivanov describes myth as growing out of the symbol "like a sheaf of wheat from a seed" (*SE* 29; *Coll. Works* 2:554); symbolism is a kind of art that "discloses to consciousness things as symbols and symbols as myths" (*SE* 13; *Coll. Works* 2:538). This would suggest that, in the ontological hierarchy, myth occupies a status higher than that of symbol. Ivanov cites the example of how divine names and attributes were ascribed to the Sun, in a process tantamount to "creation through faith" (*SE* 31; *Coll. Works* 2:557). The symbol identified the Sun as a god, while the myth endowed it with predicates: the Sun is born, the Sun rises, and the Sun dies.

Writing of "The Two Elements," Semyon Frank noted with consternation that Ivanov credited both symbol and myth with uncanny transformative power and expressed his fear lest such religious art turn out to be a religion of art. Indeed, what would be the place of religion, philosophy, or even social action if the means for transforming the world lay solely within the purview of the artist? Frank considered artistic symbols as essentially metaphorical revelations, while myth denoted the actual incarnation of transcendent truth in the real world. Myth, Frank wrote, is a spiritual labor that should be reserved for religion (1910: 33–35). This implies a duality of sign and function similar to that which Ivanov had also posited in "The Two Elements": "Hence follows the first condition of the kind of mythopoesis we have in mind: the emotional labor of the artist himself. [. . .] And myth, before being experienced by all, must become an event of inner experience, personal in its arena, suprapersonal in its content" (*SE* 32; *Coll. Works* 2:558).

Myth, therefore, is man's internalization of the objective revelation and application in the world of people and things. Myth turns the mimetic symbol into a narrative by allegorizing it, interpreting it in worldly categories, and comprehending it. Frank's point seems to be that the authority to compose narratives about the transcendent should not be ceded to the artist but should be retained by the participants in ritual. Ivanov, by contrast, happily cedes to the artist authorship of religious myth and existential truth. In his later hermeneutical thought Ivanov will come to view the artist less as the author of history than as its narrator, who records religious and existential truths in aesthetic expressions that affect ritual without replacing it.

Theurgy

Despite the balanced view of mimesis in "The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism," the majority of Ivanov's constructs dating from 1908–10 focus almost exclusively on the significative aspect of art. Ivanov encapsulated art's ontological elevation of the world in the well-known slogan "*a realibus ad realiora*" (from the real to the more real [SE 28; *Coll. Works* 2:554]). Ivanov termed this kind of art "theurgy," modeling it upon the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Eucharist. Utilizing a Pauline triad of concepts, Ivanov links theurgic art to the triad of faith, hope, and love. As a signification of higher realities, the symbol assumes the presence of faith in those realities. It is, in this respect, "the evidence of things unseen" (Heb. 11:1), a seamless cohabitation of immanent form and transcendent essence. Art is thus a teleological process that manifests a universe transfigured in the light of eschatological truth. In Paul's words, the symbol is "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). The two virtues of faith and hope lead the artist to erotic creation, what Ivanov calls an "Eros for the divine" (SE 28; *Coll. Works* 2:553). Thus, the symbol is a partial achievement of transcendent truth, not merely a sign but an approximation of divine reality.

Accordingly, the theurgic artist is "the conscious successor of the creative efforts of the World Soul" (SE 14; *Coll. Works* 2:538), dealing in "alchemic enigmae," "clairvoyance," and "visionary seeing" (SE 28; *Coll. Works* 2:553). Such esoteric language was a natural outgrowth of Ivanov's temporary disregard for the symbol's functional relation to the consciousness of creator and beholder. Latent in Ivanov's significative or theurgic symbolism there remained the potential for explaining how the symbol affects the human beholder and stimulates action. Ivanov later reintroduced the functional aspect of the symbol as the inspiration of man's transformational labor.

The theurgic ideal itself is paralleled in a multitude of philosophical

doctrines, from Plato to Schelling and Vladimir Solovyov. However, the Platonic conception of theurgy represents only half of Ivanov's underlying conception of mimesis. In many respects Ivanov's theurgic conception of the symbol was modeled on Christology. God's willingness to reveal his image in earthly reality sanctifies this reality and reveals its potential to become divine. That God became man suggests that man can become God. That Christ's person had comprised both divine and human natures suggests that each human person likewise can adopt divine nature. Ivanov, like many Platonists, extended this structure even to material reality. Thus, for Ivanov each thing was a *symbol* insofar as it combined material being with its divine potential: the form of a thing is analogous to Christ's human nature, while its hidden essence can be compared to His divine nature. Like the Eucharist or icons, a symbolic manifestation of form already denotes essential presence. In fact, even the verb "to be" is an image of God if he is understood as the source of Being (*SE* 40; *Coll. Works* 2:594). This makes any predication (as long as it corresponds to reality) an act of theurgy or myth: God as Being is present whenever the existence of a thing is asserted.⁴ For Ivanov the theurgist, art essentially becomes a means of asserting the divine potential of things by naming them:

As soon as forms are correctly combined and coordinated, art instantly becomes vital and significant: it turns into a signifying vision of the interrelations that innately tie forms to higher essences; into the holy, visionary action of love, which conquers the division of forms; into a theurgic, transformational "Let it be." When this mirror is turned onto the mirrors of fragmented consciousnesses, it restores the original truth of what is reflected, amending the guilt of the first reflection, which had distorted the truth. Art becomes the "mirror of mirrors" (*speculum speculorum*); due to this very reflective quality, everything becomes a symbolics of united being, where each cell of the living, fragrant tissue creates and glorifies its own petal, and each petal illuminates and glorifies the glowing center of the unknowable flower: the symbol of symbols, the Flesh of the Word. (*SE* 47; *Coll. Works* 2:601)

In this way, the iconoclasm of Ivanov's Dionysianism evolved into a global icon, with each thing seen as an image of its essence, the icons arranged into a hierarchical display that would eventually merge with the divinized cosmos. However, this promiscuous icon veneration threatened to obliterate any kind of reality other than the icon itself. Just as Ivanov's hermetic poetry discovered new life in the "tender mystery" of his son's birth, so Ivanov the

thinker escaped from alchemic theurgy by recognizing the singularity of man. Man is not made for the symbol but rather the symbol for him. Faith and hope, these capacities for signification of higher truths, are lesser than the love that comprises man's supreme activity on earth.

In "The Two Elements" Ivanov largely ignored the role of concrete human beings in achieving community, which is formed through the gathering power of a symbol: "For *idealistic symbolism* the symbol, since it is only a means of artistic depiction, is no more than a signal that is supposed to establish the interaction of separate individual consciousnesses. In *realistic symbolism*, the symbol is, of course, also the principle that connects separate consciousnesses, but their union in *sobornost'* is achieved by the common mystical vision of an objective essence, a vision that is the same for everyone" (*SE* 27; *Coll. Works* 2:552; emphasis added). This was precisely the idea that inspired mystical anarchism, in which Ivanov abdicated social activity in the name of individual "mystical vision." In fact, Ivanov will come to believe that the symbol is both a "mystical vision" and a "signal" that triggers some transformation in the human consciousness. The symbol must not only be mimetically faithful to things but also functionally faithful to the human mode of perception and action. Retaining its revelatory and communicative strength, Ivanov embeds the symbol first in an anthropology and then in a concept of history. Myth, which as "the predicated symbol" had lost some of its definition and importance in Ivanov's aesthetics, is to be reinterpreted as a historically based task of integral human labor, instructed and inspired by symbolic creations. If one recalls the spectral character of the phenomenal world in Ivanov's cosmology, it becomes clear that he has progressed to the point of attempting to ground worldly reality in positive being. In this progression, Ivanov's theurgic symbolism, providing a stable hierarchy of beings, turns out to be a middle stage on the path from iconoclasm to an integral religious aesthetic.

Limits of the Symbol

The subordination of the symbol to man is a central proposition of Ivanov's "On the Limits of Art" (1913–14), which is the fullest expression of his mature aesthetics. Here he writes:

[A]lthough any true symbol is a kind of incarnation of divine truth, and thus by itself reality and real life, still it is reality of a lower order, ontological only within the concatenation of symbols, but only conditionally ontological relative to lower reality and meonic in comparison to higher reality. Consequently,

the symbol is living life to an endlessly lesser degree than Man, who is truly alive and being, which he remains even when face-to-face with the First of Beings Himself, which is why it is said that he is little different than the angels. (SE 86–87; *Coll. Works* 2:646–47)

Ivanov cites Goethe to the effect that “limitation first shows the master” but then asks whether such a renunciation of theurgic power on the part of symbolists would not be “to deny their ‘bride,’ their holy possession, to which they were betrothed with the ring of the symbol” (SE 78; *Coll. Works* 2:637).

The citation of Goethe in defense of his anthropological turn is significant.⁵ Ivanov consistently referred to Goethe as a theoretician of symbolism, claiming that, “An aspiration to achieve a symbolic grounding of art has been distinctly observable in the history of the artistic consciousness ever since the time of Goethe” (SE 57; *Coll. Works* 2:613).⁶ Yet Goethe’s sober theoretical outlook was much less sympathetic to Ivanov than Schiller’s more ecstatic attitude. In a 1912 article on Goethe, Ivanov contrasted Goethe’s Aristotelian understanding of the symbol to Schiller’s Platonism (*Coll. Works* 4:137). Although Ivanov’s theurgic language favors Plato, in actual fact he does not take sides in the conflict concerning the symbol. Both transcendent and immanent aspects are important to Ivanov, and he can accept both Schiller and Goethe, both Plato and Aristotle, as describing different aspects of a single spiritual process: “In this disagreement Schiller’s point of view clearly reflects his metaphysical beliefs, while Goethe’s position most likely describes his cognitive method without exhausting his metaphysical and mystical worldview, which was broader than immanentism” (*Coll. Works* 4:137).⁷ Ivanov’s acceptance of Goethe the theoretician is indicative of his turn toward earthly being, particularly toward the role of the human agent in the cosmic process.

In his mature symbolism Ivanov strives to reconcile the active human principle (the metamorphic aspect of creation) with symbolic signification (emmorphosis) in a new understanding of art centered upon this dual concept of mimesis. This does not entail a return to the starkly immanent posture of his early aesthetics since the symbol remained as a guarantor of the integrity of immanent and transcendent. Nor, Ivanov claims, does this denote a kind of pantheism, which would fail to do justice to a mystical worldview “filled with sense of the tenderness and unutterability of the divine mystery” of man (*Coll. Works* 4:138). Ivanov’s anthropocentric view allows him to overcome his Dionysian excesses with Goethe’s Apollonian clarity.

SYMBOLISM AND THE MAN

The Crisis of Total Symbolism

Ivanov's 1913–14 essay "On the Limits of Art" is shocking in its sobriety. By 1910 Ivanov's symbolist aesthetic—founded on ecstatic mysticism and buttressed by the symbolist hegemony in Russia in the first decade of the century—seemed to recognize no bounds. Not only did Ivanov proclaim the triumph of symbolism as theurgic art par excellence, on the threshold of "a unified symbolics of being" (*SE* 47; *Coll. Works* 2:601). He found the parameters of symbolism applicable to all its precursors, from the ancients to Goethe and, in Russia, Pushkin and Tiutchev, matching his partisan prescription for Russian poetry to an empirical description of all great literature. Despite his insistence that Innokenty Annensky, Valery Briusov, and Konstantin Balmont were excessively idealistic and subjective, Ivanov never publicly questioned their credentials as symbolists, merely relegating them to particular currents or "elements" within the movement.⁸ Stressing his own metaphysical realism, Ivanov hoped that even the realists Maksim Gorky and Leonid Andreev would soon realize their symbolist patrimony.⁹

Ivanov's theurgic symbolism supplied Russian modernism with a coherent aesthetic sufficiently general and pliable that when rival movements, such as acmeism and futurism, arose to challenge the symbolists' nominal dominance, they were left with few effective theoretical weapons of their own to aim at the symbolist edifice. In their most coherent theoretical works they largely adopted the conceptual framework of Ivanov and other symbolists,¹⁰ while their own poetry easily yielded to symbolist analysis. In 1914 Ivanov characterized the conflict between the symbolists and acmeists in the following terms: "To cease being a symbolist in order to become a naive and exuberant acmeist, who say [*sic*] that it is bad to speak of God or of the soul but good to speak of some exotic country, this is childishness."¹¹ "This is why," Ivanov explained, "the acmeists have so much trouble with symbolism: everything they themselves do with some talent [*potalantlivee*] comes out more or less symbolic. 'Chase nature out the door, it will fly back through the window'" (quoted in Obatnin 1994b: 169). Ivanov even allowed for a futurist symbolism ("should futurism prove to be worthy of attention"; Ivanov 1914: 82; cf. *SE* 57; *Coll. Works* 2:613). Symbolism was not a school but simply the truth about the nature of art. It was, Ivanov declared, "the dogma of orthodoxy in art [*dogmat pravoslaviia iskusstva*]" (Ivanov 1914: 82). Accordingly, symbolism, particularly in Ivanov's exposition, was a preeminently catholic creed that sought not victory but synthesis.

It is therefore dangerous to exaggerate the much-heralded “crisis of symbolism” that occurred in 1910, when symbolist theoreticians began issuing summations of their views as if for posterity, or else in anticipation of the proliferation of competing aesthetic doctrines in the years ahead.¹² The 1910 apologetics marked a moment of reflection on the first stage of symbolist theory and a realization that it needed to be applied more broadly, beyond the bounds of lyric poetry and a stubbornly elusive theater of the future. The causes of this reflective mood were manifold. With respect to Ivanov, it is particularly important to consider the significance of the death in 1907 of Lidia Dmitrievna, who had inspired much of Ivanov’s confident lyric mood in the 1900s, and his encounter with the “tender mystery” at the heart of the crimson rose of his suffering. In a single watershed event the poet confronted his mortal, human aspect; his art’s failure to defeat death; and the crisis of his inflated theoretical claims. It was therefore imperative that symbolism restate the kind of redemption it could offer to both the individual and the world at large.

The 1910 crisis cast doubt less on symbolism itself than on the symbolist bias toward the lyric mode and the lyric persona. Ivanov wrote that “an atavistically preserved lyric energy” had “defined Russian symbolism from the very beginning” (1910: 41). Yet he also saw the limitations of this lyric bias and attempted to discern a pattern of growth in symbolism toward larger forms.¹³ First, poets had realized that “the world is not small, flat and bare,” that “the world is magical and man is free,” and that man should strive “to be like the sun” (*SE* 45; *Coll. Works* 2:598). However, unlike Balmont, from whose poetry Ivanov borrowed these expressions, some symbolists realized the limitations of this mode and succumbed to despair: “Sunlike, free man emerged as a worm crushed by the ‘datum’ of chaos, while he weakly insisted on affirming in himself the god that had been overthrown by reality” (*SE* 45; *Coll. Works* 2:599). From the standpoint of theurgic symbolism, Ivanov asserted that modern art was obliged to lead beyond the limits of the musical lyric into the creation of forms, beyond subjective life to the creation of objective icons: “Before, symbols were uncoordinated and dispersed, like a deposit of precious stones (and this is why lyric poetry was dominant); from now on symbolic works will be like monolithic symbols. Before there was “symbolization”; from now on there will be *symbolics*” (*SE* 48; *Coll. Works* 2:602). *Symbolics* denotes an objective reality above the phenomenal world that would communicate divine being to its beholders. As mimetic symbol of transcendent reality, life would issue into universal myth, taking the form of epic, tragedy, and mysterium, which involve, respectively, self-renunciation,

the resurrection of the self, and a “victory over death, the positive affirmation of personality and its action” (*SE* 49; *Coll. Works* 2:602). Mysterium “restores the symbol as incarnate reality, and restores myth as an actual ‘*Fiat*,’ ‘Let it be! . . .’” (*SE* 49; *Coll. Works* 2:603).

When the bliss anticipated from the grand aesthetic forms failed to materialize, Ivanov readily admitted the symbolists’ failure to achieve transfigurative art. However, he also came to realize that these limitations were not exclusive to them or their symbolist creed but were inherent to art itself. “On the Limits of Art,” Ivanov’s last major statement on symbolism before the 1930s, recognizes the aesthetic realm as but one aspect of human reality, allotted its own particular tasks. “[T]he word ‘theurgy,’” Ivanov now writes, “is inapplicable to the artist’s normal activity” (*SE* 86; *Coll. Works* 2:646). Symbols, seen in their functional aspect, become an instrument of mediation between reality and the divine realm without independent ontological status. The way that symbols interact with the human personality becomes the province of a new anthropological account of the creative process that seeks less to determine the artist’s peculiar virtues than to locate his activity within a general account of humanity.

Man and Artist

The opening section of “On the Limits of Art” is devoted to differentiating between man and artist, a distinction that first appears in Ivanov’s 1912 essay on Goethe. Ivanov stressed Goethe’s objectivity, claiming that this does not entail frigidity:

[I]t is given to certain natures (and [. . .] the greatest artists belong to their number) to turn their experience from an emotional state into an object, thereby preserving a certain independence for their *I* from its [emotional] states; it is given to them to separate, as it were, their *I*, which lives in its imperturbable depths, passionless and will-less, from their other, passionate *I* [*pateticheskoe ia*] [. . .] [T]he objective artist, granted all the vividness and authenticity of his contemplation, finds within himself a suprasensible center from which his own state can become an object of contemplation. (*Coll. Works* 4:117)

Goethe’s artistic objectivity is rooted in the stability of his personal being, which can weather Dionysian ascent and return to personal equilibrium, allowing him to achieve greater epic calm and breadth in his depictions of history than his romantic contemporaries.

In "On the Limits of Art" the ascent that so dominated Ivanov's heroic cosmology is designated as the act of the man, who seeks mystical unity with the transcendent realm. This is "the mystical epiphany of inner experience, which may be either a clear vision or a face-to-face beholding of higher realities only in exceptional cases, and which in the proper sense remains beyond the bounds of the artistic-creative process." Next there follows the apprehension of forms, "that very dream of poetic fantasy that artists customarily call their creative 'dreams.'" The third stage of artistic creation is "the culminating incarnation of dreams in meaning, sound, and visual or tangible matter" (*SE* 73; *Coll. Works* 2:631–32). It is this final point, namely, the ability to descend and share the achieved revelation, that distinguishes the artist from the "spiritual man" (*SE* 71; *Coll. Works* 2:629–30).

The similarity between this scheme and that of "On Descent" obscures the greater differences. As I have shown (Chapter 4, "Aesthetic Principles"), the tripartite (Dionysian, Apollonian, and Aphroditean) scheme of 1905 breaks down into a thoroughly Dionysian understanding of art as chaotic in origin and sublime in effect. In "On the Limits of Art" Ivanov explicitly acknowledges that each stage of the creative process incorporates a Dionysian, ecstatic experience of otherness. However, he also incorporates Apollo into each of the three stages of the form-bearing and form-granting aspect. Apollo represents an inherent structure in the human consciousness, what in "Ancient Terror" Ivanov termed "the force of visionary contemplation in memory" (*SE* 152; *Coll. Works* 3:100). As such, this force or capability is linked to the feminine substratum of creation, the World Soul, insofar as it provides the objective form in which the transcendent Dionysian experience can be crystallized and communicated to those distant in time and space. The work of art retains this dualism of energy and form, representing the interpenetration of active and passive principles, at each stage of creation and reception.

The Inner Canon

The interpenetration of energy and form presupposes a full correlation of the content with the means by which it is expressed. This correlation, the properly Apollonian aspect of artistic creation, is what Ivanov called "the inner canon," a concept introduced in his most purely "theurgic" essay, "The Testaments of Symbolism" (1910), where he writes: "By 'inner canon' we mean that which the artist experiences as a free and integral recognition of the hierarchic order of real values, which form in their harmony the divine all-unity of final Reality. In the artist's creative work the inner canon is the living connection of properly coordinated symbols, from which the artist weaves a precious

veil for the World Soul, creating, as it were, a nature that is more spiritual and transparent than the multicolored *peplos* of natural being” (*SE* 47; *Coll. Works* 2:601). Here the inner canon is the hierarchy of Platonic forms to which things aspire, the “*realiora*” of the cosmos, embedded in the World Soul.

As the theurgic tone of Ivanov’s aesthetics subsided, the inner canon came to denote more of an axiological structure within the artist’s consciousness.¹⁴ The perception of a symbol becomes a stimulus to being rather than its direct communication. This provides a new basis for the subjective, transformative activity that Ivanov had rejected in “The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism.” In “On the Limits of Art” Ivanov writes that the inner canon “relates not at all to the artist as such, but to the man,” understood as a spiritual, not aesthetic entity: “The inner canon is the law of organizing the personality in accordance with universal norms, the law of vivifying, strengthening and realizing the connections and correlations between individual being and collective [*sobornyi*], universal and divine being” (*SE* 81; *Coll. Works* 2:640). Stressing that the inner canon is immanent to all humanity as an inherent structure, rather like language, Ivanov foresees the objection that this minimizes the purely aesthetic sphere: “[If our demands] are pronounced beyond the threshold of aesthetic analysis, this is only due to the fact that the poet himself is the first to have stepped over the threshold of art, which requires respect for the things of the world that we all share, which requires the fulfilling of a certain measure of objectivism, and which symbolically signifies the recognition of objective norms” (*SE* 68; *Coll. Works* 2:626).¹⁵ Since everyone is called to ascend through this hierarchical cosmos, art is necessarily religious.

[T]he knowledge that we can gain from the works of truly descending art is knowledge of the true will of the Earth, of the genuine thought of her things, and of the torments and presentiments of the World Soul, which are unutterable except in the language of the Muses. Most important here is the correct determination of correlations, correspondences, and contiguities between the higher and lower realities. [. . .] It is in works of true art that we find such a correct determination and insightful selection of these features in a reality that is depicted artistically, because their creators penetrated into the more-real to achieve an actual synthetic apprehension of the reality they depict. (*SE* 84; *Coll. Works* 2:643)

The inner canon is the language shared by the transcendent and immanent realms and is therefore the only language accessible to both the artist and

his audience at all stages of the creative act. It is the language of narrative memory, which renders transparent the unity of earthly life.

One consequence of this new scheme is that it allows for a stable metaphysical dualism, that is, the earth or World Soul ceases to be understood merely as a meonic aspect of the divine cosmos and attains independent being and value. Furthermore, the connecting role between the two realms is occupied by man. Cosmic dualism exists only “analytically” for the human consciousness, since man is able both to link the two worlds and project their “synthetic” unity (*SE* 75; *Coll. Works* 2:634). The perception of mystical reality evokes a form in the artist in accordance with the inner canon, and this form corresponds to the inherent “plasticity” of the earth. The embodiment of this form in the material substratum evokes “the perception of beauty” in the beholder. Essentially, Ivanov posits the coincidence of reason, consciousness, the innate structure of the earth, and beauty, all of which are concentrated in the central locus of humanity and are directed at surmounting cosmological dualism. Thus, in 1914 Ivanov pronounced the “unique subject of any art” to be the mystery of Man “taken in his vertical aspect, in his free growth inward and upward [*v glub' i v vys'*]” (*SE* 58; *Coll. Works* 2:614).

Another important consequence of Ivanov’s personalist aesthetics is his increasing consideration of the nonartist’s perception of the artwork. In the 1912 essay “Thoughts on Symbolism” Ivanov proclaims that true art must evoke an active response from the beholder, producing a concordant yet polyphonic chorus representing a spiritual bond: “[I]f the ray of my *word* does not seal my *silence* and [the beholder’s] *silence* with the rainbow of a secret covenant—then I am not a *symbolic* poet” (*SE* 51; *Coll. Works* 2:606). In beholding a symbolic work of art, “two are connected by a third, higher element” that initiates Jacob’s ladder, which can also be understood as an erotic ascent in the Platonic sense (*SE* 51; *Coll. Works* 2:606). The effect is again understood as theurgic, which Ivanov seems to understand here as the symbolization or mythicization of real life (*SE* 53; *Coll. Works* 2:608). By contrast, in “On the Limits of Art” Ivanov retains the emphasis on art’s communicability (based in the shared axiological structure of human consciousness), but its effect is less ontological than revelatory: “[A]rt, insofar as it is true art, serves to elevate those who enjoy it and perceive it correctly from the real to the more real” (*SE* 78–79; *Coll. Works* 2:638). Ivanov now reserves the formula “*a realibus ad realiora*” (from the real to the more real) for the perception of art, leaving the descending “*a realioribus ad realia*” (from the more real to the real) to account for the artist’s shaping of transcendent revelation into immanent form.

Persona and Grand Style

The inner canon thus ensures the normative character of aesthetic form and of its effect on the beholder. In the 1913 essay “Manner, Persona, Style” Ivanov elucidates in more detail the gradual evolution of the artist’s “I,” stressing that the process of form-creation is dependent upon the artist’s developing spiritual capabilities. The spontaneous distinctiveness of the artist’s voice, unreconciled with “the external datum” (*SE* 66; *Coll. Works* 2:624) is his artistic *manner*. As he evolves as an artist, he begins to discern an “inner word” that inevitably contradicts the original manner, dictating its own forms of embodiment and requiring the growth of a *persona* [*litso*]. This stage is accompanied by the dominance of subjectivity. If the artist is sufficiently “magnanimous” to sacrifice his previous manner to the forms dictated by the inner word, he enters into a third stage, that of *style*, which is marked by a “strict balance between the extra-personal datum and the personal reaction to it” (*SE* 67; *Coll. Works* 2:625). The conflict between manner and style dictates complete abandon to the inner canon, the normative force of Apollo: “Manner is immediate; style is mediated: style is achieved [. . .] by objectifying the personality’s subjective content” (*SE* 60; *Coll. Works* 2:617). There is one further step: the achievement of *grand style* [*bol’shoi stil’*], which “demands the ultimate sacrifice of personality, the integral surrender of self to the objective and universal principle, either in its pure idea (Dante), or in one of the auxiliary and subordinate forms of affirming divine all-unity (such is, for example, true nationality)” (*SE* 61; *Coll. Works* 2:618).¹⁶

Here one notes some terminological confusion. Manner and style comprise an aesthetic dialectic relating to artistic form,¹⁷ while the concepts of persona and grand style refer to the spiritual authenticity of the intuition that lay at the basis of the artwork. The latter concepts comprise the most original part of this essay, for here Ivanov forges an important link between the artist and objective reality, including its national and historical forms. Subordination to the inner canon must be accompanied by the artist’s willingness and ability to live in all the planes of human life: “Thus, truly vital art is the result of an integral personality that is equal to itself in all psychological modi, a personality that cannot but realize its unity in contact with other living unities and, together with them, submit to all-encompassing unity in a joyful affirmation of its individual and universal being” (*SE* 64; *Coll. Works* 2:622).

Like the doctrine of the inner canon, the ethic of self-renunciation and wholeness is addressed to the man within the artist. Only by heeding this call

will he be able to achieve “the grand style,” the kind of universal art characteristic of Dante and Pushkin. Although Ivanov does not spell it out here, he is projecting a way to expand the lyric into epic discourse, where the poet’s conception is related to the historical epoch and audience to which it intends to speak (*SE* 66; *Coll. Works* 2:623). While this again introduces extra-aesthetic concerns into Ivanov’s mature account of art, it ultimately allows aesthetic considerations to attain autonomy and inner cogency within a broader and more finely textured vision of human existence.¹⁸ Although self-renunciation is essential to the artist’s creative labor in creating style or symbols, this labor must be preceded by personal growth; its fruits can be reaped only by the integral personality in the real world of people and things.

Ivanov and the Theurgists: Berdiaev, Scriabin, and Solovyov

The importance of the “hermeneutic turn” in Ivanov’s symbolism cannot be overemphasized. For one thing, Ivanov’s ideas became increasingly capable of philosophical formalization. Moreover, they began to seem compatible with Orthodox Christianity and even to reveal a serious theological basis. One remarkable testimony to this development is Ivanov’s polemic with Nikolai Berdiaev. Berdiaev had originally endorsed Ivanov’s Dionysian aesthetics, which recognized that “the entire dynamism of religious life depends on the assertion of the free activity of the human will, on the daring aspiration for new life.”¹⁹ Indeed, this understanding of Ivanov’s more Promethean writings greatly influenced Berdiaev’s own masterwork *The Meaning of the Creative Act* (*Smysl tvorchestva*, 1916), which contrasted free human creativity with the “objectivization” inherent to culture, law, or religious obedience. Berdiaev essentially remained at the first stage of symbolism, characterized by Ivanov as a stage of the lyric, of subjective self-assertion, and of “anarchism and amorphism” (*Coll. Works* 2:601–2). By 1915 Ivanov had moved from iconoclastic Prometheanism to an elaborate defense of cultural tradition. In response to Berdiaev’s book, Ivanov states: “Yes, creativity is inexplicable, for it embodies the antinomy of maximal freedom and maximal obedience. But this can be understood only by one who feels that the most active, free, and autonomous act of the human will, the extreme expression of the profoundest inner unity with the Spirit, and the truly profitable revelation of man in God were the words that creature once uttered to the Creator: ‘[B]ehold, the handmaiden of the Lord’” (*Coll. Works* 3:314). In other words, Ivanov claims that man must subordinate himself to the formative structure of the inner canon, which ensures both universal comprehensibility and participation in the historical continuum of human expressive activity.

Berdiaev's response bespeaks both personal and theoretical irritation with Ivanov's appeal to Scripture. Berdiaev's attacks boil down to an accusation that Ivanov had struck the unbecoming pose of a court poet seeking to flatter the cultural powers that be and stifle free creativity, and that he had deserted the immediacy of life for the "charms of reflected cultures": "In Ivanov, philology is surreptitiously substituted for ontology. [...] The problem of the relationship between culture and being, culture and life, is not present to V. Ivanov's consciousness: he does not feel the tragedy of culture; he is content with culture, delighted with its riches. [...] It is not the word that becomes flesh but the flesh that becomes word."²⁰ Berdiaev's comments are quite acute, but I would reverse their valuation. Ivanov had come to affirm "objectivized" culture precisely because he perceived the need to relate creativity to the life of real people and not just heroic artists, to explain communication and not just revelation. The objectification of the creative act, its crystallization in word or image therefore becomes a necessary complement to the tragic self-sacrifice of the artist. Berdiaev's failure to account for an abiding, form-bearing reality makes his cosmos an artistic utopia, just as Ivanov's had been.

To be sure, Ivanov's fascination with the Promethean artist continued alongside his personalist symbolism. This is particularly evident in his writings on lyric artists and on the theater, themes that crystallized in his analyses of Aleksandr Scriabin.²¹ Scriabin is portrayed as a "tranquil anarchist" (*Coll. Works* 3:194) whose "destructive artistic work" marked "a decisive break not only with all the artistic experience and prejudices, testaments, and prohibitions of the past, but also with the entire emotional mood that informed this experience and sanctified these testaments" (*Coll. Works* 3:191). Scriabin was a "solar artist, who forgot that he was only an artist, just as the sun, melting and flowing forth with its life-creating force, seems to forget that it is a celestial body and not a torrent of flowing fire" (*SE* 214; Ivanov 1996: 12). Ivanov's account of Scriabin preserves some of the distinctions he introduced in his mature symbolism, but only to show how Scriabin exceeded the "limits of art." He refused to separate his humanity from his artistry and was proud to be an "artist-hero" (*SE* 223; Ivanov 1996: 28a). Although the symbolists created only icons and not "living life," Scriabin's theurgy synthesized artistic and historical action (*SE* 221; Ivanov 1996: 26–27). Finally, Scriabin raised his musical genius to the threshold of the *Mysterium*, bypassing all the intermediate steps. Echoing his celebration of Schiller in 1905, Ivanov portrays Scriabin's death as the realization of the *Mysterium* he had long sought, providing a new entrance into the world of immortality. Scriabin's

mysterical demise subsequently merged with the revolution to signify for Ivanov the beginning of a new astral epoch (*Coll. Works* 3:193).

Even here, however, Ivanov continued to seek a compromise between his fascination with divinely self-sacrificial artists and his concern for the preservation of ethical measure, between Dionysus and Apollo. This ideal of measure and harmony can be glimpsed in the figure of Orpheus, with whom he identifies Scriabin.²² In a 1913 semischolarly essay devoted to the topic, Ivanov presents Orpheus as the taming of the Dionysian by Apollonian forces, the uneasy coexistence of which typifies the human condition: “[A]ccording to the belief of the Orphics, a limit has been placed on the dismemberment of the suffering god, who comprises the spiritual principle of the world of birth and destruction: the Apollonian principle saves him and restores universal unity.”²³ The Orphics also attempted to codify and communicate the Dionysian mysteries in alliance with traditional Athenian religion. Orphism provided the timeless with a historical form: embodying it in a tradition.²⁴ Ivanov regards this as a clear precedent for the establishment of a Christian church, going so far as to call the Orphic-influenced Delphic priesthood “this Vatican of the ancients” (1913: 71). In other words, the Orphic religion attempted to express the content of ecstatic religion in a form that could be accepted and transmitted by its adepts, as a teaching or *mathesis*. Orpheus is therefore a suitable symbol of Ivanov’s mature aesthetics, which similarly sought to elaborate the positive content of aesthetic catharsis, the teaching that causes an inner rebirth of the personality, the “tender mystery.”²⁵

Ivanov’s recourse to Orpheus illuminates the path he has trodden from theurgy to personalism and hermeneutics. In particular, it grants some perspective on his evolving relationship to Vladimir Solovyov.²⁶ Solovyov’s aesthetics was based on the concept of beauty as “the transfiguration of matter through the incarnation of another, supramaterial principle within it” (1903: 6:37). The supramaterial principle is identified as the idea that illuminates matter, understood as the “stagnation and opacity of being,” which has value only as a receptacle of divine being (43). While all of nature aspires to being, only man can act beyond his own species by creating works of art. Although Ivanov shared much of Solovyov’s cosmology, his aesthetics led him from this rather mechanistic theurgy toward a recognition of man as a special kind of being suspended between two worlds, each with its own being. To be sure, one can find precedents for this in Solovyov, but less in his aesthetics than in his poetry. In the poem “The Three Labors” (“Tri podviga”), which was originally entitled “Orpheus,” Solovyov first describes the aesthetic revelation of beauty, only to assert that this is merely the beginning of the process:

Когда резцу послушный камень
 Предстанет в ясной красоте
 И вдохновенья мощный пламень
 Даст жизнь и плоть твоей мечте,
 У заповедного предела
 Не мни, что подвиг совершен,
 И от божественного тела
 Не жди любви, Пигмалион!
 Нужна ей новая победа. (Solovyov 1974: 70)

[When the stone that obeyed the sculptor
 Is revealed in its clear beauty
 And the mighty flame of inspiration
 Gives life and flesh to your dream:
 At this bound of prohibition
 Do not imagine that your labor is complete,
 And from the divine body
 Do not await love, Pygmalion!
 Love needs a new triumph.]

By citing this poem, Ivanov is developing a strain of Solovyov's thought that the latter left poorly developed, namely, that earthly existence—and humanity in particular—has its own “mystical potential” to be activated through art.²⁷ The creation of a symbolic artwork is only the beginning:

Nature cannot follow the artist any further, for the artist has nowhere further to lead her. [. . .] Here, in the conception of Vladimir Solovyov, the artist's work ends and the mask of the sculptor Pygmalion falls away, revealing the former idolmaker and lover to possess the archangelic might of the warrior Perseus, whose fiery mask falls in its turn to reveal the Christ image of the resurrecting god Orpheus. In the symbolics of this poem, such are the three hypostases of the human labor: the labor of the chisel, the labor of the sword, and the labor of the cross. These correspond to: the task of inspired creation, the task of social construction, and the task of divine humanity; or else: spiritual culture, the state, and the church. (*SE* 87–88; *Coll. Works* 2:648)

Aesthetics is limited to the first realm. Though it might awaken love, it is not yet the exercise and fulfillment of this love, which requires the labors of the full man and not just his artistic creativity. It is not that “the transfiguration

of reality plays a lesser role in Ivanov's theory of Symbolism than in Solovyov's aesthetics" (Wachtel 1994: 65) but rather that this transformation is thought to issue from the implementation of the symbol in concrete human labors, in history. As Ivanov put it in a 1922 essay, his last major statement on aesthetics prior to emigration: "Symbolism [. . .] remains true to itself, affirming the organic indivisibility of form and content, on the one hand, and artistic perfection and spiritual growth, on the other" (*Coll. Works* 4:635).

FROM AESTHETICS TO HERMENEUTICS

Catharsis–Mathesis–Praxis

At the close of his 1909 essay "On the Russian Idea," Ivanov writes of "three moments [that] determine the conditions of correct descent: in the language of mystics, they are denoted by the words *cleansing* (*catharsis*), *learning* (*mathesis*), and *action* (*praxis*)" (*SE*142; *Coll. Works* 3:337). The passage is quite obscure and probably derives from Ivanov's esoteric reading at that time; moreover, Ivanov would never again cite this particular triad of concepts.²⁸ Nevertheless, the three concepts are obviously central to Ivanov's thought. Their juxtaposition here provides a suggestive and convenient perspective from which to review the development of Ivanov's mature aesthetics.

In his earliest writings on aesthetics Ivanov adopted Nietzsche's program of ontological renewal through a revival of tragedy. Working within the framework of Kantian aesthetic terminology, Ivanov stressed the category of the sublime, which is linked to the chaotic basis of the universe. In chapter 4 I suggested that Ivanov's focus on tragedy and the sublime can also be interpreted as an advocacy of catharsis as the engine of artistic efficacy and the prerequisite of artistic communication. Ivanov's conception of catharsis is closely related to his studies in Dionysian religion (Szilárd 2002: 152–58). In *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism* Ivanov describes catharsis as a condition for the "restoration of correct relations between the participants in emotional divine worship [*pateticheskoe sviashchennodeistvie*] and the supreme gods," which have been divided into the Olympian and chthonic realms (*DP* 197).²⁹ In other words, catharsis is a condition for the worship of Dionysus, the god who straddles the divide between heaven and earth: "[F]aith in the suffering god is most of all the emotional [*pateticheskii*] and cathartic principle of Greek religious life" (*DP* 200). Ivanov goes so far as to claim that "Dionysian cathartics saved the Greeks from the madness caused by their dual faith" in Olympian and chthonic gods (*DP* 201).

As suggested by these quotations, catharsis follows closely on the heels of

pathos, or suffering/emotion: the religious service is defined as “imitation of the suffering” of the god (*mimesis pathous*; DP 203). Accordingly, *pathos* and *catharsis* are “the experience of emotional arousal and its pacifying resolution” (DP 207), with the aim of “healing” the soul and body in all senses, but especially in the spiritual sense (DP 208). Even Aristotle had to admit that tragic *catharsis* was related to the Dionysian religion (DP 216). Correspondingly, Ivanov defines *catharsis* as “the awakening of the mystical life of the personality [and] the first and necessary foundation of religious work.” *Catharsis* demonstrates “that all the values of our critical culture are relative values, and this prepares the way for the restoration of all true values in their connection with divine all-unity” (SE 143; *Coll. Works* 3:337). Ivanov also defines *catharsis* as “‘an irreconcilable No,’ and integral, religious *non-acceptance* of a world wholly infected by sin” (SE 143; *Coll. Works* 3:337). *Catharsis*, in short, clears the ground for positive communication.

In the first section of this chapter I presented Ivanov’s thoughts on the two kinds of *mimesis*—*emmorphosis* and *metamorphosis*—that correspond to the significative and functional aspects of the symbol. I demonstrated that Ivanov focused mainly on art as the transfiguration of the world by means of the passive signification of higher reality. However, Ivanov’s provision for metamorphic *mimesis* linked his theurgic ideal to his earlier Dionysian aesthetics since it presupposed the transformation of the consciousness of the artist and his audience. If *catharsis* clears away obstacles to communication, then the communication itself imitates some higher reality and transforms the beholder. Thus, *mimesis* in its dual nature can be interpreted as a certain teaching, or *mathesis*. In “On the Russian Idea” Ivanov defines *mathesis* as “the discovery of the *Name*,” the point at which “mysticism becomes aware of itself as the nurse of religious truth. [...] Here the visionary is blinded by the *Image* it sees; here is *acceptance* of the world in Christ” (SE 143; *Coll. Works* 3:337).

Finally, cleansing the beholder and communicating some content, the artwork translates into an ethical imperative. This leads to the third member of Ivanov’s triad—*praxis*—which he defines as the “moment of descent,” “social action,” or “asceticism” (SE 143; *Coll. Works* 3:337). Aristotle places *praxis* at the center of his *Poetics*: he claims that *emplotment* (*muthos*) is “the combination of actions” (*he ton pragmaton sustasis*; 1450a15), and that art is “the imitation of action” (1448a; cf. *mimesis praxeos*, 1450b3). This leads Paul Ricoeur to claim that in the *Poetics* Aristotle was concerned with “an intelligibility appropriate to the field of *praxis*, not that of *theoria*” (1984: 40). Likewise Ivanov moves toward a more pragmatic and existentialist view of the place of art in human life.

The triad catharsis–mathesis–praxis encompasses Ivanov’s theoretical development between 1905 and 1915, which led him from ecstatic psychology through Neoplatonic theurgy to a hermeneutic standpoint, which viewed art as communication between human individuals in history, geared toward instigating historical action. It is a development that is consistent with contemporary hermeneutic theory, whose task, according to Ricoeur, is “to reconstruct the set of operations by which a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of living, acting, and suffering, to be given by an author to readers who receive it and thereby change their acting” (1984: 53).³⁰

Sources (Ivanov and Aristotle)

The sources of the concepts of catharsis–mathesis–praxis lie in ancient mystery religions, especially the Eleusinian Mysteries, which Ivanov often mentioned in his most esoteric writings of 1908–10.³¹ However, these terms were also appropriated in Greek philosophical terminology, most notably in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and are attested in ancient writers from Plato to Plutarch and Clement of Alexandria. Indeed, the cultic meaning of the terms often has to be extrapolated from their subsequent use by philosophers. Based on Plato and later sources, Christoph Riedweg has identified three distinct stages in the Eleusinian Mysteries: *catharsis*, *paradosis* (transmission or lore, also called *didaskalia* or teaching), and *epopteia* (revelation) (1987: 125–27).³² In the context of mystery religion, the initiate goes from purification (*catharsis*), to the receipt of some hidden knowledge (*paradosis*, *didaskalia*, *mathesis*), to the revelation of truth (*epopteia*). These ritual terms were often used metaphorically—for example, in one of Ivanov’s favorite texts, Plato’s *Symposium* (3–29). In Socrates’ story about the priestess Diotima, the steps of ascent include “learning” (*mathesis*) and “lore” (*paradosis*). The terms are also used in Socrates’ “palinodia” in the *Phaedrus* (30–69), where, for example, he claims that the philosopher’s mind communes with God’s divinity, and that the employment of such memories causes a man to be “initiated into perfect mysteries”; moreover “this man alone becomes perfect” (249c).

These Platonic texts undoubtedly exerted a great influence on Ivanov. Most directly, Ivanov applied the terminology of mystery religion to the theater, which he traced back to the Dionysian rites: “In the Dionysian orgies, the most ancient cradle of the theater, each participant had a twofold goal: to co-participate in the orgiastic action (*sumbakcheúein*) and in the orgiastic cleansing (*katharizesthai*), to sanctify and be sanctified, to attract the divine presence and receive the gift of grace,—an active, theurgical goal (*hierourgēin*) and an emotional, passive goal (*páschein*)” (*SE* 104; *Coll. Works* 2:96).

Ivanov's use of this terminology, however, was not limited to the theater. Broader aesthetic application is hinted at in such passages as the following from "The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism": "Popular opinion was agreed that whoever beheld Pheidias's idol could no longer be unhappy in life. In other words, the blessed contemplation of this image [...] bestowed a power of such might and grace that the viewer would become almost equal to those initiates who saw the light of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which freed man from sadness forever."³³ However, as I have demonstrated with Ivanov's theurgy, the terminology of mystery religion does not yield a coherent aesthetic in and of itself.

It is only in Aristotle that these concepts undergo systematic development. Ivanov, as an out-and-out Platonist, never had anything particularly good to say about Aristotle.³⁴ Usually Ivanov intimated that as a psychologist and secularist Aristotle had distorted the mystically inspired doctrine of his teacher, Plato. He recognized that Aristotle "was the first to undertake an independent, extra-religious grounding of aesthetics" (*SE* 217; 1996: 18) but doubted the success of Aristotle's venture:

Despite the fact that Aristotle tries to ground tragedy in a purely aesthetic manner, when he teaches that the goal of tragedy is to arouse in the spectator the affects of fear and pity, in order that the soul might resolve itself of their presence through the correct experiencing of these passions, he is nevertheless forced to introduce into his constructs a concept that is external to pure aesthetics—the concept of catharsis, borrowed from the realm of religion and religious medicine. He unwittingly repeats the common belief that participation in Dionysian rites is a cleansing and healing sacrament for body and soul. (*Coll. Works* 2:210–11)

Elsewhere, after amply citing examples of "catharsis" in Plato, Ivanov writes that Aristotle's *Poetics* repeats the "old religious truth about Dionysian cleansing" while superficially seeking to divorce it from religion (*DP* 213, 215). Polemicizing with Jacob Bernays's interpretation of catharsis as a medical term, Ivanov avers: "In Aristotle's teaching aesthetics has not yet been defined as an autonomous doctrine and is only just being differentiated from religion" (*DP* 214). In sum, despite his hostile attitude toward Aristotle, Ivanov is clearly reliant on the definition of catharsis in the *Poetics* (*SE* 217; 1996: 18). Far from distorting the religious nature of art, Aristotle allows Ivanov to establish the connection between art and ritual.

Although mathesis is a much less prominent concept in Aristotle, there

are nonetheless several important texts that demonstrate his use of it and his dependence upon the conceptual apparatus of mystery religions.³⁵ In the *Poetics* Aristotle avers that “to learn [*manthanein*] is the greatest pleasure not only to philosophers but to everyone else too” (1448b). In the *Politics* Aristotle seems to oppose mathesis and catharsis (1341a). In a fragment Aristotle defines the goal of the mysteries as suffering (*pathein*), not learning (*mathein*).³⁶ Yet the consensus appears to be that, far from being opposed, these concepts are in fact interdependent (Croissant 1932 : 64, 155), especially when Aristotle writes that music serves “both education [*paideia*] and catharsis” (1341b). In any case, the two concepts are often found in close proximity in Aristotle’s texts. The oldest manuscripts of the *Poetics* actually define the function of tragedy not as “catharsis of such emotions” but “catharsis of such teachings” (*ten toiuton mathematon katharsin*). Whether or not Ivanov had this reading in mind,³⁷ his sequence catharsis–mathesis corresponds to an understanding of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, according to which pity and fear “are capable of purification precisely because, when we experience them in an imitative work, they are modes of learning rather than raw experience” (Redfield 1994: 260–61 n. 54).

The third element—praxis—is perhaps the most characteristically Aristotelian concept, prominent both in the *Poetics* and in the *Ethics*. As James M. Redfield has written, “Ethics and fiction have a common subject matter—praxis; but they approach it from opposite directions. [. . .] Ethics works from actor to action and prescribes. [. . .] Fiction works from action to actor and describes; it shows us that such an action could have been done by such a man, that it is probable” (1994: 63–64). Accordingly, since it deals with fiction, the *Poetics* subordinates character to action (Ricoeur 1984: 37). The representation of action in art provides a universally intelligible pattern that both preserves the past and can be applied to the future by its beholder.

Reducing Ivanov’s “myth” to the Aristotelian sense of “plot” (*muthos*) may appear anticlimactic. However, I believe that it highlights the role of narrative art for Ivanov in capturing the mystery of life and playing it out for the spectator, rendering the transcendent comprehensible to man while gesturing toward a truth that must be attained outside the realm of the fictive.

Praxis

Despite having been a student of the great Theodor Mommsen, Ivanov's earliest published works linked him to two of Mommsen's bitterest enemies, Johann Jakob Bachofen and Friedrich Nietzsche. Ivanov thereby threw in his lot with a philological school of historiography that dealt more with the aesthetic expressions of culture than with its material organization. Setting his lyric poetry at the center of his creative universe, Ivanov viewed past events and future prospects for human action in their relation to the creative word. He came to view history as a continuum of texts and interpretations, much like contemporary hermeneutic philosophers Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur.

From this perspective Ivanov attributes a key role in Russian history to particular epochal texts. In the opening section of this chapter I trace Ivanov's interpretation of how Pushkin's Byronic narratives essentially marked the rise of individual consciousness in Russia and thereby commenced history as a conscious process. In the second section I turn to Ivanov's interpretation of Dostoevsky's novels, particularly *The Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, which he read as the major events in Russian cultural-historical life after Pushkin. Ivanov's definition of these works as "novel-tragedies" indicates how for him Dostoevsky was able to translate individual lyric inspiration into narratives that stimulate readers into action. The incorporation of historical and pragmatic components into his mature aesthetics allows Ivanov's reading of Dostoevsky to be formulated in terms of his hermeneutic philosophy, which I compare to that of Gadamer.

IVANOV ON PUSHKIN: BYRONISM AS AN EVENT IN RUSSIAN HISTORY

Aesthetic Utopias

Ivanov's cosmology legitimized two ethical postures: Promethean theomachy and a passive accession to unity.¹ For Ivanov theomachy was best represented by Byron's rebellion against the illusory world of necessity, while other romantic poets, such as Shelley and Novalis, illustrated a posture of passivity before cosmic unity that at times verged on pantheism. While Ivanov's cosmology was much closer to that of the pantheists, his early works privileged Byronic rebellion as a means of challenging false authorities and instituting existential freedom both in society and in religious consciousness.²

Nonetheless, Ivanov always subordinated the rebellious attitude of theomachy to the ideal of cosmic and social unity. Although theomachy penetrates beyond cosmic necessity, it still does not arrive at freedom. Byron "proclaimed [. . .] the slogan 'let man be proud and free' [. . .] without studying the fatal contradiction" between pride and freedom, a contradiction "rooted in the yet deeper antinomy of mangodhood and godmanhood" (*Coll. Works* 4:284).³ Both Byron and Nietzsche approached the dithyramb but lacked the faith in cosmic unity to surrender completely to the religious spirit of tragedy.⁴ Similarly, in the social sphere Byron's hatred for false authority was not matched by a faith in the people (*demos, narod*). In 1906 Ivanov wrote: "The daring independence and self-sufficiency of the autocratic *I* in the types of the Corsair and Lara, Harold or Manfred, Cain or Don Juan represent the hero as unwittingly alienated, as it were, from the social world, or even directly hostile to the principle of *sobornost'*, i.e., the principle of inwardly subordinating one's individual will to universal feeling and care. [. . .] A friend of the *demos* and enemy of tyrants, [Byron] himself, under the masks of his poetry, often seems a tyrant without a *demos*" (*Coll. Works* 4:283). Just as theomachy is directed toward the illumination of the cosmos, so individualism is merely a step toward a new integration of society at a higher stage of consciousness.

Ivanov typically expressed this dilemma in aesthetic terms as a schism between the artist and the folkloric tradition of myth. Its healing was to be sought not in an egalitarian critique of the artist's alienation but in its exacerbation, which would lead to a shared cathartic experience. Byronic individualism issues into "a negation of the individual in the name of the universal idea," where "the *I* of the creator is, as it were, immersed in the Nirvana of the national *P*" (*Coll. Works* 1:731). In this dialectic, the individual's willfulness culminates in will-lessness, "mystical self-oblivion" or "the blessed loss

of the limited *I* in the divine unity of the expanded, universal *I*,” which is achieved through love and “the asceticism of the holy saint [*podvizhnik*]” (*Coll. Works* 4:291).⁵ By uniting the individual artist with the myths of the nation, universal art overcomes historical contradictions and initiates an organic cultural epoch. The organic epoch should eventually result in an epic (*Coll. Works* 2:727–28), but Ivanov is typically concerned with the more immediate task of achieving a tragedy powerful enough to wipe clean the slate of history.

Since Ivanov’s social ideal found its most direct expression in his advocacy of tragic art, and the path to the “universal [*vsenarodnoe*] art” of the future lay precisely in the intensification of individual lyricism, in his early writings Ivanov accorded Byron a higher status than either Pushkin or Dostoevsky. Ivanov defined both Pushkin’s and Dostoevsky’s longer works as “demotic,” that is, based on the “collective experience” of a national soul that is “divided within itself and unwhole, not in a state of being [*nesushchei*] but of becoming” (*Coll. Works* 1:728). Often reading Pushkin’s lyrics in a rather flatly ideological manner, Ivanov considers them manifestations of a cultural division that could only be firmly addressed in his own day by the more powerful lyricism of symbolism, which was to usher in grand, universal art.

There was another side to the lyric poet Byron that Ivanov tended to minimalize, although it is most evident precisely in Byron’s narrative poem *The Island*, which Ivanov translated into Russian. Classified by Ivanov as an “*epilliia*” (evidently an “epic idyll”), it describes the travails of Torquil, a participant in the mutiny aboard the *Bounty*. Most of the mutinous sailors are massacred by punitive expeditions, but Torquil is spirited off to a sunken cave by his native lover, the mermaid Neuha. Ivanov calls *The Island* “a kind of ‘Utopia’” because the native inhabitants of the island live a life based on “‘natural’ relations between people, who are innately good and not yet severed from the breasts of their common mother and nurse—Nature” (*Coll. Works* 4:282). This ideal combines Byron’s “freedom-loving spirit” with the “idyllic dream [. . .] connected to a profoundly serious quest for universal good” (283). Ivanov’s choice of Byron’s least characteristic work underscores his view that the stereotypical Byronic attitude was incomplete. By way of explaining how the theomachist arrived at this utopia, Ivanov singles out the influence on Byron of Shelley, whose poetry typifies for Ivanov the romantic ideal of the golden age (1:716). Ivanov stresses that the two poets represent distinct responses to the same tension between individual and cosmos. His ultimate goal is to incorporate both limited perspectives into a superior synthesis.

It is important to be aware of the dual nature of Ivanov's romanticism when considering his historical ideal. In Ivanov's early thought, which so clearly bears the imprint of his lyrical inspiration, it is the Byronic moment of individual revolt and suffering that is expressed most prominently—for example, in his mystical anarchism. Ivanov was sensitive to this criticism, as in this comment from 1904 (before he had formulated his mystical anarchist creed): “It is unjust to accuse [adherents of individualistic social doctrines] of defending the principles of personal or social egoism and social indifference. They will [*voliat*] not the personal and private but the general and suprapersonal. [...] They know the price of bread and the price of the Word. But is it really necessary to be ignorant of the latter in order to pity the people, who have not eaten for three days?” (*Coll. Works* 1:733). Mystical anarchism was ultimately inspired not by the rebellious anarchism of Byron's *Cain* but by faith in the utopia of *The Island*, which presupposes “the possibility of reconciling individual and collective [*sobornyi*] will in the triumph of anocracy [*bezvlastiie*] or anarchy [*beznachalie*], the idea of synthesizing both principles, the individual and the collective [*sobornyi*], in the anarchic commune” (4:284). Needless to say, the removal of action from the social to the cosmic sphere did nothing to quiet the critics. Nonetheless, in all of his political associations Ivanov held the initiative of the sovereign individual to be a necessary dialectical moment in the achievement of social unity.⁶

Cultural Typologies

At times Ivanov's concern for social change brings him close to socialist and even Marxist formulations.⁷ This is especially true of the 1907 essay “On the Joyful Craft and Joy of the Spirit,” where Ivanov's view of artistic creation sounds similar to Marx's “paradigm of nonalienated labor [...] which could preserve the idea of free productivity and of a receptivity that can change people's minds” (Jauss 1982: 55). The difference lies in Ivanov's total conflation of history and art. His practical prescription for individuals was to turn their reality into an aesthetic event. Ivanov anticipated that this aesthetic approach would culminate in an “organic epoch.” He borrowed the term “organic epoch” from Saint-Simon, in whose writings is laden with rather unsavory totalitarian connotations. The moral ambivalence of Ivanov's utopia is evident in passages such as the following:

[O]ur nation's soul will [...] be revealed in an artistry coming from the nation, summoned forth by the nation. Then our artist and our nation will meet. The country will be covered with orchestrae and thymelae, where a round-dance

will sing, where true mythopoesis (for true mythopoesis is marked by *sobornost'*) will rise again in the action of a tragedy or comedy, a national dithyramb or mysterium, where freedom itself will find hearths for its full, unsullied, immediate self-affirmation (for choruses will be a genuine expression and voice of the nation's will). Then, for the first time, our artist will be only an artist, a craftsman of the joyful craft, the executor of the commune's creative commissions, the hand and voice of a crowd that knows its beauty, and a vatic medium of the nation-artist. (*SE* 127; *Coll. Works* 3:77)

In another particularly ominous passage Ivanov tells "anyone who doesn't want to sing the choral song [to] leave the circle, covering his face with his hands. He might die, but he will not be able to live in isolation" (*Coll. Works* 1:838). Such comments might be excused if one limited their application to the aesthetic sphere, but Ivanov himself did not do so. His aesthetic utopia is a form of "political romanticism" devoid of a sense of concrete historical situation and ethical responsibility, suspending historical antitheses on the strength of a belief in their reconcilability from the perspective of transcendence.

The creative energy of Byronic theomachy and lyricism was just such a transcendent factor that Ivanov used to dissolve manifest historical conflicts. In the cultural typology he developed in the years 1906–9, the tendency toward organic culture is represented by the element of barbarianism, which Ivanov opposes to the critical culture of the Greco-Latin tradition. Ivanov claims Russia not only as a barbarian culture but as the home of Dionysus, the ultimate barbarian divinity: "The great element of non-Hellenic culture, of barbarianism, lives its separate life next to the world of the Hellenic element. The two worlds relate to each other as the kingdom of form and the kingdom of content, as formal harmony and birth-giving chaos, as Apollo and Dionysus—the Thracian god of the Transbalkan region whom the Hellenes transformed, plastically revealed, but also tamed and rendered harmless, but who still, in his very element, is our barbarian, our Slavic god" (*SE* 120; *Coll. Works* 3:70).

In Ivanov's scheme Greco-Latin culture is periodically renewed by eruptions of barbarian energy, which fuels cultural "renaissances." Conversely, infusions of critical culture allow the organic barbarian culture to achieve self-definition: "Critical culture frees up energies hidden in the stagnation of primitive culture" (*SE* 137; *Coll. Works* 3:331). This distorts the barbarian element, excluding "that irrational and immeasurable element which we know and love in Shakespeare and Byron, Rembrandt and Beethoven, Dostoevsky

and Ibsen.” Ivanov continues: “In Latin culture these geniuses feel like the citizens of a great city—the Polis, whereas in barbarian culture they feel like ‘unrestrained’ personalities (as Goethe angrily called Beethoven), individualists in an anarchic world” (*SE* 120; *Coll. Works* 3:70).

Organic epochs, Ivanov suggests, result from the influx of new barbarian blood into critical culture or else by the center of critical culture being shifted to barbarian shores. Ivanov discerned such a shift in his own day, when the decadence of Latinate (i.e., French) culture had reached an extreme point, whereupon it had stimulated a rebirth of myth in Russia, specifically in the Russian symbolist movement (*SE* 124–25; *Coll. Works* 3:73–75). This new organic epoch converged with cultural developments in Britain (Ivanov names Morris, Ruskin, and even Oscar Wilde) and, in Germany, with Wagner’s restoration of myth “as one of the determining factors of universal consciousness” (*SE* 124; *Coll. Works* 3:74).

Although it is a culturally productive force, barbarianism is outside of culture proper. Barbarian art, Ivanov writes, “either strives for formlessness or else it constantly shatters its forms, being unable to fit in them its incommensurable content” (*SE* 95; *Coll. Works* 2:86). The barbarian artist is less a builder than an initiator of culture: “The [barbarian] artist imperceptibly shifts our horizons in harmony with the entire elemental aspiration of the national soul. If he refrains from destroying institutions, he destroys everyday life, the bulwark of all institutions. If he refrains from teaching hatred and compassion, then he accustoms people to love differently and to feel compassion in a new way” (*SE* 116; *Coll. Works* 3:65). The barbarian artist is a transitional, liminal figure, an ahistorical actor, although his activity initiates and directs historical events. Although Ivanov ridicules the thought of Byron overthrowing tyrants, he bestows on Byron the mantle of “liberator” on the strength of his artistic accomplishments (*SE* 114; *Coll. Works* 3:63).

Ivanov’s cultural typology led to a peculiar understanding of Russia’s historical situation based on the moment at which its organic-barbarian culture encountered the critical culture of the West and became a conscious, progressive process. Although Ivanov recognized Peter the Great’s reforms as the empirical catalyst for modern Russian history, these reforms only became meaningful *history* when Russian individuals became conscious of them. This happened, Ivanov suggests, through the rise of lyric poetry and of fictional narrative, which turned the new cultural consciousness into a text. Improbably enough, Ivanov saw Byron as having sparked Russian history by introducing a way of writing about past events and future tasks as a function of an individual consciousness. Thus, in a 1916 essay ahistorical

Byronism becomes an event—or perhaps the event—“in the life of the Russian spirit,” tantamount to “the social revelation of the individual personality” (*Coll. Works* 4:292).

Byron in Russia

Ivanov’s historical projection of Russian Byronism echoes Petr Chaadaev’s devastating critique of Russian history as mere stagnation, while also hinting at Chaadaev’s later, more optimistic estimation of what Russia might someday become. Chaadaev’s dual argument gave rise to the two main ideological movements in the 1840s: the Westernizers and the Slavophiles. Ivanov allies himself with the Slavophiles by identifying “free *sobornost*” as the destination of Russian history. However, the Slavophiles used this term to denote the peculiar merit of Russian history, whereas Ivanov’s *sobornost* belongs wholly to the future. Moreover, Ivanov makes the startling claim that it took “a blow from Byron’s iron” to evoke a manifestation of “the Russian faith in *sobornost*” (*Coll. Works* 4:295). Byron, Ivanov writes, “bore within himself the riddle of the Sphinx, and he issued a challenge to Russian Oedipuses” (*Coll. Works* 4:295). At a time when Russia was still like prehistoric Greece, “[w]ithout writing or the arts, ‘bereft of the Muse and illiterate’ [*ámousoi kai agrámmatoi*]” (*Coll. Works* 3:94), Byron summoned forth Russia’s dormant being by initiating the tragedy of the personality, stimulating a cathartic openness to its own past and future and giving birth to conscious literary tradition: “incipit tragoedia” means “*incipit historia*.”

The alienation of conscious individuals from the inert nation in post-Byronic Russia was reflected in the contradiction within romanticism between individualism and organic unity. This contradiction was embodied by the poet Lermontov:

[A]t the same time that one half of his being, passionate and demonic, was experiencing the Byronic revolt and torment of the proud man’s alienation with the inexpressible urgency of tragedy and with even more grievous despair than that of Byron himself, Lermontov’s other *I* would suddenly turn placid in the azure of a contemplation unknown to Byron and of compassion before a shadow of the Eternal Feminine, before the image of the Mother of God, who bowed toward the “exile from paradise” from ineffable blue depths. (*Coll. Works* 4:295; cf. I 711)

Although Lermontov was unable to bridge the contradiction between rejection of the world and acceptance of the cosmos, the resulting tension in his

works brings the fissure itself into clearer focus. The fissure frames, as it were, Pushkin's defining achievement.

In 1908, and again in 1916, Ivanov identified Pushkin's narrative poem *Gypsies* (*Tsygany*, 1830) as the work that provided "the Russian spirit's answer" to Byronism.⁸ Ivanov came to regard Pushkin as the first remarkable manifestation of the divide in Russia's consciousness and as the initiator of its healing. In his 1908 remarks "On the Lyric," Ivanov singled out Pushkin's poetic dialogue entitled "The Poet and the Crowd" ("Poet i tolpa") as the precise moment at which this conflict became manifest:

[T]he moment of historical significance was that the crowd began to speak and thereby for the first time proclaimed itself to be a force that any future art would have to take into account. The consequences of the revolt were important and various. One of them, mostly in the realm of the lyric, was the change of our poetic language. This change lowered our poetry and was an unnecessary compromise with the rebellious "crowd," which represented itself as the nation [*narod*] but which was in reality only a "third estate" and perhaps even the "lumpen intelligentsia" [*intellegentnaia massa*]. (*Coll. Works* 3:122)

For Ivanov *The Gypsies* was a more advanced stage in the emergence of a national culture capable of "universal art" and, eventually, of a historical epic that would signal the fulfillment of Russia's destiny. Ivanov demonstrates this by tracing the way the work grew from a lyrical intuition into a tragedy with epic breadth.

"The embryo of [the poem's] lyrical animation and dramatic spirit" (*Coll. Works* 4:300) was, in Ivanov's opinion, a Moldavian folk song performed by a chorus, a *sui generis* dithyramb. It was only "the artist's whim or, more precisely, his taste for Byron's technique [*priemy*]" that dictated the form of "romantic epic poem" (300). In fact, Ivanov claims, the work reveals "a concealed choral structure" reminiscent of ancient tragedy and linked to the central conflict between "the hero's isolated will and fate [and] the free commune's inwardly harmonious and therefore integral and stable moral outlook and supreme judgment" (300). Therefore, Ivanov claims, the "epic poem remains a lyrical drama" (300). He thus begins his analysis by insisting on the work's lyrical genesis and tragic substructure, which assures its aesthetic efficacy. Plainly identifying Pushkin with the protagonist Aleko, Ivanov identifies three "formations" in the development of *The Gypsies*. First he discerns the alienation felt by Aleko/Pushkin upon encountering idyllic life, where he becomes conscious of himself as "the wanderer Cain." Second,

he sees the “romantic-descriptive” sections of the poem as indicative of Pushkin’s attempt “to rid himself” of Byronism. Third, Ivanov interprets the triumph of the Gypsy commune over Aleko as “the triumph of the chorus over the affirmation of isolated will,” and *eo ipso* Pushkin’s triumph over Byronism (*Coll. Works* 4:303).⁹

Ivanov so grievously oversimplifies Byron that he is forced to admit that Byron himself overcame Byronism in *The Island* (with its “ideal of anarchic liberty of innocent children of nature”; *Coll. Works* 4:310). However, it is important for Ivanov to show that Pushkin “made Byron’s problem his own and resolved it independently” (310) since, in so doing, Pushkin was not merely growing as an artist but was effecting a revolution in Russian life by inscribing the conflict between the Europeanized intelligentsia and the Russian nation as a literary text.

The Gypsies as Epic

Having demonstrated how Pushkin “overcame” individualism on behalf of Russian cultural consciousness, Ivanov now shifts his attention from the poem itself to “the slow process by which [Russian] social consciousness assimilated [Pushkin’s] lofty poetic testament” (*Coll. Works* 4:307). Ivanov’s lengthy survey of critical responses to *The Gypsies* may be expected in a literary-historical essay of the type Ivanov was writing, although it is absent in his essay on Byron’s narrative poem *The Island* and other early essays on literary history. Nonetheless, this critical history amounts to much more thanks to the central place of Pushkin and *The Gypsies* in Ivanov’s conception of Russian history, and also to the fact that “the process [of assimilating *The Gypsies*] embraces the period of Russian spiritual development from the era of the dispute between romantics and classicists to the solemn days when Dostoevsky’s prophecy first exposed the inner meaning of [Pushkin’s] inspired creation and revealed a vatic symbol in an image that for previous generations had been only a poetic image” (307). Pushkin’s work and Dostoevsky’s interpretation of it are paired as the two turning points in Russian spiritual history.¹⁰

In this manner the critical tradition itself enters the work and expands its tragic structure into epic discourse. Ivanov remarks that early critics had correctly noted both Pushkin’s dependence on Byron’s problematics and his independent resolution of the Byronic conflict between nation and individual (*Coll. Works* 4:310–12). Ivanov first singles out the work of Ivan Kireevsky, who later became the leading Slavophile philosopher. Next Ivanov discusses Vissarion Belinsky’s response, which, although marked by a “narrow general

evaluation” and “insufficient insight into the mystery of [the poem’s] beauty,” presents the correct conclusion, namely, that the key to the poem is the Old Gypsy’s reproach against Aleko: “[Y]ou want freedom only for yourself” (315). Ivanov’s responses to Kireevsky and Belinsky are emblematic of his relation to the Slavophiles and Westernizers: both expressed vital yet incomplete truths concerning Russia’s cultural identity and the social importance of human dignity. More important, he views both Kireevsky and Belinsky as emerging from a partial assimilation of Pushkin’s poetic work.

The next critic to say anything new (in Ivanov’s opinion) about *The Gypsies*, and the last one Ivanov discusses, is Dostoevsky. Ivanov accepts Dostoevsky’s articulation of Pushkin’s significance in Russian history as the rise of “our correct self-consciousness, which [in Pushkin’s day] had hardly begun and appeared in our society an entire century after the Petrine reform” (Dostoevsky 1972: 26:136). Dostoevsky recognized that Pushkin created Aleko as an emblem of the intelligentsia that was “severed from the nation” (137). Ivanov concurs with Dostoevsky’s view that the poem addresses the intelligentsia with the plea: “Humble yourself, proud man” (*Coll. Works* 4:315–16). However, Ivanov takes issue with Dostoevsky’s identification of the Gypsy tribe with the historically existent Russian nation: “Pushkin was [. . .] far from the idea that the wisdom of the nomadic tribe might coincide with our national wisdom, the lawless freedom of the Gypsies with the moral foundations of our ‘national truth.’ It can be said that the Old Gypsy teaches Aleko some free and sublimely meek religion; but the content of the lesson does not indicate what application of this religion, what incarnation of its spirit, should be chosen by the listener” (317). Dostoevsky’s “Russian” interpretation is “too narrow” (318). The voice of the Old Gypsy arises “as if from the mouth of mother Earth herself” and represents the voice of religion speaking to the individual (318). The religious revelation “removes the very principle of the individual personality’s negative determination through the *other*” (296), providing “a religious resolution of the problem of individualism” (318).

In fact, *The Gypsies* not only “marked [Pushkin’s] entrance into his period of perfect artistic maturity” (*Coll. Works* 4:319) but released a “creative energy” that turned the artistic word in Russia toward the nation and its historical being. This is intimated in a parallel Ivanov makes between the Old Gypsy and Pimen, the chronicler of *Boris Godunov*, who records historical events from the standpoint of eternity (300). It is made most explicit in a concluding passage on *The Bronze Horseman*, which Ivanov sees as a reversal of the conflict between the alienated individual and the primordial

nation: “[I]n *The Bronze Horseman* the multiple will of people who are perishing with a complaint against the individual will that, in league with the elements, had destroyed them, rises up against the lone hero, who triumphs, alone against everyone, over people and the elements” (318). Peter’s tyranny embodies the will of the mute nation and leads it to its destiny. The individual will is no longer that of a wanderer or deserter but that of a man who has attained suprapersonal status. Ivanov is not asserting that the historical Peter the Great was such a figure, but that in Pushkin Petrine culture raised the mute national will to a state of individual consciousness, crystallizing it in the form of a rational word. The figure of the Bronze Horseman reveals the positive historical energy that remained latent in Aleko due to his inability to assimilate the religious truth preserved by the people but that Pushkin finally brought to the light of day in his works, which henceforth became the model for all Russian individuals with respect to their nation.

In sum, Ivanov sees Pushkin’s overcoming of Byronic individualism in *The Gypsies* and *The Bronze Horseman* to be a foundational event in Russian history. The poet transformed Byron’s tragic impulse into an epic of national self-awareness, which was continued beyond the fiction itself in its critical reception. Byron challenged the latent universality of the Russian nation by inspiring the rise of the individual, whose action leads to tragic catharsis and reabsorption into the nation, which now becomes a nation of conscious individuals. Dostoevsky, Pushkin’s “constant pupil and [...] successor [*prodolzhatel’*]” (*Coll. Works* 4:342), acted upon Pushkin’s initiative and created a new epoch in Russian history. In this manner artistic texts are ascribed real historical power. The path to historical action lies through the apprehension and application of these texts in the living literary tradition.

IVANOV ON DOSTOEVSKY (PART 1)

Ivanov’s Hermeneutic

Ivanov’s identification of history with the interpretive history of literary works borders on utopian aestheticism, yet it reveals a way beyond the limits of modernism to a novel kind of historicism. Ivanov sees works of art as elements in a cultural continuum that both reflects and forms historical reality. For him there is no objective standpoint outside this continuum. Objectivity is attainable only by full-blooded participation in the creations of other historical subjects, which themselves have been formed in response to previous expressions. Although it does not admit of an objective viewpoint outside of history, this historicism allows Ivanov to avoid the pitfalls

of political romanticism. Historical actors may be viewed as authors and interpreters, but they still take a principled stand—both in dialogue with each other and with respect to tradition. In this section I shall reformulate Ivanov's approach to literary history—specifically to Dostoevsky—as a hermeneutic philosophy and highlight its similarity to the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Ivanov's historiosophy generally followed a Hegelian rhythm, using manifest conflicts to identify an underlying unity, which requires human agency to become actualized in reality. The most important example from Ivanov's writings on Russian history is the conflict between the intelligentsia and the people. The appearance of this social divide was the origin of Russian historical consciousness. Therefore an investigation of this conflict seems capable of revealing the common "substratum" in both elements, which "inevitably becomes a quest for a synthesis, as a third, higher form, removing the contradiction of the two lower forms" (*Coll. Works* 3:325). What Ivanov hopes to discover in his investigation of this cultural divide is the abiding essence of Russia. This belief in unchanging eternal ideas marks Ivanov's major point of disagreement with the Hegelian dialectic. As he liked to put it, "Only that which is, becomes" (325).

For example, in the conflict between the intelligentsia and the people it is possible to access the "psychical substratum" of the two entities and then gain access to the "being of their idea" (327, 325). Since the latter is a transcendent essence, reading history is ultimately a religious investigation: "Insofar as we move beyond the definition of the substratum to the development of a synthesis, we must speak of postulates and not accomplishments, of our hopes and not of historical achievements. [. . .] [W]hen we reveal potential being in empirical presence, we also reveal the being of the idea that is to be fulfilled in incarnation. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the results of a psychological observation would find their alternative expression in terms of religious thought" (*Coll. Works* 3:325). If Ivanov's view of history is religious, it is also hermeneutic in its stipulation that one begin with "empirical presence" (a text) and work to achieve "potential being" (its interpretation). In other words, history is the gradual *understanding* and *interpretation* of transcendent essences by creative individuals in texts. As the locus of transcendent revelations, the text forms a human community and endows it with a historical record. All of the texts within a tradition become the cumulative revelation of the same originary essence.

In his definition of the essential "idea" shared by all Russians, the revelation of which would inaugurate a new era in Russian history, Ivanov begins

with the texts of Dostoevsky. In his speech on Pushkin, Dostoevsky defined the Russian idea as “universal responsiveness” and “all-humanity” (Dostoevsky 1972: 26.146–47).¹¹ Objecting to Dostoevsky’s privileging of the people over the intelligentsia, Ivanov claims that the Russian idea can only be made manifest by supplanting both the intelligentsia’s atheism and the people’s blind faith with a conscious acceptance of Christianity. Ivanov seeks the underlying religious aspect of “universality” in order to define—and facilitate—the historical realization of this substratum by free individuals. For guidance in this matter he will turn to Dostoevsky’s works, which is, after all, where the idea came from. The basic tenet of Ivanov’s interpretive method, namely, that one must discern the tragic conflict and seek the common substratum of its agents, entails a hermeneutic circle by assuming a genetic identity behind all difference. Ivanov has *faith* in the truthfulness of artistic communication even as its forms eternally change in response to the needs of extraliterary reality. The most startling example of this hermeneutic circle is the way in which Ivanov interprets Dostoevsky’s artistic method in the terms Dostoevsky himself applied to Pushkin, all of which supports Ivanov’s view of art as prophecy: narrative art discloses an inner, concealed truth, which not only allows the truth to be apprehended but fructifies it in human consciousness.

In his 1911 essay “Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy” Ivanov integrates Dostoevsky’s roles as thinker and artist, linking the social or historical relevance of Dostoevsky’s types to their genesis in his artistic method, which in turn arose out of Pushkin’s texts. In Ivanov’s interpretation, Dostoevsky was precisely the kind of universally responsive “all-human” that Dostoevsky himself had proclaimed Pushkin to be in 1880. To be sure, there was a difference: Dostoevsky had spoken of Pushkin’s ability to make himself incarnate in other nationalities, while Ivanov notes Dostoevsky’s ability “to penetrate into another’s ‘I’” on an interpersonal level, “to recreate within [himself] any state of another’s soul” (*Coll. Works* 4:416–17). Ivanov reinterprets the national trait of “all-humanity” as faith in the common substratum not only of all Russians but of all humans in “universal connection and truth” (318).

This religious virtue had its origin in Dostoevsky’s life. All of his revelations were “only attempts to communicate to the world [...] what was once revealed to him in a catastrophic inner experience” (423). Specifically, Ivanov mentions the “death” Dostoevsky experienced during his mock execution and his rebirth in the labor camp, which “were a kind of swaddling that confined the newborn man and guarded the outer depersonalization that he needed in order to be reborn in full” (422).¹² Dostoevsky remained a divided

man, inwardly spiritual yet prone to failings in his actions: "Allowing the outer man to continue living within him as it pleased, [Dostoevsky] devoted himself to the multiplication of his doubles beneath the multifaceted masks of his *I*, which was now no longer tied to any particular face but was all-faceted [*vselikoe*], all-human" (423). It is interesting that Ivanov here recalls the word "mask," which he had previously used to denote the moment at which the god of the religious rite became the character in a fictional and mimetic drama. The implication is that the tragic separation within Dostoevsky's being following his mock execution and imprisonment rendered possible the birth of fiction: religious truths took on flesh and became real people. By extension, Dostoevsky not only created authentic types but made each one the bearer of absolute value, of being, and of God: "His penetration into another *I*, his experiencing of another *I* as an original, boundless, and autonomous world contained within it a postulate of God as a reality more real than all of these absolutely real essences. [. . .] And the same penetration into another's *I*, as an act of love, [. . .] contained a postulate of Christ, who achieves the redemptive triumph over the law of separation and the curse of solitude, over the world that lies in sin and in death" (420–21). Each of the fictional human types Dostoevsky depicted can be read as a revelation of God. Each time a reader accepts the type, he accepts a mask of the divinity. Expressed in the terms of Ivanov's hermeneutic, the reader ascends through the characters' empirical determinations to their metaphysical substratum.

Here there are no discursive truths to be assimilated. Rather, the reader *experiences* Dostoevsky's characters' sufferings, their passion (*pathos*), as a universal religious medium that inspires ethical action. This, it may be recalled, was the ideal Ivanov had established in his essay "On the Limits of Art": "[T]he symbol is true life to an endlessly lesser degree than Man, who is truly alive and being. [. . .] The symbol, by contrast, is mediating and mediated life, not a form that contains but a form through which reality flows. By turns reality flares up and is extinguished in it. It is the medium of epiphanies that stream through it. And the liberation of matter that is achieved by art is only a symbolic liberation" (*Coll. Works* 2:646–47). The application of this existential aesthetic can be illustrated by Ivanov's understanding of Dostoevsky's characters, who are traditionally seen as symbolic *types*, in accordance with the writer's own aesthetic theory.¹³ In his early essays Ivanov began by elucidating the typological (i.e., symbolic) nature of Dostoevsky's characters as generalizations of important historical processes, seen from a religious-mythical perspective. Later Ivanov came to believe that the crux of Dostoevsky's importance was not these types per se but their ability to facilitate

meaningful historical action. The very title of Ivanov's 1917 essay on Dostoevsky—"The Image and Masks of Russia" ("Lik i lichiny Rossii")—reflected a new distinction, where the "image" is the face of a man as seen by God (and as portrayed on an icon) and "mask" is the empty signifier worn by an imposter (4:442). In 1905 Ivanov had defined the dramatic mask as "a funerary mask placed on the face of the living bearer of its soul, on the receiver of the divine power that is hidden in its features" (*RD* 1/207). This feature once contributed to "the fictive forms of primitive tragedy," but now the process is reversed: Dostoevsky's de-fictionalization of the mask reflects his gradual elevation of the novel to the level of tragedy, at which point the mask ceases to be mere theater and signifies the presence of the divine as in ritual.

Central to the identification of Dostoevsky's muse with tragedy is the inculcation of Aristotelian catharsis in his readers.

Dostoevsky's cruel (for it is tragic to the final point) Muse powerfully raises terror and tortuous compassion from the depths of our souls, but it always conducts us to cleansing, thereby granting a seal of the authenticity of its artistic effect. [...] We are familiar with [catharsis] if we have ever returned home after some solemn and collective [*sobornyi*] shock with the clear awareness [...] that it was not in vain that torrents of tears just flowed from our eyes and that our wounded heart contracted in spasms, [...] that some indelible event has taken place within us, that henceforth we have become in some way different, that life has become in some way different for all eternity, and that some imperceptible but gladdening affirmation of meaning and value, if not of the world and God then of man and his aspirations [*poryv*], has lit up as a star in our [...] soul. The relief and fortification that Dostoevsky grants our souls is just so creatively strong and transformingly cathartic [...] (*Coll. Works* 4:411–12)

Catharsis grips and affects Dostoevsky's readers, leading them to self-knowledge (*mathesis*) and inspiring them to action. Thus, although he does not use all of the same terms, Ivanov's reading of Dostoevsky implicitly refers back to the tripartite hermeneutic catharsis–mathesis–praxis analyzed in the preceding chapter:

It was Dostoevsky's unique combination of tragic vision and realist narrative that allowed him, like Pushkin, to exert such a powerful effect on the world he described:

[N]ever for a minute does the poet abandon the techniques of a matter-of-fact report and investigation. In this way he achieves the illusion of extraordinary

realistic faithfulness to life, of absolute authenticity. With this illusion he covers up the purely poetic, grandiose contingency [*uslovmost'*] of the world he creates, which is not the same as the real world in our everyday perception, but which so completely corresponds to it [. . .] that reality itself has, as it were, rushed to respond to this Columbus of the human heart by discovering the phenomena he foresaw and, as it were, foreordained, but which had hitherto been concealed beyond the horizon. (*Coll. Works* 4:415)

Reading the work results not only in understanding but in an imperative for action. The stages of Ivanov's hermeneutic are: (1) the author's tragedy of creation; (2) his narration of this experience; (3) the apprehension of the narration by the reader; (4) cathartic participation in the originary tragedy; and (5) the reader's transformation. The masks of the fiction make palpable the inexpressible encounter with the other at the moment of creation. The masks allow this ecstatic instant to be shaped into a sequential narrative, which can then be mapped onto the reader's own experience of time and retranslated into action.

Ivanov, Gadamer, Bakhtin

Ivanov's understanding of history as the living tradition of cultural expressions can be clarified and formalized with reference to contemporary hermeneutic thought. Of especial interest is Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of "effective history," which is defined as the continuum of meaning that is present to human consciousness. For Gadamer historical action is tantamount to an act of understanding defined as a threefold event that occurs when an actor apprehends, interprets, and applies meaning to his own life. This threefold act of understanding fuses the distinct temporal horizons of the original speaker and his interpreter ensuring both the continuity of history and its constant transformation (Gadamer 1998: 307–11). There is no escape from the pressure of tradition. Any human actor is always guided by preconceptions held in common with others, which provide a framework into which meaning can be realized. According to Gadamer:

The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Tradition is not simply a permanent precondition; rather, we produce it ourselves, inasmuch as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition, and hence further determine it ourselves. Thus the circle of understanding is

not a “methodological” circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding. (293)

Having established the intimate connection between tradition and understanding, Gadamer goes on to stress the importance of “application,” that is, of applying the text “to the interpreter’s present situation” (308). Knowledge remains only potential until it is applied in an existential situation. History is essentially the sum of past acts of human apprehension and application. Another way of putting this is that *sophia* (wisdom) must be reunited with *phronesis* (practical, moral understanding) in order that word become deed (20).

Gadamer’s hermeneutics helps to recognize the pragmatic aspect in Ivanov’s thought. For example, although memory (“Mnemosyne”) is for Ivanov an organ of divine knowledge, his writings on literary history make clear that the expression and application of memory is always temporal and contextual. Therefore, both Ivanov and Gadamer must explain art in immanent terms that preserve its transcendent power. Both thinkers do so by identifying tragedy as the timeless basis of aesthetic power, even “in other artistic genres, especially epic” (Gadamer 1998: 129). With reference to Aristotle, Gadamer defines the tragic effect as a moment in which “the spectator recognizes himself and his own finiteness in the face of the power of fate” (132). However, torn from his own life, the spectator must then recognize himself from the standpoint of “religious or historical tradition”: “[T]he elevation and strong emotion that seize the spectator in fact deepen his *continuity with himself*” (133). This self-knowledge and self-affirmation “is an insight that the spectator has by virtue of the continuity of meaning in which he places himself” (132). In other words, catharsis dissolves the boundaries between consciousnesses and resolves their encounter into a single event of meaning.

For Gadamer the process of understanding art is exemplary for human understanding as such, which he depicts as a process of transposing one’s own “horizon” of meaning onto that of another. As he puts it: “Transposing ourselves [. . .] always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other” (305). In the case of a religious tradition, the “universality” that unites the various historical “horizons” is God. Therefore any act of understanding involves an openness to the transcendent. Gadamer uses the example of the Socratic dialogue: “What emerges [from the Socratic dialogue] in its truth is the *logos*, which is neither mine nor yours and hence so far transcends the

interlocutors' subjective opinions that even the person leading the conversation knows that he does not know" (368). Textual tradition is just like the Socratic dialogue in that it makes present a fullness of meaning that belies the fragmentary nature of each individual text. It is by correlating one's own words to those of tradition, by speaking from within, that one transcends one's own particularity. The congeniality of Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy to Ivanov can be seen in such poems as "Before the Dark Icon of the Sign," which I analyzed in chapter 1. Here Ivanov seeks self-understanding by ascertaining his attitude toward previous acts of understanding as they are preserved in memory. Such textual triangulation provides knowledge that is necessarily dialogic in the sense that it reaches beyond the limitations of any single act of understanding.

This dialogic aspect of Ivanov's hermeneutic can also be clarified by contrasting it with Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism.¹⁴ Bakhtin praises Ivanov's interpretation of Dostoevsky's works as based in the principle of "penetration" into his characters' personalities, which "shifts the dominant to someone else's personality, and in addition corresponds more closely to Dostoevsky's *internally dialogic* approach to the represented consciousness of a character" (Bakhtin 1984: 14). However, Bakhtin faults Ivanov for failing to address how this thematic principle "becomes the principle behind Dostoevsky's *artistic* visualization of the world, the principle behind his artistic structuring of a *verbal* whole" (11). Ivanov's concept of the novel-tragedy cannot do justice to the new form created by Dostoevsky and remains a hybrid of traditional forms (11).

Bakhtin misses the point that Ivanov's definition of Dostoevsky's novels as tragedies denotes not their *genre* but their *discourse*, that is, their method of creation and reception. Far from being merely an imperfect anticipation of his younger contemporary, Ivanov's view of Dostoevsky points to areas of deficiency in Bakhtin's interpretation. Bakhtin's dialogic prejudice imposes a predetermined interpretation on each work that leaves little room for reader participation. The reader is either a passive observer obliged to derive the proper conclusions from the depicted world or else a participant in the novel's dialogue. In the latter case, the reader can hope only to achieve a more precise formulation of his or her own point of view but not to learn anything in particular from or through Dostoevsky, apart from a general lesson concerning the desirability of dialogue. According to Ivanov's allegedly "monological" interpretation, Dostoevsky not only grants knowledge of final realities but also communicates a cathartic event that brings the reader into direct participation with what was revealed to Dostoevsky.

The interpretation and application of this experience in the reader's life remains open-ended.

This comparison with Gadamer and Bakhtin helps to highlight key aspects of Ivanov's original hermeneutic philosophy. Ivanov posits memory as the preeminent organ of understanding insofar as it allows one to define one's position and task in the world by placing oneself in the continuity of culture. This can be achieved only by a committed engagement with others' texts that remains open to the full force of the text (catharsis) yet also learns from it (mathesis) and acts upon it (praxis).

IVANOV ON DOSTOEVSKY (PART 2)

Overcoming Realism

Mindful of the differences between himself and Dostoevsky, Ivanov uses his interpretations of the novels to seek out levels of shared experience. He develops his work as an extension of Dostoevsky's fiction in order to create an overarching narrative about Russia. The central myth that runs through Dostoevsky's novels seeks embodiment in Ivanov's own texts and, more broadly, in actual Russian history. This is the myth of human rebirth, reflected in Dostoevsky's stated desire to portray "the type of a beautiful man." Ivanov's reading of *The Brothers Karamazov* can be seen as an attempt to bring Dostoevsky's basic intuition closer to historical realization.¹⁵

Ivanov's personalist aesthetics stipulated that the "man" ascend to higher realities in order to gain the knowledge that the "artist" would then embody in his works. The expression of such transcendent knowledge about *humans* would be the *type*. Ivanov writes: "[I]f a realist depicts reality from any place other than the realm of the more real, his depiction will always remain the merely dreamy fantasy of a subjective spirit immersed in an illusory emotion. It will never possess either true objectivity or the magic force of life that populates our emotional atmosphere with the demonic offspring of a genius imagination, whose effects remain palpable far beyond the sphere of the given works or art, such as Hamlet, Werther, the Bronze Horseman, or Chichikov" (*Coll. Works* 639).

I shall return to the "demonic" nature of types, which are based on people's *daimonia* or what Ivanov calls their "noetic" character. Ivanov here generally follows Dostoevsky's own understanding of type as "the artistic medium through which the artist reveals the dynamics of reality, the configuration not only of the past, but also of the future, as it is disclosed in the indications of the present" (Jackson 1978: 108). The type remains metaphysically

closed, suggesting the emanation of personalities out from a transcendent source, which conflicts with the fundamental openness of Dostoevsky's characterization as understood by Ivanov.

Ivanov's reliance on historical and universal types is evident in his analyses of each of Dostoevsky's novels. *Crime and Punishment* depicts the hell of hubristic solitude and the ecstasy of union with the whole. In historical terms Raskolnikov represents generations of the Russian intelligentsia. In mythical terms he is a theomachist who must carry his battle to the extreme point before breaking down in suffering before the eternal truth of the earth. Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* is the opposite of Raskolnikov: his union with the cosmic whole remains too strong. By refusing to rebel against divine being and thereby incur the guilt of incarnation, he is powerless to act in a fallen world. Beyond the resonance of their types, both of these protagonists reflect Dostoevsky's attempt to depict a "beautiful man."¹⁶ In *Crime and Punishment*, the mystery-like plot of murder and investigation culminates in a mysterious "Epilogue" that promises Raskolnikov's rebirth as a new man: "Here, however, there begins a new story, the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual rebirth, his gradual passage from one world to another, his acquaintance with a new, hitherto utterly unknown reality" (Dostoevsky 1972: 6:422). It is legitimate to see Myshkin as a depiction of this new man, but, as Ivanov asserts, Myshkin remains a "stranger" to the world, a passive incarnation of heavenly content. In Dostoevsky's artistic world positive types either perish or reach the brink of rebirth without fully achieving it.

Dostoevsky's next novel, *The Demons*, is the subject of Ivanov's most detailed discussion, which was elaborated in a separate 1914 essay.¹⁷ Here Dostoevsky's attention moves from the hero, Stavrogin, who suffers complete degradation and perversion, to the heroine, the minor character Mariia Timofeevna Lebiadkina (known as Khromonozhka, "the lame creature"), whom Ivanov takes as an allegory of the cosmic bride abandoned by her corrupt betrothed. Stavrogin's perversion of the role of the "new man" brings into greater relief the conflicts he is obliged to resolve and the world he is called upon to save. Ivanov identifies Khromonozhka as "the Eternal Feminine in the aspect of the Russian Soul" (*Coll. Works* 4:440), while Stavrogin is "Ivan Tsarevich," who fails in his national calling (442). More important, the mythical aspect of the novel provides the reader with an intuitive sense of the "noetic" characters despite the failure of the protagonists to realize their personalities in word or deed.

The distance between the empirical characters and their mythical roles is most striking in the person of Stavrogin. Ivanov compares him to Faust (with Verkhovensky as his Mephistopheles), but he is “a negative Russian Faust” since “within him has been extinguished the love, and with it the tireless striving, that saves Faust” (*Coll. Works* 4:441). Stavrogin is a black hole, the immensity and gravity of which hints at the positive content that was once possible and perhaps still remains possible within him: “The poet [Dostoevsky] specifically indicates [Stavrogin’s] high calling; it is not for nothing that he is the bearer of the name of the cross (*stauros* means cross). He has been mysteriously offered a kind of regal anointing. He is Ivan Tsarevich. [. . .] Upon him has been showered the grace of a mystical understanding of the ultimate mysteries of the national Soul and its expectations of a God-bearer” (442). However, Stavrogin’s only real deed in the novel is his betrayal of this calling. Ivanov claims that Stavrogin devoted himself to Satan, but that even here he is able to aid Satan only negatively. He is deprived of any will to action since he has refused his true self.

Since the one who was to come with the image of Christ, having accepted the image of Christ, actually betrayed Christ, and since Satan has entered him, around him there has crowded a legion of demons and Gadarene swine.¹⁸

[B]etraying Satan does not remove [Stavrogin’s] passive role as a receptive conductor and bearer of Satanic power, which overpowers a herd of possessed people around him and through him. They are a herd because their *I* has been removed from them, as it were: their living *I* has been paralyzed and replaced by another’s will” (443).

Specifically, Stavrogin serves as the conduit of destructive ideologies in which he does not believe and which supplant the characters’ personalities. Each of the other characters becomes strangely dependent on Stavrogin, who is totally unable or unwilling to perform the role he has assumed. As the forlorn Verkhovensky says, “I am like Columbus without his America; does Columbus without America make any sense?” (Dostoevsky 1972: 10:326). Ivanov identifies two partial exceptions to this complete breakdown of personality: Kirillov, the theomachist man-god, who retains personal energy despite his utter isolation; and Shatov, who idolizes the nation as the bearer of God without believing in God. Even they, however, appear as fragments of Stavrogin’s massive homunculus, or else masks by which he conceals his own facelessness. With the abdication of their prince, they are therefore

rendered incapable of manifesting themselves fully in their utter isolation. Both Kirillov and Shatov are on the brink of establishing sincere interpersonal contact when they are destroyed in the wave of violence unleashed by Verkhovensky with Stavrogin's compliance.

While *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* had sought a positive *type*, *The Demons* shows the historical impotence of *types in general*, understood as existentially closed attitudes of the human will. If one connects the type to the ancient concept of *daimonia*, the title *The Demons* [*Besy*] might indicate that the novel is concerned precisely with the miscarriage of "noetic" personalities. In a 1919 essay Ivanov hinted at the limitations of type in the face of spiritual reality: "Ancient depictive art aspired to the typical, understood as the idea of things. The light of this idea illuminated things with a kind of illumination, divorced from the earth and therefore always slightly mournful. For the universal and the typical bore things on the crest of the phenomenon and did not permit them to plumb the depths of individuation, which comprised the principle of full incarnation" (*Coll. Works* 3:378). While the failure of type is true of all the characters, it is particularly important with respect to Stavrogin, whose messianic type is crippled by his total rejection of the role.

The breakdown of types in *The Demons* illustrates the key difference between Ivanov and Bakhtin. According to the latter, each of Dostoevsky's characters appears as the personification of a point of view. The points of view and the people who express them achieve expression and definition only in dialogue with one another. In essence, however, the conflicting ideologies and personalities are given once and for all: they can only realize themselves but can never change. Ivanov concurs that an eternal *type* needs interpersonal contact to be expressed. Not only do people change in interaction with others, but they also need to be "read" by others in order to attain self-understanding. Ivanov goes one step further by attempting to read a more basic level of reality through the ideological conflict between types. The crisis of limited types leads to an experience of catharsis, which opens the reader up to a reality transcendent to the novel itself. For Bakhtin the dark world of *The Demons* can communicate only a negative lesson concerning the consequences of personal isolation (Bakhtin 1984: 96, 244–46). Ivanov sees the work as communicating to the reader the ethical and even ontological imperative of attaining a metaphysical basis that would make dialogue possible. Ivanov's readiness to explore the metaphysical basis of the novel and to tie it to Dostoevsky's own stated belief in a "Russian idea" and "new word" highlights Bakhtin's reluctance to contemplate the larger

teleology of Dostoevsky's works and their effect on the reader. Indeed, in the case of *The Demons* the almost total collapse of humanity and dialogue leaves one with little else to contemplate.

As a negative moment in Dostoevsky's artistic dialectic, *The Demons* provides only the shells of characters. A nontypical individual such as Stavrogin would herald the salvation of the Russian land, the transformation of Russia into Holy Russia, and of the people into the church (*Coll. Works* 4:444). The absence of a flesh-and-blood Stavrogin in *The Demons*, while failing to provide concrete information on this ideal's realization, does not diminish the luminosity of the ideal itself.

There is a positive character in the novel who provides knowledge of this destiny and hope for its achievement, namely, Khromonozhka. In particular, Ivanov cites her delirious talk of having given birth to the child of Stavrogin, her legal husband: "The little child is only imagined; but without the dream and grief for the child the ideal life of this female soul, which reflects in itself as in a mirror the soul of the great Mother-Damp-Earth, would not be complete. Through the mouth of the foolish woman the soul of the Earth and, specifically, her Russian hypostasis, the soul of the Russian land, speaks about something ineffable and uniquely hoped for, about her solar Bridegroom and about the sad glory of the sun, its double and the empty throne" (*Coll. Works* 4:435–36). Khromonozhka's fidelity and patience in the face of endless insults are expressed in the song she sings: "I do not need a new, tall tower, I shall stay in this cell, And I'll start to live and be saved, Praying to God for you." Ivanov comments: "The words of this song might be the most tender thing that Dostoevsky ever said about the concealed recesses of our national soul, of its love and yearning, its faith and hope, its renunciation and patience, its female faithfulness, and its female beauty. [. . .] This is the mystical psyche of our national element, the sacred mystery of our emotions" (436).¹⁹ Despite Russia's inability to produce the new man capable of accepting its lofty destiny, the national element retains its own fecundity even when locked in a cellar and at the mercy of petty tyrants. Indeed, its promise for regeneration only gains in urgency in view of the spiritual impotency that surrounds and reveals it.

In Ivanov's reading, *The Demons* presents a potent myth of Russia as a cosmic bride waiting for her miscarried bridegroom. Indeed, as I argued earlier, Ivanov views all narratives as allegories of cosmic truths.²⁰ *The Demons*, however, is a collapsing allegory and a decaying myth in which the characters' masks remain transparent and fail to congeal into human faces. In a certain sense, the novel presents Russia's tragedy as it carries in fiction, unable

to be fully incarnated in historical reality beyond texts. In this manner *The Demons* not only uses fictional types to project the creation of a new non-typical man but also uses allegorical fiction to project the desirability of a new kind of history.

The Brothers Karamazov

Ivanov's last major work on Dostoevsky before emigration applies this basic paradigm to *The Brothers Karamazov*, which for him presents, if not the non-typical man anticipated in the previous novels, at least a maximal approximation to him. This is Alesha Karamazov, whom Dostoevsky introduces as "an historical actor [*deiatel'*], but an ill-defined, unclarified actor" (Dostoevsky 1972: 14:5). Ivanov had previously written: "Alesha is a symbolic collective type, [...] the type of people of a new Russian consciousness that Dostoevsky prophesied and engendered" (*Coll. Works* 3:347). Now Ivanov specifies that Alesha is typical not of the existing state of things but of the future that is being created by the Russian cultural process. Alesha is a bearer of "the idea of the transfiguration of our entire social and state union into the Church" (4:465). In Ivanov's eyes, central to *The Brothers Karamazov* is its institution through Alesha of a new national ritual that will lead to a qualitatively new kind of history. This is therefore neither fiction nor allegory but a history of the future.

To be sure, Ivanov begins with an allegorical scheme for the novel. The force of human self-achievement, similar to what had previously been called the type, is now named the Luciferian force. The self-implosion and disintegration of this force is personified by the demon Ahriman. Against them both stands Christ. The three brothers represent these three metaphysical extremes. Dmitry presents Ahriman's Russia, while Ivan's original allegiance to Lucifer decays into Ahrimanic nonbeing after he inspires Smerdiakov to kill their father. Alesha is called to establish a Christlike personality. His drama is largely determined by the nobility and impossibility of this ideal.

Ivanov's account of Alesha's drama relies on a version of his metaphysical doctrine known by the phrase "thou art."²¹ Isolated people possess only potential being. Their selfhood can only find confirmation and realization in another's. As in the erotic ascent of Plato's *Symposium*, an "I—Thou" relationship lays bare the being that both persons hold in common (*Coll. Works* 4:448–50). In terms of Ivanov's mythology, it is only in the other that one can see through the world to the earth that undergirds it: "The 'world' hates the Word that became Flesh, and those who accept the Word hate the 'world.' The 'Earth' is in a sense covered and wrapped in the 'world,' but it

is not itself the 'world.' [...] The 'world' is the given state of the Earth, which is outwardly and evidently possessed by Lucifer: it is the Earth's *modus*, but not its *substantia*" (452).²²

The revelation of the Earth to the world depends on man. *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivanov believes, is essentially the projected attainment of this cosmic ideal. At the same time, like *The Demons* it illustrates the dangers on Russia's historical path for the new personality that is to be revealed: "[W]henever the native phrase 'Holy Russia' is pronounced as an expression of faith in Christ's Russia, in the soul of those with little faith [...] there immediately arises the huge, black phantom of Ahriman's Russia, and our evil companion so closes off that tenderly shining light of the secret [*sokrovennoi*] native mother that she no longer 'shows through' or 'shines mysteriously,' in the words of the poet, from out of the lethal gloom" (*Coll. Works* 4:454). Alesha avoided the fate of both Lucifer and Ahriman by taking refuge among Orthodox elders, which granted his "religious consciousness" [...] if not new content, then the root and emerging shoot of a new religious action" (457). All of this hints at Alesha's productivity in Russian reality, although Ivanov understands why many have seen Alesha as "a vain attempt to clothe in flesh some requirement or conclusion of abstract thought, as a type that is not taken from life and has not left its imprint on life" (457).

The proof of Alesha's historical plausibility and reality is found in the novel itself. Alesha gathers a group of young boys around the grave of their young comrade Iliusha, in a union that Ivanov

can only call *sobornost'*. The connection between the members [of the brotherhood] is not such that each of them gives to their association only something isolated in his consciousness, abstracted from the entirety of his emotional life. [...] This connection is like a shared chalice in which entire lives have once been mixed at a bitter and comforting time of almost innocent childhood. [...] All have found concord in one solemn "thou art" addressed to Iliusha, not in one of his images or deeds but in his irreplaceable wholeness, in his deep being, and thereby affirming the irreplaceability, integrity, and holiness of each [...] through the whole. (*Coll. Works* 4:459)

Iliusha is like a martyr around whose grave there arises a gathering of people worthy of being called a church. Ivanov claims that Dostoevsky's artistic vision of this future "Holy Russia" would not have been possible without the labors of a "great saint" not long before him (probably Saint Seraphim of Sarov), just as Saint Francis was a necessary precondition for Dante (*Coll.*

Works 4:478). Ivanov terms his social ideal “hagiocracy” (481) and cites Zosima’s words about the symbolic “seven righteous men” on whom the church stands (477).

Implicit in this rather devotional analysis is the fact that the concrete realization of “hagiocracy” anticipated by Ivanov would also be impossible without Dostoevsky’s novels, which encompass all of Russian reality and indicate the avenue of hope. This hope is something based on existing cultural forms yet exceeding them all: “[E]very cultural form is based on some principle derived from the depths of human consciousness and outside of this unique Image [of Christ]: consequently no cultural form is suited for construction corresponding to ‘the Russian idea.’” (*Coll. Works* 4:466). The humans responsible for this construction, while inhabiting the “Luciferian” world of cultural types (the “demons”), must issue directly from the religious substratum of Russian culture. The achievement of Alesha’s brotherhood is that it communicates the tragedy to all individuals, binding them in a common experience that shapes social reality. In a sense, Alesha follows Dostoevsky’s own “tragic-epic” artistic method as elucidated by Ivanov, initiating historical action out of spiritual communication.

Robert Louis Jackson has noted that it was a mighty task for Dostoevsky “to reconcile his classical higher aesthetic with the demands of a realism that essentially called for a new aesthetic of disfiguration” (1978: 113). In Ivanov’s view it was Dostoevsky’s task to present, against a background of human types, a new man capable of refiguring the types he discerned in life. The resolution of this dilemma lies in the way Dostoevsky reformed modern social types as the tragic source of a new reality. In the end it is irrelevant to Ivanov whether one can name the character that achieved this goal: the task has been posed, and Ivanov challenges Russians to take it up.

Jackson has discussed the nature of this task with respect to *The Brothers Karamazov*. In reply to Dmitry’s claim that he has been reborn as a “new man” in prison, Alesha answers: “In my opinion, remember only and always throughout your life [. . .] this other man—and that will be enough for you” (Dostoevsky 1972: 15:185). Jackson comments: “Memory here serves to foreground the purity of intention, the point of light toward which Dmitry can strive. Ethical behavior in Dostoevsky’s artistic universe, in the language of Russian grammar, is in the imperfective or durative aspect, not perfective or punctual. One cannot speak in any sense of a resolution of Dmitry’s conflicts. [. . .] Yet one may speak of ‘a new sense of faith [. . .] an integral attitude toward a higher and ultimate value’” (1993: 282). In terms of my analysis, memory serves a hermeneutic function with respect to the revelation

of a new man, spurring the old man to work actively toward a perhaps unreachable goal. This, in essence, is Ivanov's vision of Russia's history, based on the pledge given in Dostoevsky's works.

One can dispute how much of this historical prescription belongs to Dostoevsky and how much to Ivanov.²³ Suffice it to say that Ivanov did not ask such questions. He remained happily within the hermeneutic circle, supported by his faith in the underlying unity of tradition. There is no reason why the modern reader should not also recognize this hermeneutic circle as meaningful. These old allegories still breathe. Compare the preceding analysis of Ivanov's views with one of Dostoevsky's notations on aesthetics:

Shakespeare. This was without tendentiousness and is eternal and has remained. This is not the mere reproduction of the everyday, which many teachers hold to exhaust all reality. All reality is not exhausted by the everyday, for in its greatest part it is enclosed within the everyday in the form of a subterranean, unexpressed, future Word. Very rarely there appear do prophets appear who guess and utter this integral word. Shakespeare is a prophet sent by God to proclaim to us the mystery of man, of the human soul. (Dostoevsky 1972: 11:237)

Such prophecies, however, are of the self-fulfilling variety as long as they enter into the continuum of human expressions to be apprehended and applied by readers.

PART 3



AFTERGLOW

Now our partnership is dissolved, I feel so peculiar:
As if I had been on a drunk since I was born
And suddenly now, and for the first time, am cold sober,
With all my unanswered wishes and unwashed days
Stacked up all around my life; as if through the ages I had dreamed
About some tremendous journey I was taking,
Sketching imaginary landscapes, chasms and cities,
Cold walls, hot spaces, wild mouths, defeated backs,
Jotting down fictional notes on secrets overheard
In theatres and privies, banks and mountain inns,
And now, in my old age, I wake, and this journey really exists,
And I have actually to take it, inch by inch,
Alone and on foot, without a cent in my pocket,
Through a universe where time is not foreshortened,
No animals talk, and there is neither floating nor flying.

—W. H. Auden, “Prospero to Ariel,” in *The Sea and the Mirror*

INTRODUCTION

Unlike Auden’s Prospero, who is daunted by the prospect of a final journey, Ivanov portrayed his permanent exile as a return to “his native home,” as he wrote in the first of his 1926 *Roman Sonnets* (*Coll. Works* 3:578). Although in emigration he was left with nothing but his memories and his family, Ivanov felt liberated from earthly constraints and restored to a transcendent abode. Thus he concludes the final sonnet in the cycle:

Зеркальному подобна морю слава
Огнистого небесного расплава,
Где тает диск и тонет исполин.
Ослепшими перстами луч ощупал

Верх пинии, и глаз потух. Один,
 На золоте круглится синий купол. (*Coll. Works* 3:582)

[Like a mirrored sea in the glory
 Of the fiery heavenly cauldron,
 Where the sun's disk melts and the Titan drowns.
 With blinded fingers the sun's ray touches
 The crown of the pine, and the eye is extinguished. Alone,
 The blue dome is caressed by the gold.]

Ivanov, however, did not fully dissolve into this solar glory, remaining preoccupied with the defense of his creative achievement, particularly its inner consistency. These closing lines of the *Roman Sonnets* recall a key image of Russian symbolism, expressed emblematically in the title of Andrei Bely's debut collection *Gold in Azure* (*Zoloto v lazuri*, 1904) and repeated in the opening lines of Ivanov's *Man*. In this way Ivanov suggests that his return to Rome and impending conversion to Catholicism are the logical outcome of symbolism, and that it, too, is coming home to Rome. Indeed, in his émigré writings Ivanov was concerned to prove the mutual compatibility of his symbolism and Catholicism—at least of the Neo-Thomism of Jacques Maritain. Many of these writings, consisting of both prose and poetry, were based on published or unpublished works written before the revolution. However, they were not so much revised versions as parts of a broad *revision* of his thought and his image, addressed to a Western and primarily Roman Catholic audience, and not always easy to reconcile with his earlier essays.

In this chapter I begin with a reading of Ivanov's best-known work, the *Correspondence from Two Corners*, which served simultaneously as Ivanov's farewell to Russia and his calling card in western Europe. Here one sees not only the most vivid expression of Ivanov's hermeneutic stance but also insight into Ivanov's understanding of emigration as homecoming. I next examine Ivanov's intellectual evolution in emigration on the basis of two postscripts to the *Correspondence from Two Corners* and one short essay on aesthetics. Although Ivanov's emigration from Russia removed his theoretical work from history and from the balanced hermeneutics of "On the Limits of Art," in his poetry he continued his prerevolutionary tendency toward a purer and more personal lyric voice. As I demonstrate in my analysis of a poem from *The Roman Diary of 1944*, Ivanov's late lyrics eschew allegory for a mimetic account of ritual experience, leaving interpretation to the reader. However, when read as a single work, Ivanov's *Roman Diary* weaves his late lyrics into a unified narrative of creative memory, crowning his lifework in fitting style.

Ivanov's Emigration

CORRESPONDENCE FROM TWO CORNERS

The Correspondence as Text

Ivanov's mature theoretical stance in the 1910s entailed a certain humility before history. His emigration in 1924, by contrast, revealed a quite different attitude. There were, of course, many personal reasons prompting him to emigrate. On a broader level, however, as a thinker Ivanov was escaping history and its conundrums. As for Shakespeare's Prospero, exile was a condition of Ivanov's continued sovereignty. He spent his waning years in splendid intellectual isolation from his compatriots, with intermittent visitations by Ariel, free to construct Russia as a fiction in *The Tale of Svetomir-Tsarevich* and numerous essays.

The moment of Ivanov's transition from hermeneutic engagement to the external standpoint of emigration is captured in *A Correspondence from Two Corners*.¹ This small book consists of an exchange of twelve letters between Ivanov and his roommate, the eminent literary historian Mikhail Gershenzon, in June and July 1920. In his letters to Gershenzon one sees traces of Ivanov's hard-won hermeneutic standpoint as well as signs of impending detachment from history. The correspondence captures a moment of transition from participation in a vital intellectual community to lonely isolation, from a receptive cultural milieu to silence. When viewed in the context of events in both writers' lives and of the work's illustrious reception, the *Correspondence* itself turns out to be a highly complex event in Ivanov's intellectual development and a compelling example of hermeneutic interaction between text and action.

The *Correspondence* has usually been seen more as a timeless monument of humanistic thought than as a literary text. Vera Proskurina has demonstrated that this "universal document, beyond space and time," is actually a "remarkable *literary* work, constructed according to the laws of the artistic

text and oriented toward literary play and theatrical conventionality” (1998: 338–39). In particular, Ivanov holds to a rhetorical strategy of citation, never asserting anything without reference to some textual authority (367). While he does make a few citations, Gershenzon clothes his argument mostly in metaphor, a more open rhetorical strategy that suggests “the inexpressibility in words” of spiritual essence (367–73). Ivanov finds freedom within tradition, while Gershenzon seeks its more immediate expression. Ivanov values the *textuality* of life, while Gershenzon aspires to the *vitality* of the text, its rootedness in real-life experience. The disputants argue about whether life or the text comes first. In the end Ivanov and Gershenzon are forced to admit that both abide in a fragile but vivifying interdependence.

Due to the neglect of its literary qualities, the arguments of the *Correspondence* have often been reduced to a simple *pro et contra*: Ivanov defends culture as mediation between humanity and God, while Gershenzon (like Nikolai Berdiaev before him) seeks to circumvent culture in more direct expressions of the human spirit. From this viewpoint, the circumstances of the text’s composition seem a mere curiosity, despite the fact that the work’s topicality was the overriding issue for its earliest critics. Some, especially among the Bolsheviks, read the *Correspondence* as the swan song of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, precisely the kind of intellectual showmanship that proletarian culture should abolish: “Ivanov’s faith in God and Gershenzon’s faith in ‘spirit’ are religions of the same order since both excuse their high priests from the urgent duty of our day: the obligation to take an active part in the construction of a new life.”² Others, mostly from the prerevolutionary intelligentsia, focused on the relevance of Ivanov’s and Gershenzon’s arguments about culture at such a pivotal moment for Russia, when the entire cultural legacy was at stake. While these early critical responses did not do much to illuminate the text, they pointed in a richer direction than the reductive approach that predominated after 1930, when—largely at Ivanov’s prompting—the *Correspondence* became seen as a manifesto of Ivanov’s Christian humanism, a viewpoint that ignores Gershenzon’s contribution and the fact that neither Christianity nor humanism are explicit themes in the text. The concerns of the *Correspondence* are much more immediate, involving both the identity of nascent Soviet culture and whether the creative individual can best contribute by persevering at home or by fleeing abroad.

The Correspondence as Event

Ivanov’s contribution to the *Correspondence* can be interpreted either as his last word in Russia or as his first word in emigration. As the culmination of

his writings in the 1910s, Ivanov's letters to Gershenzon comprise the melancholy testament of a dethroned king of modernism and a wistful plea for a return to spiritual tradition. Read prospectively as a presentiment of his conversion to Roman Catholicism, however, Ivanov's letters soar above history and into the realm of immutable truths. In fact, the work represents the very moment of transition: the hero of the book is time itself, in its implacable movement backward in memory and forward in action, and in its merciless sovereignty over man. The text is a mediator between past and future experience, between homeland and exile; it both narrates the authors' actions and plots their intentions. While this kind of text does not aspire to transfigure the universe, as does Ivanov's lyric poetry or Scriabin's *Mysterium*, its modest goal of conversation is efficacious in a more practical way. The *Correspondence* is therefore a perfect example of Paul Ricoeur's model of interaction between action, text, and action: "Fiction has the power to 'remake' reality and, within the framework of narrative fiction in particular, to remake real praxis to the extent that the text intentionally aims at a horizon of a new reality that we may call a world. It is this world of the text that intervenes in the world of action in order to give it a new configuration or, as we might say, in order to transfigure it" (Ricoeur 1991: 11). Simply by engaging in written correspondence the authors configure their lives as a plot that is subject to transfiguration at the hands of the reader.

The *Correspondence* engages the historical situation from the very beginning, from the unsigned "Publisher's Note" that precedes the first letter: "These letters, twelve in number, were written in the summer of 1920, when both friends lived together in a single room, in a sanatorium 'for workers of science and literature' in Moscow."³ This note, couched in a mixture of high literary style and awkward Soviet terminology, is obviously ironic and even polemical, for the status of cultural "work" in the new Russian state is precisely what is at issue in the epistolary dialogue. Given his individualistic denial of any continuity in culture, Gershenzon contends that "what we now see in the revolution says nothing about the distant calculation and intention with which the spirit brought it into existence" (409). Ivanov's historicist position is based upon the heritage of "our fathers' [ritual] initiations" (395), encoded in works of artistic and philosophical culture. In letter 9, dated 12 July, Ivanov directly raises the question of whether proletarian culture seeks continuity with the past. Surprisingly, he affirms that "the proletariat stands wholly on the grounds of cultural continuity" (*Coll. Works* 3:405). Ivanov arms himself with time, dating each of his letters, while Gershenzon's letters are all undated, except for the last letter in the exchange,

which probably received its date during the editing of the manuscript to mark the close of the argument—and the victory of time over notions of eternal spirit or timeless culture. By the end of the dialogue both Ivanov's appeal to cultural history and Gershenzon's appeal to individual inspiration in the present are absorbed by the pressing need to act in support of the open future.

It is not entirely clear that one should consider the exchange a competitive verbal joust, as many critics have done. It is just as possible to read it as an open conversation in which the participants *listen* to and *learn* from each other. Both authors' respective points of view evolve throughout the work. There is a distinct change in the tone of the argument beginning with letter 10. Whereas earlier Ivanov had haughtily ridiculed Gershenzon's inconsistencies and escapism, now Gershenzon himself goes on the offensive, declaring: "If you consider it necessary to analyze the nature of my thirst, then I have no less right to define the reasons for your satiety" (407). This change provides a starting point for investigating the relationship between the text and the events that shaped it. If one compares the dates of the letters with events in both authors' lives, one sees that the *Correspondence* is closely engaged with life beyond the authors' two corners. For example, the theme of proletarian culture vis-à-vis the past in letter 9 reflects an actual public debate among several intellectuals—including Ivanov, Gershenzon, and Anatoly Lunacharsky, the "Commissar of Enlightenment"—that took place on 13 July 1920. More to the point, the change in tone in letter 10 coincided with the news that Ivanov would not be allowed to travel abroad, as he had planned.⁴ It is as if, finding himself unable to link the revolution to past culture or to escape it, Ivanov's cult of memory suddenly became closed off to the future and rendered impotent.

The entire *Correspondence* took place against the dramatic backdrop of both authors' attempts to leave Russia. Ivanov had been approved for departure on 11 March 1920, whereas Gershenzon had been denied permission on 17 April. Knowing that he was about to leave, Ivanov positively radiates optimism in his initial letters. His very first words in the exchange are: "I know, my dear friend and neighbor in a corner of our shared room, that you have come to doubt your personal immortality and the existence of a personal God" (384), to which Gershenzon curtly responds: "No" (385). As Robert Louis Jackson has noted, this exchange reveals the underlying disagreement: Ivanov "knows," whereas Gershenzon merely exercises his personal sovereignty in a negative manner.⁵ On the other hand, while Ivanov's affirmative stance is inspirational, it can also seem self-satisfied and smug,

while Gershenzon's heartfelt negation at least reveals a beating heart. Gershenzon tangles with contradictions: while he denies objective culture as a moribund burden preventing new creativity, he idolizes Dante and Rousseau, whose very juxtaposition hints at his own impressionistic approach to history (387, 388). The only thing that links Gershenzon's thoughts and images is his own psyche, unashamed in its subjectivity and jealous of its sovereignty.

The connection between the correspondents' arguments and their respective prospects for emigration is made explicit by Ivanov in letter 5: "My dear friend, we abide in the same cultural environment, just as we inhabit the same room, where each has his own corner, but there is only one window, wide as it is, and one door. Each of us also has his own permanent abode, which both you and I would gladly exchange for another abode, under another sky" (390). Ivanov activates both metaphorical and literal levels of denotation here to affirm the creative individual's independence from his or her historical surroundings, an independence founded upon the individual's relationship to God outside of history: "[T]o live in God means not to live wholly in relative human culture but to grow beyond it, into freedom, with some part of one's being" (391). This externality to historical culture is directly related to the idea of being abroad. It is no coincidence that the two key events in Ivanov's spiritual life—his discovery of Dionysus and Eros upon meeting Lidia Dmitrievna Zinovyeva-Annibal and the revelation of the "tender mystery" in 1912—both took place outside of Russia, mostly in Italy.⁶ However, externality to culture—what Ivanov termed "barbarianism" in 1907—is also related to the stance of the lyric poet, a connection made by Gershenzon in letter 4:

I am not alone; there are many of us being suffocated in these stone walls [of culture, of the sanatorium, or of Russia]; and even you, a poet, could you survive here without complaint if you did not have the fortunate gift—to fly away in inspiration beyond the walls, even if infrequently and not for long—into the free expanse, into the realm of the spirit? With envy I follow your ascent with my eyes, your ascent and that of other modern poets: there *is* an expanse and humanity *does* have wings! (390)

In a single exclamation Gershenzon rails against the oppressive claustrophobia of culture and statehood, and yearns for free expression and unbounded sovereignty. He sees such a life in Ivanov's lyric creativity and his ability to travel abroad. However, Gershenzon does not strive beyond boundaries. Rather, he bristles against them and against the culture that supports

them in an assertion of his selfhood. As Gershenson confessed in a letter to his brother shortly before starting the *Correspondence*, “I always thought that people’s attempts to run away to a happier place were akin to the desire to run away from oneself.”⁷ Deprived of all that was dearest to him, Gershenson is committed to staying in a bid to understand himself in his new vulnerability.

Ivanov consequently risks sounding insensitive (and even hypocritical) when he criticizes Gershenson for his “nomadic unsettledness” (402) or when he affirms culture as “the ladder of Eros” (386). Ivanov claims that “[t]he door to freedom is the same for everyone who lives in the same prison, and it is always open. One leaves, and another will follow. Perhaps everyone will follow one after the other” (391). However, Ivanov’s door somehow refuses to open for Gershenson—as in life, so also in argument. Ivanov’s grand edifice, rooted as it may be “in God,” does not always open to others.

All of this changes around 12 July, when Ivanov learns of the cancellation of his trip abroad (which is not mentioned explicitly in the text). Now the neighbors are equal in life, which complicates Ivanov’s detached authorial stance. Stuck at a finite point in space and time, Ivanov is forced to contemplate other sources of transcendent knowledge and freedom. Turning to cultural history as a repository of spiritual values, he tries to reconcile its transcendent source with the messy unpredictability of time. As he writes in letter 9, Ivanov is forced to place even the revolution in this continuum of cultural expressions: “History [. . .] stubbornly wants to remain history, that is, a new page in the chronicles of cultural Egypt. The method of revolution, which has chased us, tired and weary in body, into a government sanatorium, where we sit discussing issue of health, is a historical method par excellence and a method that affirms society and even the state, not utopia and anarchy; that is, it is not the individual method of rebels and nomads but the method of those who stay and are settled” (405). Fashioning the future requires an acceptance of the present as the legitimate expression of the past. Yet history for Ivanov is not made but written. He senses that if he is to remain in Russian history, he must become one of its authors. In this case, however, he can only become its coauthor together with the stubborn Gershenson.

Authorship does not always entail active participation. Gershenson is able to demonstrate to Ivanov that “humans of our world have mistaken their path and have wandered into an inescapable wilderness (407). Ivanov answers in exasperation by proposing to end the conversation. Echoing the words Gershenson had written to his brother just weeks earlier—but with

no visible irony—Ivanov claims: “I have an unbearable sense of disgust for resolving difficulties by running away” (412). He affirms more strongly than ever the importance of returning to “the origins of life” in memory (411). As if to explain why he had nevertheless undertaken such strenuous efforts to leave Russia, Ivanov claims to be “only half a son of the Russian land, who has, however, been chased from it, while I am half a foreigner and one of the disciples of Sais, where distinctions of clan and tribe are forgotten” (412). With this reference to the German romantic poet Novalis, Ivanov redefines his homeland as a universal space outside of history, exempt from its rules and limitations. He no longer refers to the “initiations of our fathers,” but assumes some universal ritual origin.

At the close of the *Correspondence* Gershenzon turns the tables on Ivanov, assuring him: “You, my friend, are in your native country; your heart is here, as is your home, and your sky is above this land” (415). Here Gershenzon defines himself as a foreigner, disadvantaged vis-à-vis the natives, among whom he numbers Ivanov. (Gershenzon is obviously referring to traditional divisions between Jew and Russian.) However, this ending also represents the victory of Gershenzon’s unmediated sense of life and more direct discourse over Ivanov’s allegorical rhetoric and reliance on textual tradition. Whereas earlier Gershenzon had felt oppressed by culture and by what he perceived as Ivanov’s arrogant name-dropping, he is now able to proclaim his freedom insofar as he has worked it out in the text. Ivanov, conversely, had earlier manipulated cultural references from a transcendent viewpoint. Now he must stress his rootedness in cultural memory and in the present that it has brought about. By the end of the text it has become clear that Ivanov’s argument logically requires him to remain in Russia and, at the same time, makes this a real possibility.

My analysis of Gershenzon’s “freedom” and Ivanov’s “culture” has admittedly sharpened the edges and perhaps exaggerated the drama of the opposition in order to show how the text of the *Correspondence* arose from a concrete historical need and issued forth as ethical action. In letter 4 Gershenzon confesses: “I write because in this way I will be able to express myself more fully, and my thought will be perceived more distinctly, like a sound amid the silence” (387). The text becomes a stage for the authors to act out their chosen personas in open dialogue. Ivanov’s mercurial adversary forces him to recognize the impossibility of a simple escape from Russian culture and the necessity of accepting its dependence upon time. Through the *Correspondence* it becomes clearer to Ivanov that his faith in the transcendent authenticity of culture has bound him to history so tightly that he

could not even reject the revolution. In this manner, the textual dialogue between correspondents becomes a condition of self-understanding. Ivanov realizes what Paul Ricoeur has affirmed: "To understand oneself is to understand oneself as one confronts the text and to receive from it the conditions for a self other than that which first undertakes the reading" (1991: 17). By choosing to publish the *Correspondence*, the authors project this growth in understanding as a model for all readers' interaction with the text. Paradoxically, by submitting their text to the travails of history, both Ivanov in his detachment and Gershenzon in his rebellion become participants in a supra-individual continuum of texts and vouchsafe their future in the transient dialogue of culture.

The *Correspondence* is the fullest example of Ivanov's hermeneutic stance, demonstrating his understanding of history as a cultural continuum and of the text as mediation between actors in this continuum. By clarifying the stakes of understanding, however, the *Correspondence* also revealed the cost of rejecting direct participation in cultural history. Removed from the Russian cultural continuum, Ivanov's creative persona would lose the balance he had achieved between his transcendent lyric voice and its application to concrete historical tasks, freeing him to enter a splendid realm of imagination yet potentially condemning him to its isolation.

CATHOLIC HUMANISM

Letters from Rome

As *The Correspondence from Two Corners* achieved notoriety in interwar Europe, Ivanov found himself the unexpected beneficiary of friendly but somewhat disparate expressions of support from religious intellectuals, who discovered their own inspiration in his spirited defense of culture in history. These contacts led Ivanov to compose a body of texts that have often been published (at Ivanov's insistence) as addenda to the *Correspondence*, most notably the "Letters" to Charles Du Bos and Alessandro Pellegrini, which Ivanov viewed as developing ideas from the earlier work. Here, from an explicitly Roman Catholic standpoint, Ivanov claimed that he wrote the *Correspondence* just as "my faith was beginning to assert itself upon the ruins of my pagan humanism" (*Coll. Works* 3:424). Accordingly, Ivanov presented his doctrine of "Christian humanism" as an elaboration of the *Correspondence*. In fact, in his "Letters" to Du Bos and Pellegrini Ivanov took great care to revise his earlier viewpoint in the *Correspondence*.

This revision is perhaps most noticeable in Ivanov's attempts to erase all

traces of his acceptance of Bolshevism and to demonstrate the inner consistency of his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1926. In so doing, however, Ivanov retreats to an ahistorical point of view that was clearly rejected in the *Correspondence*. The "Letter to Du Bos" portrays the Bolshevik Revolution as a straightforward battle between good and evil: "The cause of the proletariat is only a pretext or method; in actuality it aims to silence God, to exterminate Him in human hearts. So everyone must choose one of the *two Cities* that are at war with each other" (*Coll. Works* 422, 424). The Augustinian concept of "two cities," which Ivanov had presented in his melopeia *Man*, contravenes any appeal to tradition or the human past. Ivanov's social ideal is a static truth that is to be accepted through inner conversion, not achieved through work and dialogue.

The specific ideal that Ivanov identifies—the Catholic Church—was also absent in the *Correspondence*. Ivanov's "Letter to Du Bos" contains the only public explanation for his 1926 conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, which he presents not as a repudiation of Orthodoxy but as an accession to the fullness of the Christian heritage: "[T]here resounded powerfully and constantly in my heart the call that [. . .] has guided me slowly but unerringly to ward union with the Catholic Church" (*Coll. Works* 3:424). As this passage shows, Ivanov presents his decision as a profoundly personal and individual one, based more on *feeling* than on theology. His conversion essentially upheld the equation he drew between the creative act and the renewal of ritual. Indeed, he won special approval from the Curia to append Vladimir Solovyov's prayer of reunion to the standard rite: "When I pronounced [. . .] the Creed, followed by the formula of adherence [to the pope's authority] [. . .] I felt Orthodox in the full sense of the word for the first time in my life, in full possession of the sacred treasure [*trésor*] that had belonged to me since my baptism, the joy of which had, however, been encumbered for many years by a sense of growing anguish and by the consciousness that I had been severed from the other half of this living treasure of sanctity and grace, that, like a consumptive, I had been breathing with only one lung" (426). Despite the personal motivation behind Ivanov's act, he claims national significance for it, writing that he felt "the satisfaction of having accomplished my personal duty and, in my person, the duty of my nation, the consciousness [. . .] of having acted in accordance with its will" (428).⁸ While Ivanov had long nurtured Catholic sympathies, he had never presented the issue in such stark terms.

The idea of accepting one's rightful "sacred treasure" allows Ivanov to agree with Du Bos's reading of the *Correspondence* as a dispute between Ivanov's

ahistorical “thesaurus” and Gershenzon’s nihilistic “tabula rasa” (Zarankin and Wachtel 2001: 507). This concept of the thesaurus may seem commensurate with Ivanov’s concept of the cultural continuum, but it presents this cultural legacy more as a store of frozen meanings than as a fluid continuum that can be accessed only in the present. In his reply to Du Bos, Ivanov specifically identifies the “thesaurus” with the “treasure” of the Roman Catholic Church. Similarly, Ivanov retains his cult of memory but limits its revelatory power in accordance with the new doctrinal requirements of Roman Catholicism. His overarching interpretation shares some characteristic traits with the cosmology he expounded in such Dionysian articles as “Ancient Terror.” For example, Ivanov mentions “Uncreated Wisdom,” a synonym for “Sophia–Divine Wisdom,” as a denotation of the feminine cosmos. However, these concepts and terms are cleansed of the ecstatic and morbid connotations of the earlier cosmology and are reduced to articles in the Catholic catechesis as it stood in the grim period between the First and Second Vatican Councils.

Subsequent to his “Letter to Du Bos,” Ivanov named his revised intellectual stance “Christian humanism.” Before his emigration Ivanov had spoken of humanism in two senses: classical philology and secularism. He was proud to identify himself as a humanist in the context of the Renaissance tradition of classical scholarship.⁹ Understood as modern secularism, however, humanism only evoked his ire. In his definitive statement on the matter, the 1919 essay “On the Crisis of Humanism,” Ivanov declared that “Dionysus resists humanism,” that “humanism is perishing,” and that it will be followed by a “transhumanism” that affirms humanity as a single whole, what Ivanov christened “monanthropism.”¹⁰ Ivanov’s discussion of humanism here is comparable to Heidegger’s 1946 essay “On Humanism,” in which he seeks to reestablish a humanism “that thinks the humanity of man from nearness to Being.”¹¹ By 1926, however, Ivanov seems to have despaired of any ontological revolution leading humanity beyond its current state. Ivanov’s revision of his cosmological interpretation of humanism in emigration reveals a much more modest and private thinker, one who addresses the needs of the individual *as an individual*. This more intimate conception of the individual is underscored by the fact that Ivanov published his key émigré texts in the form of private letters (Zarankin and Wachtel 2001: 504), even rejecting a proposed translation into Russian (Shishkin 1989: 503–4). This is the key paradox of Ivanov’s emigration: in the “Letter to Du Bos” Ivanov claimed that he converted to Catholicism in the name of his nation, but he spoke of it only as a profoundly personal experience and prevented its discussion in

the Russian-language press. This elusiveness eventually led to outlandish rumors, such as the belief that Ivanov had been appointed a cardinal!

Although Ivanov's Christian humanism presented the individual in a much more dignified manner than in his cosmic symbolism, it insisted that human dignity could only be protected in the Roman Catholic Church. When Alessandro Pellegrini published a sympathetic response to the concept of humanism presented in Ivanov's "Letter to Du Bos," Ivanov found himself obliged to take issue with his new ally. Pellegrini had understood Ivanov to mean humanism as a defense of individual rights and aristocratic elitism. In his answer Ivanov tied his concept of humanism explicitly to that of *docta pietas* (learned piety) (*Coll. Works* 3:434). With reference to Justin Martyr, Ivanov claims that Christ and Christianity absorbed all that was best in antiquity (442). To remember Christ is to access humanity's highest ideal; humanism is therefore definable as "universal anamnesis in Christ" (442). While Ivanov presents Memory as the main organ of spiritual knowledge, he expresses disdain for empirical history, viewing the "historical process" as "the incessant and tragic dialogue between man and He who created him free and immortal in accordance with His Image" (442, 444). In emigration memory becomes strangely divorced from history and merges with the category of fictional myth.

It is useful to compare Ivanov's later image of antiquity with his earlier understanding of classical thought as issuing from the cathartic mysteries. The antiquity that Justin Martyr or Clement of Alexandria thought consistent with Christianity was cleansed of any hint of ecstatic religion. As Arthur Darby Nock once put it, "Justin, like Clement of Alexandria, was concerned to find an analogy between Christianity and philosophy; he sought none between Christianity and pagan worship."¹² Similarly, in his Christian humanism Ivanov shied away from congruities in the ritual experience of antiquity and Christianity, which had held his attention for decades, and edged toward the affirmation of purely intellectual continuity. The same cannot be said of Ivanov's poetry in emigration, which retained a fascination with Dionysus and the Eleusinian mysteries.¹³ This discrepancy may represent a resurgent split between Ivanov's intellectual aspirations and his more immediate lyrical beliefs.

In the final analysis, the two addenda to the *Correspondence* express Ivanov's emigration mentality: he feels himself alone, but at the center of the universe and with direct access to divine truth. Utilizing the imagery of his *Roman Sonnets* in the "Letter to Du Bos," he writes: "From the first steps of my long peregrinations, I have observed a constant feature of my interior

life: I could really see [...] connections between this reality and its Idea only at a certain distance from the immediate impressions. [...] [N]ever has the passage from the relative blindness of the immanent state to the relative lucidity of *transcendent contemplation* been made so palpable; never has it adopted such a poignant aspect as when I was bodily separated from my homeland and tried from afar to envisage its enigmatic traits” (*Coll. Works* 3:420; my emphasis). Receding into such “transcendent contemplation,” Ivanov becomes a passive participant in the historical process. In a 1931 introduction to an émigré friend’s book of poetry, Ivanov might have been describing himself when he wrote: “His Russia, removed from his field of vision, has become for him ‘inner experience,’ the object of mystical faith and almost transcendent hope; memory of Russia has become ‘eternal memory,’ as proclaimed in the funeral rite.”¹⁴

Aesthetic Revisionism

Ivanov’s “transcendent contemplation” had significant consequences in his aesthetic writings, which were now cleansed of “pagan” connotations and brought into line with Catholic *philosophia perennis*. In chapter 5 I singled out for detailed treatment the closing section of Ivanov’s 1909 essay “On the Russian Idea,” with its aesthetic triad of catharsis–mathesis–praxis. As I argued, this triad lays the basis for a profound hermeneutic theory by applying the terminology of ancient mystery religion to the idea of art as communication. When Ivanov was revising the essay for publication in German in 1930, he dropped this entire section and expanded on his brief consideration of Russia as “Christophorus,” that is, as a “Christ-bearing nation.” Ivanov presents the legend of Saint Christopher as an allegory of Russia’s future return to the Catholic Church, when it will pronounce (in Latin?) “Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi” (1930: 39; cf. *SE* 142; *Coll. Works* 3:336). While Ivanov continues to stress the religious roots and calling of art, he now attaches this proposition to scholastic formulations, obscuring the ecstatic, Dionysian roots of his mature aesthetic formulations. Ivanov refers approvingly to Aristotle, but this is no longer the Aristotle of tragedy but rather the Scholastics’ Aristotle, free of association with ecstatic ancient religion. The result is that Ivanov’s émigré theories, while couched in familiar words, at times resemble a collection of conventional doctrinal formulae.

An example of this is Ivanov’s 1948 essay “*Forma formans* and *forma formata*: On Inner and Outer Form,” which he wrote in Italian and translated into German. The basic idea of the essay is familiar from Ivanov’s pre-emigration essays: the universe is unified, feminine, and creative. Since art

is an expression of this creative universe, it cannot be divided into form and content. Creative power suffuses all phenomena as "inner form," as the "How" of the world. Without this authenticity, vouchsafed by the artwork's transcendent origin, it is hopeless to try to communicate some abstract content (a "What") through outer form. Art is fully explicable by the two "How's": How it is envisioned and how it is expressed. The "how" of vision is termed *forma formans*, while the "how" of expression is called *forma formata*.

The Nietzschean privileging of "how" over "what" is familiar, as is the general idea of the inner form.¹⁵ In 1919 Ivanov defined the "inner form" as phenomena endowed with human meaning, or *reality interpreted* (*SE* 165; *Coll. Works* 3:370). What is new in 1948 is the terminology, some of which is scholastic in origin. Ivanov refers to the Thomistic text *De pulchro* (On Beauty) to show that "[A]rt is the creative incarnation of beautiful things; the ground of beauty, *ratio pulchri* in the Scholastics' sense, is form" (1948: 372). Ivanov identifies this understanding of form with Aristotle's concept of entelechy, defining it as "an immanent act that realizes all potentialities in unformed matter" (374). Moreover, this Aristotelian and scholastic aesthetic is classicist in spirit; Ivanov obligingly makes reference to Goethe's concept of "morphological form" and the "classicist" understanding of beauty in Goethe's poem "Dauer in Wechsel" (1948: 375–76; cf. *Coll. Works* 3:446, 448).

Other parts of Ivanov's terminology are more complex in origin. With reference to Spinoza's concepts of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*,¹⁶ as well as Aristotle's concepts of *energeia* and *ergon*, Ivanov distinguishes "forming form" (*forma formans*, or inner form) and "formed form" (*forma formata*, or outer form): "[T]he closer the *forma formata* clings to the idea that gives it full beauty, the closer the artwork is to perfection" (1948: 374). In other words, the concrete artwork is a sign of the creative energy within: "The symbol of resplendence reminds us that beauty in the lower world is a reflection of the suprasensual resplendence of divine beauty, obscured by the natural environment but still radiant" (*Coll. Works* 3:667). Ivanov contrasts this concept with romanticism on the grounds that it affirms the necessity of beautiful, consummate form and rejects fragmentary or subjective expressions of the creative energy. However, the fact that Ivanov has borrowed the terms *forma formans* and *forma formata* from Coleridge underscores the obvious romantic roots of his general conception, even if it be lashed to scholastic terminology.¹⁷

Pared of its scholastic and romantic terminology, Ivanov's émigré conception presents artworks as material signs of the creative power of the universe. This basically returns Ivanov to his theurgic stage, whose most direct

expression is in “Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism” (1908) and “The Testaments of Symbolism” (1910). Here Ivanov’s aesthetics is based solely on “emorphic” mimesis. At the same time, the relative legitimacy of those earlier aesthetic statements is obscured insofar as Ivanov marginalizes the role of catharsis, mathesis, and praxis. He briefly notes Pheidias’s statue of Zeus as an artwork whose effect was compared to an initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries (1948: 375), but this carryover from earlier essays only seems odd in the present context. Ivanov’s statement that “art forms souls” (375) appears unfounded since there is in these later aesthetic writings little account of the creation or reception of art by individuals. In “*Forma formans* and *forma formata*” Ivanov hints that the principle of “constructive form” is also “the principle of personhood [*lichnost*]” (376). In other words, like a work of art the individual is formed by an inward creative force and is duty-bound to seek the fullest possible expression of this innate idea. As Ivanov wrote in his letter to Pellegrini, “I mean that one’s inner *I* can cleanse or obscure one’s personal Daimon and that there is no need to ‘smash the form’ in order to spiritualize it” (*Coll. Works* 3:448). If one adds that knowledge of the idea is available in cosmic memory, one arrives at the basis of the Christian humanism for which Ivanov became known in Europe between the wars: man becomes fully human by accessing memory (created wisdom), which links him to Memory (uncreated Wisdom), which unites him with the divine cosmos (Sophia—Divine Wisdom). Terms such as *forma formans* and *ratio pulchri* originate in an impulse to affirm an artistic doctrine that seems commensurate with Roman Catholicism but that would not force Ivanov to recant symbolism. Ivanov makes this explicit in his entry on symbolism for the Italian encyclopedia: “[O]ne can also define realistic symbolism as ‘the vision of spiritual being in sensual reality, expressed by means of the sensual,’ as Jacques Maritain (*Art et Scolastique*) defines poetry” (*Coll. Works* 2:657, 665).¹⁸ Ivanov’s émigré writings on art reveal a modernist in retreat. The ideas he has discarded are precisely those that held the greatest potential for moving beyond lyric modernism in an account of art’s interaction with reality.

LYRIC CATHOLICISM

Despite the retreat from history in Ivanov’s émigré thought, an elegant balance between lyric enthusiasm and ideological engagement was preserved in his poetry. This balance rested on the clear distinction between mimetic lyrics and their allegorical application in narrative and theory. While his lyric

poems were still geared toward intervening in ritual, Ivanov now refrained from claiming universal significance for these interventions, which remained profoundly personal experiences and could be embedded only in his personal narrative. My analysis of one poignant lyric dating from 1944 demonstrates how Ivanov actively resisted the temptation to provide an allegorical explanation in his lyrics.

In *The Roman Diary of 1944* the poem is dated 2 February, which in the Orthodox Church (according to the Julian calendar) is the feast of Jesus' Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2: 22–40), known in English as Candlemas:

Милы сретенские свечи
И Христы-младенцы в святки;
Дух лаванды в ночь Предтечи,
В праздник Агнии ягнятки;

Благодатной ожерелья —
Нежных *Ave* розы-четки;
В среду заговин, с похмелья,
На главах золы щепотки. . .

Где бормочут по-латыни,
Как-то верится беспечней,
Чем в скитах родной святыни,—
Простодушной, человеческой.

Здесь креста поднять на плечи
Так покорно не умеют,
Как пред Богом наши свечи. . .
На востоке пламенеют.

Здесь не Чаша литургии
Всех зовет в триклиний неба:
С неба Дар Евхаристии
Сходит в мир под видом хлеба.

Пред святыней инославной
Сердце гордое смирилось,
Церкви целой, полнославной
Предвареньем озарилось. . .

То не гул волны хвалынской,—
Слышу гам: «Попал ты в лапы

Лестной ереси латинской,
В невода святого папы». (*Coll. Works* 3:591–92)

[I cherish the Presentation candles,
And the Christ-children after Christmas;
The smell of lavender on Forerunner's eve,
And the lambs on the feast of Agnes;

The necklace of she full of grace—
The rose beads of tender *Aves*;
And ashes on people's brows
On the Wednesday of fast, with a hangover.

It is somehow easier to believe
Where people mumble in Latin
Than in the cloisters of native shrines—
More sincere and more human.

Here they don't know how to raise
The cross on their shoulders as obediently
As our candles burn
Before God in the East.

Here it is not the Chalice of liturgy
That calls everyone to heaven's triclynae:
The Gift of the Eucharist descends
From heaven to earth in the form of bread.

Before a shrine of foreign faith
My proud heart was humbled,
And it was illuminated by the prefiguration
Of the whole Church, in full glory. . .

I hear the roar of a wave of arrogance,¹⁹
Or of gossip: "You have been captured
By the paws of the tempting Latin heresy,
By the nets of the holy father."]

The poem's structure is quite straightforward: two stanzas are devoted to the virtues of everyday Catholicism; three middle stanzas contrast Catholicism and Orthodoxy; the penultimate stanza presents the positive result of the lyrical hero's actions; while the last one notes its negative result—derision by other Orthodox believers.

Taken at face value, the poet expresses his preference for Catholic ritual in terms of personal taste, for which he does not claim universal validity. Latin mumbling seems to him “more sincere and more human” than Slavonic mumbling. Echoing Ivanov’s “Letter to Du Bos,” the phrase “the Church in full glory” (*Tserkov’ polnoslavnaia*) provides a slight pun on the Russian words for “Orthodox Church” (*pravoslavnaia Tserkov’*). This hint of humor is confirmed by Ivanov’s mocking of imagined detractors from the Orthodox Church, who would accuse him of succumbing to the charms of the Latins.

In the *Roman Diary* each poem is dated precisely and simply, as if written in a single sitting and at the spur of momentary inspiration. This reflects the overriding conceit of the work as a lyric *diary* that spontaneously records specific moments throughout the year. In fact, the manuscripts of many poems reveal diligent reworking of each line, sometimes over several days. Later, however, while preparing the book manuscript, Ivanov simplified the dating of the poems, usually choosing the first day he began to work on them.²⁰ The manuscripts show that Ivanov worked on “I cherish the Presentation candles” from 2 to 7 February and that, beginning with a very simple idea, Ivanov first linked this initial intuition with his lyrical myth of the feminine cosmos but then removed the most suggestive cosmological allegories to restore a more forthright statement of personal taste.

The first draft of the poem, dated 2 February, includes just three stanzas, which in amended form eventually ended up in the final draft as stanzas one, three, and seven. From the very beginning, therefore, the poem moved from an expression of Catholic virtues, through a contrast of Catholicism and Orthodoxy, closing with the derision of Ivanov’s imagined critics. On 3 February, after rewriting and typing up this version, Ivanov produced an expanded version consisting of five stanzas. While the poem follows the same progression of themes, the two additional stanzas reveal Ivanov’s thoughts soaring to much more celestial matters than mundane rituals and prayers:

Милы сретенские свечи
И Христы-младенцы в святки;
Дух лаванды в ночь Предтечи,
В праздник Агии ягнятки;

Где бормочут по-латыни,
Как-то верится беспечней,
Чем в скитах родной святыни,—
Простодушной, человеческой.

Не гностической Софии
 В облаках эонов своды,—
 Здесь языческой стихии
 Иорданью светят воды.

С Венценощицей Оранта
 В сердце странника сдружилась,
 Дней грядущих *Una Sancta*
 Полнославно предварилась. . .

Словно гул волны хвалынской
 Слышу гам: «Попал ты в лапы
 Лестной ереси латынской,
 В невода святого Папы».²¹

[I cherish the Presentation candles,
 And the Christ-children after Christmas;
 The smell of lavender on Forerunner's eve,
 And the lambs on the feast of Agnes;

It is somehow easier to believe
 Where people mumble in Latin
 Than in the cloisters of native shrines,—
 More sincere and more human.

The vaulted ceiling does not soar
 In the clouds of the aeons of gnostic Sophia,
 Here the waters of the pagan element
 Shine with the Jordan.

The *Oranta* and the Crown-bearer
 Have reconciled in the pilgrim's heart,
 The *Una Sancta* of future days
 Has been prefigured in full glory.

I hear the roar of a wave of arrogance,
 Or of gossip: "You have been captured
 By the paws of the tempting Latin heresy,
 By the nets of the holy father."]

The two added stanzas require some sorting out. The third stanza appears to contrast the pre-Christian heritage of Orthodoxy and Catholicism as

“Gnostic Sophia” and “pagan waters.” The domed ceilings of Orthodox churches are taken to represent the eternal cosmic aeons of Gnosticism, in which Sophia—Divine Wisdom is the main creative force. Now, however, Ivanov prefers the kind of paganism that was baptized in the waters of the Jordan. This matches Ivanov’s shift from the Hellenism of the Eleusinian Mysteries to that of Justin Martyr.

The fourth stanza of this second version evokes the Orthodox and Catholic images of Mary and claims that both are reconciled in the convert’s heart, in a prefiguration of the unified Church. The Orthodox Mary is *Oranta*, that is, Mary with arms outstretched in the classic attitude of prayer; Orthodoxy is more contemplative, hopeful, and passive. The Catholic Mary, by contrast, is *Regina coeli*, crowned in heavenly glory. In fact, Ivanov had originally denoted the Catholic Mary not as “Crown-bearer” but as “*Militanta*,” which implies the image of the Church militant. This image echoes Ivanov’s “Letter to Du Bos,” where he lamented the weakness of Orthodox Church organization and appealed to church unity in part as a reaction to the political threat of communism (*Coll. Works* 3:422–26).

On 6 February Ivanov returned to the poem and produced a radically expanded third draft that transformed the quatrains into octaves and presented in full both the personal and cosmic aspects of his religious vision, while still retaining the same progression of presentation, contrast, and outcome.

Милы сретенские свечи
И Христы-младенцы в святки;
Дух лаванды в ночь Предтечи,
В праздник Агнии ягнятки;
Роз Марии ожерелья—
Из немолчных *Ave* четки;
В заговины, день похмелья,
На главах золы щепотки.

Где бормочут по-латыни,
Как-то верится беспечней,
Чем в скитах родной святыни,—
Простодушной, человечней.
Там—гностической Софии
В парусах эонов своды;
Здесь—языческой стихии
Иорданью плещут воды.

В сердце странника Оранта
 С Трехвечной помирилась,
 Дней грядущих *Una Sancta*
 Полнославно предварилась. . .
 То не гул волны хвалынской,—
 Слышу гам: Попал ты в лапы
 Лестной ереси латынской,
 В невода святого Папы.²²

[I cherish the Presentation candles,
 And the Christ-children after Christmas;
 The smell of lavender on Forerunner's eve,
 And the lambs on the feast of Agnes;
 The necklace of Mary's roses—
 The beads of unceasing *Aves*;
 On the fast day, a day of hangover,
 Ashes on people's brows.

It is somehow easier to believe
 Where people mumble in Latin
 Than in the cloisters of native shrines—
 More sincere and more human.
 There: the vaults of Gnostic Sophia
 Soar in the sails of the aeons;
 Here: the waters of pagan element
 Splash in the Jordan.

In the pilgrim's heart *Oranta*
 Has reconciled with the Thrice-Crowned,
 The *Una Sancta* of future days
 Is prefigured in full glory. . .
 It is not the roar of a wave of arrogance,
 But of gossip: "You have been captured
 By the paws of the tempting Latin heresy,
 By the nets of the holy Father.]

In this version each stanza establishes direct connections between the poet's personal preferences and their allegorical meaning in Christian cosmology. The paraecclesial customs that he favors in Catholicism now include Mary as the cosmic rose, a central image in Ivanov's theurgic aesthetics. The use

of Latin in church services reflects the classical heritage of Western Christianity, a much more humane aspect of antiquity than Eastern asceticism and gnosticism. In the final stanza the poet ironically suggests that anti-Catholics view the union of the church (and the reconciliation of the various aspects of Mary) as heresy. The originally forthright *statement* is expanded into an allegorical *meditation* with intricate historical and theological layers. While this redaction of the poem remains closely linked to Ivanov's émigré life and to such works as his "Letter to Du Bos," the poem is vintage Ivanov in its cosmic sweep. It gestures toward history—in a very tendentious manner, to be sure—in the way it opposes Eastern and Western Christianity in terms of their respective cultural manifestations, as continuums of cultural representations. But Ivanov also gestures forward to an overcoming of these differences in a fuller manifestation of the church. Despite their distinct heritages, both Sophianic Orthodoxy and classically refined Catholicism seek the earthly incarnation of cosmic unity.

With the next redaction of the poem, however, Ivanov begins to remove the broad cosmic themes and to reduce the opposition of the churches to custom and dogma. Returning to quatrains, Ivanov replaces the lines about Sophia and paganism with a new stanza:

Не вином на литургии
 Дух восхищен в недра неба,—
 К верным дар Евхаристии
 Сходит здесь под видом хлеба.²³

[At the liturgy it is not wine
 That transports the spirit to heaven's womb—
 The gift of the Eucharist descends
 To the faithful here in the form of bread.]

The distinction here is not simply in Eucharistic ritual but also in existential attitude: Ivanov links Orthodoxy with ascent, which in his earlier thought was linked to theomachy. Catholicism, by contrast, is associated with descent, the preferable ethical and existential attitude. Ivanov made further changes to this redaction that had the effect of sharpening the contrasting valorization of the two churches:

Здесь не Чаша литургии
 Всех зовет в триклиний неба:

С неба Дар Евхаристии
Сходит в мір под видом хлеба.²⁴

[Here it is not the Chalice of the liturgy
That calls everyone into heaven's triclynae:
The Gift of the Eucharist descends
From heaven to earth in the form of bread.]

In this, the final version of the quatrain, the Orthodox Eucharistic rite is linked to the pagan triclynae. The final redaction of the poem adds a single ironic stanza suggesting that Eastern piety may not be as sincere as the Roman *docta pietas*, which is founded on a refined and christianized classicism.

Preparing this poem for inclusion in his *Roman Diary*, Ivanov dated it "2 February," thereby masking the complexity of its composition. He was keen to stress that, however tortured the birth of the text, its genesis was instant and immediate and that it belonged to his commemoration of Christ's Presentation in the Temple. In a certain sense, Ivanov resists the temptation to develop the lyric sentiment into an elaborate allegorical myth. However, in the context of the entire *Roman Diary*, it would take its place in a panoply of perspectives and chronologies that together weave the rich tapestry of an entire epoch.

THE ROMAN DIARY OF 1944
"Speaking the common tongue"

The *Roman Diary* consists of 116 short poems written throughout 1944 (with the exception of the first poem, dated 1937) and arranged in chronological order.²⁵ Ivanov, who turned seventy-eight on 28 February 1944, looks back on his life, at the present war raging outside his apartment on the Aventine Hill, and forward to an uncertain future for his children. The overarching themes of the diary—particularly time, tradition, and poetic expression—touch quite directly on the central issues of Ivanov's thought: the presence of God in creation; the status of the individual vis-à-vis the transcendent; and the mediating role of aesthetic activity. The poetics of the *Roman Diary* show this complex work to be the supreme expression of the personalist and hermeneutic philosophy I have traced in previous chapters. A long, lyrical narrative poem, the *Roman Diary* allows the poet-chronicler to measure the passage of biographical and historical time against an eternal standard, and vice versa.

Ivanov's poetic diction in the *Roman Diary* is disarmingly simple, conversational, and even naïvely direct. The first three poems present a series of rhymed couplets, a pattern unusual for Ivanov (an exception is his 1912 poem "The Lips of Dawn"; see chapter 1, "The Tender Mystery"). In the succeeding poems stanzas are sometimes of uneven length, lines are often repeated (as in the responses to Christian hymns), and uncharacteristically prosaic words punctuate typically resplendent images. This exquisite immediacy is combined with a confessional and repentant tone, making the collection even more personal and humane than *The Tender Mystery*, the central image of which is often alluded to. As Ivanov writes in the poem for 13 February: "I am creating the fruit of repentance: I am speaking the common tongue [*prostorech'em*]." ²⁶ The grandiose cosmos of Ivanov's earlier and better-known verse is reduced to the poet's individual communion with select intercessors (ranging from his deceased wives to poets and saints) and cosmic powers (memory, poetry), which are painted with the artist's broad brush and are no longer capitalized as allegories or personified as divinities.

The gain in semantic transparency, however, is countered by the psychological complexity of Ivanov's lyric voice. He no longer conceals his subjective perception of things behind a veil of prophetic authority. His pronouncements are coupled with expressions of doubt; his profession of faith with confession of sins. Far from making his lyrical statements more subjective and arbitrary, this lends Ivanov's poems a basic clarity that resonates with the reader. The primary colors of Ivanov's earlier poetry are refracted by the poet's psyche into a multitude of subtle and nuanced shades, making his world appear more human and more authentic yet also complicating its interpretation.

The central question for me in the *Roman Diary* is whether his more sober and nuanced vision means that he has succeeded in emplotting his ecstatic lyric posture in a narrative sequence that is open to interpretation. My analysis of "I Cherish the Presentation Candles" has shown how Ivanov's lyrics remained linked to the individual's experience of the transcendent in ritual. The danger is that the poet either dissolves into timelessness or retreats into solipsism. For example, the seventh poem for August concludes with the following stanza:

И ныне теснотой укромной,
Заточник вольный, дорожу;
В себе простор, как мир огромный,

Взор обводя, не огляжу;
 И светит памяти бездомной
 Голубизна за Летой темной,—
 И я себе принадлежу. (*Coll. Works* 3:626)

[And now, a voluntary recluse,
 I value my cozy walls;
 Casting my gaze around, I can't embrace
 The expanse within me, as big as the world;
 And the azure beyond the dark Lethe
 Shines to my homeless memory
 And I belong to myself.]

The sense of an individual relationship to eternity is particularly associated with Rome, the Eternal City in which the poet experiences his days as windows onto timelessness. (The very title, *The Roman Diary of 1944*, expresses this dichotomy.)²⁷ In the seventh poem for June, dated 28 June, the arrival of the international Allied forces confirms that “all roads lead into you [*v tebia*], O center [*sredotochie*] of the universe!” (*Coll. Works* 3:616). The tenth poem for July presents a panorama of the city at the height of summer, as seen from Ivanov's apartment (from which Saint Peter's was visible):

Вблизи—Бальбины остов древний.
 И кипарисы, как цари,—
 Подсолнечники, пустыри:
 Смотрит окраина деревней.
 Кольцом соседского жилья
 Пусть на закат простор застроен—
 Все ж из-за кровель и белья
 Я видеть Купол достоин. (*Coll. Works* 3:622)

[Up close is the ancient skeleton of Balbina.
 And the cypresses like emperors
 Sunflowers and empty lots:
 The outskirts look like a village.
 But though the expanse toward the sunset
 Is blocked by a ring of neighboring homes—
 Still, beyond the rooftops and the laundry
 I am found worthy of seeing the Dome.]

Like many of the summer poems,²⁸ this one is dominated by the circle, the image of eternity. Moreover, the “outskirts” and “ring of [...] homes” form a barrier that turns the gaze toward the center circle, the dome of Saint Peter’s. The poet inhabits a timeless zone from which the worries of war and even personal regret are suspended and diminished.

While the idealism of this poem or the sentimentalism of “I Cherish the Presentation Candles” may indeed be characteristic of Ivanov’s Catholicism and some later aesthetic writings, in the *Roman Diary* it is but a single strand in a complex tapestry of motifs and moods. The connection between the constituent poems of the *Roman Diary* is not merely subjective or occasional. As an artistic whole, the *Roman Diary* leads beyond any single theory or apprehension of tradition by positing multiple points of view in dialogue with the community of meanings in tradition. The poems are united by the poet’s voice, but this latter itself evolves and changes throughout the year. The poet’s daily existence and Rome’s eternal expanse are but the extreme points on a continuum of chronologies, which gradually form themselves into a hierarchy and even a narrative.

Chronologies

At least seven levels of chronology can be identified in the collection, which can be arranged in order of increasing sacrality: current events, Ivanov’s biography, literary events, the calendar, the seasons, the zodiac, and church feasts.²⁹ These seven chronologies can be further subdivided into two series: unique events and repeating sequences. The result of their interaction, sometimes within the space of a single poem, is the illumination of historical events by their place in the cyclical calendar, and vice versa. The poet inhabits all levels at once, seeking to define his place in the multilayered texture of spiritual time through the mediation of memory. Moreover, by reprising his biography and stimulating memories of past experiences, the “lyric diary” encapsulates the poet’s spiritual progression from apprenticeship to confident independence and then, at year’s end, hope for inner renewal. In the context of Ivanov’s religious thought, it is particularly striking to see how Christ and the church become increasingly significant for the believer through his existential and hermeneutic searching.

The poet sees his time—1944—as scarred modernity. The seventh poem for June expresses a joy and hope that are quickly eclipsed by the sight of new tanks, “although friendly ones now,” and carousing “Yankees” (*Coll. Works* 3:616). Few poems in Ivanov’s oeuvre can compare with the pessimism of the eighth poem for April:

Различны раньше были меры
 Владыки, воина, жреца,
 Пирата, мастера, гетеры
 И земледельца, и купца.

Теперь один запас понятий,
 Один разменочный язык
 Равняют всех в гражданстве братий;
 Обличья заменил ярлык.

Бьют тем же шаром те же кегли
 Бунтарь, епископ и король,
 Клейма фабричного избегли
 Вы, чья не обуяла соль!

Мир плоско выравнен, а духа
 Единомысленного нет;
 Летит Эриния—Разруха—
 За колесницею побед. (*Coll. Works* 3:606)

[Before there were different measures
 For master, warrior, priest,
 Pirate, craftsman, hetaera
 And farmer, and merchant.

Now there is one store of concepts,
 One convertible language,
 That level everyone in fraternal citizenship;
 The label has replaced faces.

The rebel, bishop and king all throw
 The same ball at the same skittles,
 You, whose salt has still not lost its power,
 Have escaped the factory brand!

The world is leveled flat, but there is no
 Unanimous spirit;
 The Erinye—Destruction—flies
 Behind the chariot of triumphs.]

The poverty of the time affects even the church. Evidently this age is incapable of the kind of theological (or any other) creativity that Ivanov had

anticipated throughout his life. The possibilities for new apprehensions of the divine are discounted. All the more important, therefore, is a new inner assimilation of tradition, of the ages and stages of the multi-storied spiritual world. While Ivanov's historical pessimism does underscore the eschatological orientation of some constituent poems, it also focuses hope on the individual, who is seen as responsible for positive change—at least in his own life. Theology, then becomes a matter of individual interpretation of tradition in the context of each individual life.

Specifically, my analysis of the *Roman Diary* will focus on the manner in which biographical events are correlated with the liturgical calendar. The first feast mentioned is the Catholic feast of All Souls, celebrated on 2 November but introduced as a recollection in the second poem for January, where Ivanov remembers a dream he had two months earlier. He dreamed that a blossoming garden was removed to a morgue, which began to issue forth the floral fragrance:

Редеет сон. В церквах звонят:
 День всех усопших. . . Сердце слышит
 Безмолвный, близкие, привет,
 Пусть ваших лиц пред нами нет, —
 Душа дыханьем вашим дышит. (*Coll. Works* 3:585)

[My dream passes. The churches ring:
 The day of All Souls . . . My heart hears
 Your silent salutation, o my beloved.
 Even if your faces are not before us
 Our souls breathe with your breath.]

The fourth poem for January, written on the Catholic feast of the Epiphany (6 January, which in the Russian Church is Christmas Eve), picks up the theme of remembrance with a bit of apocryphal legend. Ivanov relates that the Star of Bethlehem is the same one that shone over Eden, and that the Magi's vision of the star denotes a vision of paradise regained "around the Infant and Mary." In general terms, then, Ivanov equates the "night of Epiphany" with the "silent salutation" of the dearly departed, both being pledges of cosmic restoration. This memory revivifies the soul and vouchsafes knowledge of the eternal world (586).

At first Ivanov disassociates his memory of the departed from a strictly historical meaning:

Но на родное пепелище
 Любить и плакать не приду:
 Могил я милых не найду
 На перепаханном кладбище. (*Coll. Works* 3:588)

[But I shall not come to my native
 Ruins to love and mourn:
 I would not find the dear tombs
 At the plowed-over cemetery.]

The desecration of his loved ones' graves appears to eliminate them as sources of memory. The poet looks for other ways to commune with tradition, particularly through poetic activity. Language is a medium of memory (the ninth poem for January, dedicated to Pushkin; 589), and the poet primarily "teaches to recall" (the third poem for February; 592). In May the poet is particularly vexed by the memory of his own life, which he likens to being crucified in the flesh (nos. 2 and 5 for May; 609–11). In June the image of crucifixion is portrayed more positively as being nailed to the "Tree of Life" (the first poem for June; 614). June also sees the return of the motif of "the tender paradise, intrinsic to the earth," which after Adam "was covered in a haze that leads to death" (the sixth poem for June; 616). After a mention of the Annunciation in the first poem for March (celebrated 25 March in Orthodoxy; 598), no further liturgical markers are noted until August. The late spring and summer of life are spent in private communion with poetry.

However, the heat of summer leads to a period of suffering, most palpably marked by a major August feast, the Beheading of John the Baptist, who is likened to a lion (Leo) being pulled aside and beheaded by the Virgin (Virgo) (the first poem for August; 622–23).³⁰ In the next poem John the Baptist is joined by the three "Saviour" feasts (The Origin of the Most Holy Wood of the Life-Creating Cross, The Transfiguration, and The Image of Christ the Saviour Not-Made-by-Human-Hands, celebrated in Orthodoxy on 1, 6 and 16 August). Together these feasts present the poet with "an iconostasis of holy suffering" (623). The mention in the second poem for August of Madonna della Neve, a local Roman cult celebrated on 5 August, may seem out of place, but this indicates the biographical connection of the sequence, for the holiday coincided with the birthday of Ivanov's third wife, Vera.³¹ The image of Madonna della Neve is therefore tied to the central theme of rebirth. August was also the month in which Vera died (8 August 1920), as well as the month of the Dormition (15 August). It may be folly to try to

work out this tangle of dates systematically, but the weave of reminiscence and reference in August undoubtedly indicates a time of suffering that promises renewal.

In the third poem for August Ivanov links Vera's death to the poetic drought that ensued. As if in response, the two months following August are the sparsest (seven and six poems, respectively). Moreover, September leads him to doubt the efficacy of poetry (first poem for September):

И жив мой вертоград? . . . Судьба
 Что сохранит из этих звуков? . . .
 Дань лоз остальных в погреба
 Сбирай для памятливых внуков! (*Coll. Works* 3:629)

[And is my paradise still living? . . . What
 Will fate preserve from these my sounds? . . .
 Gather a tribute of remaining vines
 Into the cellar for mindful grandsons!]

October intensifies the nocturnal gloom since it is tied to the death of Ivanov's second wife, Lidia Dmitrievna (mentioned in the first poem for October; 632–33). Here also the darkness begins to lift as Ivanov recalls his beloved wife's final words: "Christ is risen" (sixth poem for October; 635). Reinforcing the implicit theme of "the tender mystery," remembrance of this causes him "to recall among the saints" "tender Tiutchev, the mysterious one of the Night," as well as Fet, and Solovyov—three poets who "intuited the heavenly in the earthly" (third poem for October; 635).

Finally the poet returns to All Souls (1 November):

Усопших день, всех душ поминки,—
 И с разоренных пепелищ
 Несет родня цветов корзинки
 В пустырь поруганных кладбищ.

 Но успокоенным не нужны
 Не мавзолеи, ни цветы.
 Их не повинность немоты,
 Но мысль томит, что *мы* недужны.

 О мертвых память *нам* нужна,
 А им—живых под солнцем радость

Им в Божьей памяти дана
 Неотцветающая младость (*Coll. Works* 3:635–36)

[The day of departed, remembrance of all souls,
 And from the destroyed ruins
 Relatives carry baskets of flowers
 Into the empty plot of desecrated graveyards.

But the rested ones do not need
 Either mausoleums or flowers.
 They are distraught not by their forced muteness
 But by the thought that *we* are ailing.

It's *us* who need memory of the dead,
 While they need the joy of those
 Who live under the sun. In God's memory
 They are given unfading youth.]

In contrast to the first All Souls, the desecration of the graves does not lead the poet to forsake his dearly departed since, having relived their lives and deaths, he has become aware that it is *he* who needs their memory. Finally, the Star of Bethlehem rises again, promising that “to our gaze will be revealed for eternity a single reality—yours” (third poem for December; 642–43). In sum, then, the poet moves from a desire to regain his past, through a period of independent poetic creativity, toward the recognition that he can live only through and by means of his past.

As can be deduced from the foregoing summary, this path from one All Souls to another can be interpreted as the journey of a single soul—that of the poet.³² In January's poems the soul is “nocturnal” (eighth poem for January; 588), seeking to unite with the spirit by adopting the form of a winged cloud (tenth poem for January; 589). The enigmatic twelfth poem for January presents a pregnant woman awaiting the arrival of this “other soul” to “double her muted life with its own.”

Как истончится жизни нить,
 Не так ли зовами и снами
 Жена, беременная нами,
 Захочет нас переманить?

И пред вселеньем в новый дом
 Мы в ней узнаем лик любимый—

И в лоно к ней, в тайник родимый,
Юркнем извилистым ужом? (*Coll. Works* 3:590)

[Just as the thread of life goes bare,
Shall not the Bride, pregnant with us
Decide to tempt us over
By calls and dreams?

And before settling into the new house
We shall recognize in her a beloved image
And into her womb, into this native recess,
We shall slither like a slinked snake.]

Indeed, February is the month of Ivanov's birth, and here we find an image of "a crowd of impatient souls" waiting to be born (595). March, which Ivanov calls "the font of my baptism" and of "regenerative betrayal" (598), extends the image of the soul in two ways. First, March is the month of the Annunciation. Mary's assent to bear Christ, referred to again by a Latin refrain in the first poem for May ("Ecce Ancilla Domini" from Luke 1:38; 609). The soul is called upon to do likewise. A more literary and biographical association is raised by the eighth poem for March, based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: Ivanov's Prospero loses his soul Ariel (601).

Perhaps this latter poem is a warning against what comes to pass in the subsequent months, as the soul drinks from Lethe (602–3) and devotes itself to the Muses (4, 10 April [604, 607]; 3, 6, 7, 10 May [610–13]). As I have already noted, this is accompanied by crucifixion imagery (5 March [600] 5 May [611], 1 June [614], July 6 [619–20]). The soul's efforts to escape from the world lead to painful discord, suffering, and death. August is paradoxically the darkest month.

Two poems in particular confirm this tale of the soul's progress through worldly torments. The eleventh poem for August has two epigraphs from Saint Augustine's *Confessions* and a further quotation is given in the text:

И я был чадо многих слез;
И я под матерним покровом
И взором демонским возрос,
Не выдан ею вражьим ковам.

А после ткач узорных слов,
Я стал, и плоти раб греховной,

И в ересь темную волхвов,
 Был ввержен гордостью духовной.

И я отвечивал: «Иду»,
 От сна воспрянув на ночлеге;
 И, мнится, слышал я в саду
 Свирельный голос: «Tolle, lege». (*Coll. Works* 3:628–29)

[And I was a child of many tears;
 And I grew up beneath maternal protection
 And under a demon's glance,
 But was not betrayed to the enemy's irons.

And then I was a weaver of fine words
 And the slave of sinful flesh,
 And spiritual pride cast me
 Into the Magi's obscure heresy.

And I answered: "I am coming,"
 Having risen from sleep in my nighttime shelter,
 And it seems, I heard in the garden
 The reedlike voice: "Tolle, lege."]

This frank confession, which one would attribute to its literary model if one did not know it to be substantially true, is followed by a poem about the conversion of Saul:

Ты на пути к вратам Дамаска
 Не от чужих ослеп лучей:
 В тебе свершилася развязка
 Борьбы твоей, судьбы твоей.

В твоём Он сердце водворился;
 Душа несла Его, нежна:
 Ты, Савл, свирепый бык, ярился
 Противу Павлова рожна.

И ныне роженицей стонешь,
 В дорожной корчишься пыли.
 Откуда голос?—«Что ты гонишь,
 О Савл, меня с моей земли?» (*Coll. Works* 3:631–32)

[On the road to the gates of Damascus
 You were blinded not by another's ray:
 Your own battle, your own fate
 Reached its conclusion within you.

He took abode in your heart,
 Your soul, tender, bore Him forth:
 You, Saul, a ferocious bull,
 Did battle against Paul's spikes.

And now you groan as if pregnant,
 You writhe in the dust of the road.
 Whence the voice?—"Why, o Saul,
 Do you chase me from my earth?"]

Dated 23 September, this poem is evoked not by the feast of Paul's conversion (30 June in the Catholic Church) but by the soul whose drama is the subject of the *Roman Diary*.

Given that the soul's drama is so closely correlated with the liturgical year, it is surprising that Easter is passed over in silence. In fact, the entire year is a symbolic crucifixion endured by the soul, leading to a symbolic resurrection toward year's end. This event is seen in the sixth poem for October, with Lidia Dmitrievna's last words "Christ is born" (635), and also in the third poem for November, the diptych "The Cypressess," a poem with many echoes in Ivanov's earlier works:

Предвечерний час настанет,
 Мир от буйных игр устанет,—
 В кущах смуглых вдруг проглянет
 И зардеет скрытый жар,
 Будто Ночь завожделет
 Солнца, что дрему лелеет,
 И до звезд в их теле тлеет
 Темным пламенем пожар. (*Coll. Works* 3:637)

[The pre-evening hour will come,
 The world will tire of violent games,—
 In the dark groves a hidden heat
 Will suddenly look out and burn,
 As if the Night has come to desire

The Sun that cultivates sleep,
 And in their body the fire smolders
 Toward the stars in a dark flame.]

This theme culminates in the penultimate poem, based on John 21:7–12, where the disciples encounter the resurrected Christ:

Порывистый, простосердечный,
 Ты мил мне, Петр!—Мечта иль явь?
 —«Он!» шепчет Иоанн. И вplash
 Ты к берегу ринулся, беспечный.
 Там Иисус уж разложил
 Костер, и ждет огонь улова.
 О том, что было с Ним, ни слова:
 Он жив, как прежде с ними жил. (*Coll. Works* 3:644)

[Impulsive, simple-hearted, Peter—
 I cherish you! Are we dreaming or is it real?
 “It’s Him!” John whispers. And you
 Dove in toward the shore, so carefree.
 There Jesus had already made
 A fire; the flame awaits the catch.
 About what happened to Him, not a word:
 He lives just as he lived with them before.]

The soul’s rebirth culminates in a recognition of the resurrected Christ. In a sense, the soul has regained its memory of the cardinal event in history and is now able to orient itself in its own time.

My perforce cursory analysis of selected poems from Ivanov’s *Roman Diary* reveals the work to be a chronicle of the poet’s spiritual life, running from the conception of his soul to his belated remembrance of Christ. Extrapolating from this, one might conclude that in an age bereft of religious creativity, the immersion of the individual into the spiritual history of the world is all that can engender true religious knowledge, both of the self and of God. After all of Ivanov’s fanciful speculations touching upon the farthest recesses of the spiritual cosmos, this may seem an excessively modest conclusion to make. However, whether applied to Catholicism, Orthodoxy, or any other creed, there is no better way to express what Ivanov is capable of granting than the example—and the gift—of remembrance.

Postscript

... this thing of darkness I
Acknowledge mine.

—Prospero, *The Tempest* (5.1.277–78)

In a letter to Viacheslav Ivanov dated 1 April 1915, the priest and philosopher Pavel Florensky wrote: “What does V[iacheslav] I[vanov] really know? A lot; but everything that he truly knows is near the *origin* [*okolo rozhd-eniia*].”¹ This was an expression of both wonder and frustration: wonder at Ivanov’s all-pervading profundity; frustration at his inability or unwillingness to systematize his thought into “a phenomenology of creativity.”²

Ivanov was a religious thinker who shied away from discussing the transcendent yet also refused to settle in the immanent world. Instead, he dwelled at the places where the transcendent makes its entrance: holy places, temples, tragic theatres, but most of all the lyric text. It was out of these texts that he spun mythical narratives and aesthetic theories, never letting them congeal into history or doctrine. The act of creation was for him the imitation of a religious sacrifice. By contrast, all of its intellectual transpositions amounted to dissimulation, understood as the disguise and concealment of the symbolic core. His entire oeuvre depends on its absent center for its air, its nourishment. It bears witness to his faith in the absent divinity, and it forms a posture of faith in the reader, who traces the narratives back to their originary event.

Thus Ivanov’s texts are his masks. He came to understand himself by learning to read the fictional masks as the true dissimulations of an inaccessible being. The mask registers both the absence of the self within and the presence of life encroaching from without. Ivanov’s masks presented

him with a record of his self in its interaction with outside forces. The history of his texts became the basis for the selfhood he projected. Each new act of ecstatic self-comprehension returned him to the source in ever-widening circles of comprehension.

These circles describe a remarkable creative universe that, like a solar nebula, always bore the traces of its violent birth. It is a difficult universe to enter, but its pull will never completely let one go free. My task has been simply to describe one such foray within and to gesture toward the breadth of understanding one can achieve in Ivanov's works.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Ivanov has previously been likened to Prospero alongside Andrei Bely's Ariel. See Georges Nivat, "Prospero et Ariel: Esquisse des rapports d'Andrej Belyj et Vjačeslav Ivanov," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 25, no. 1 (January–March 1984): 19–34.

2. The secret police knew Ivanov as "writer" (*literator*) and "son of a Titular Councilor"; see GARF 102.237.527 ll.226–27 (Osoboe otdelenie 1907), 102.244.20/46/B ll.70, 35 (Osoboe otdelenie 1914).

3. Daria Mikhailovna was the sister of Ivanov's friend Aleksei Dmitrevsky, to whom Ivanov devoted some of his most significant juvenilia, including the Ovid-inspired "Laeta." See Ol'ga Kuznetsova, "Stikhotvornye poslaniiia Viach. I. Ivanova k A. M. Dmitrevskomu," *Gumilevskie chteniia. Materialy Mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii filologov-slavistov. Sankt-Peterburgskii universitet profsoiuzov i Muzei Anny Akhmatovoi v Fontannom dome, 15 apreliia 1996 goda* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta profsoiuzov, 1996), 239–53.

4. Ivanov 1905a. Michael Wachtel (1995a) has documented Hirschfeld's importance in Ivanov's education, and Nikolai Kotrelev (1997:193 n.11) has stressed the symbolic status of Mommsen as Ivanov's "mentor"; cf. Averintsev 2001:34 n.14.

5. See their correspondence in Michael Wachtel, "Die Korrespondenz zwischen Vjačeslav Ivanov und Karl Krumbacher," *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 37, no. 3 (1992): 330–42 (esp. 335–38).

6. Ivanov's 1888 essay "The Jews and Russians" ("Evrei i russkie," published in: N. V. Kotrelev and I. N. Fridman, eds., "[Intellectual'nyi dnevniki. 1888–1889]," *VIAMI* 10–61:30–32) is plainly derivative of Solovyov; see *Coll. Works* 2:751.

7. See the brief comment in Vasily Rudich, "The Tower Builder: The Works and Days of Vyacheslav Ivanov," *Arion*, 3rd ser., 5, no. 3 (winter 1998): 50.

8. Letter of 1 January 1895; RGB 109.17.10 l.10.

9. RGB 109.1.9 l.9; also RGB 109.1.14 ("Dnevnik puteshestviia po Frantsii i Italii [1892]"). See N. V. Kotrelev and L. N. Ivanova, eds., "Viacheslav Ivanov na poroge Rima: 1892 god," *Archivio III*: 7–24; Viacheslav Ivanov, "Volshnebnaiia skrana ITALIA," ed. N. V. Kotrelev, in *Istoriia i poeziia: Perepiska I. M. Grevsa i Viach Ivanova*, eds. G. M.

Bongard-Levin, N. V. Kotrelev, and E. V. Liapustina (Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaia entsiklopedia [ROSSPEN], 2006), 399–426.

10. See Davidson 1989:100–110.

11. See Valerii Briusov, review of Viacheslav Ivanov, *Kormchie zvezdy, Novyi put'*, no. 3 (1903): 213.

12. RGB 109.9.43 l.23–24ob.; here Ivanov expresses his shock at Solovyov's death on 1 August 1900. In a letter to Semyon Vengerov dated 8 October 1905 Ivanov called Solovyov his “literary adviser” (Kuznetsova 1993:90). See also N. V. Kotrelev, “K istorii ‘Kormchikh zvezd,’” *Russkaia mysl'*, no. 3793 (15 September 1989): 11.

13. RGB 109.9.43 l.31.

14. On this incident and on poetic initiation in general, see David Bethea, *Realizing Metaphors: Alexander Pushkin and the Life of the Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998). On the poetry of initiation and *tombeau*, see Lawrence Lipking, *The Life of the Poet: Beginning and Ending Poetic Careers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

15. Obatnin 1994a: 32–34; RGB 109.43.6 ll.31, 41.

16. IRLI 94.76 l.2. It is somewhat surprising that Ivanov found this particular poem to be so original since it seems quite derivative of Balmont's style at the time (cf. “Gimn ogniu,” 1903). On Ivanov and Balmont, see Bird 2000.

17. At the same time Vladimir Lenin (under the pseudonym V. I. Il'in) was reading a course on Marxist agricultural policies, although there is no record of Ivanov ever meeting him; see Iu. S. Vorob'eva, “Russkaia shkola obshchestvennykh nauk v Parizhe,” *Istoricheskie zapiski* 107 (M.: Nauka, 1982): 332–44.

18. Vasily Rozanov provided a wicked account of the evening; see V. V. Rozanov, *Sakharna* (Moscow: Respublika, 1998): 336–39. See also: L. A. Il'iunina, “Tak zhili poety . . .,” in *Russkoe revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie i problemy razvitiia literatury. Mezhevuzovskii sbornik* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 1989), 178–80; and *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiia. Ezhegodnik 1990* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 105–7. In an undated note Ivanov once wrote: “The Jews are God's blood. That is why they are dispersed over the earth, and why they revere the mystery of blood”; RGB 109.4.36. On Ivanov and the Jews, see, in addition to note 6, Simon Markish, “Vjačeslav Ivanov et les juifs,” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 25, no. 1 (January–March 1984): 35–47.

19. See Kuzmin 1998:69–70; Andrei Shishkin, “Simposion na peterburgskoi bashne,” *Russkie piry. Al'manakh “Kanun”* 3 (St. Petersburg: Kanun, 1998), 274.

20. RGB 109.9.38 l.19 (ellipses in original).

21. RGB 109.9.38 l.58ob (emphasis in original).

22. Wittingly or not, Ivanov's Tower shared a common trope with modernists in other countries; see Theodore Ziolkowski, *The View from the Tower: Origins of an Antimodernist Image* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). Ziolkowski mentions Ivanov only in passing (35).

23. See Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, ed. Sears Reynolds Jayne (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1944), 121.

24. N. V. Kotrelev, L. K. Kuvanova, and I. P. Iakir, eds, “Perepiska s S. A. Poliakovym,” *Valerii Briusov i ego korrespondenty [Literaturnoe nasledstvo]*, vol. 98, pt. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1994), 109.

25. See Davidson 1989:110–20. On “Hafiz’s Tavern,” see N. A. Bogomolov, “Peterburgskie gafizity,” *Mikhail Kuzmin: Stat’i i materialy* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 1995), 67–98. For a revealing account of Ivanov’s “Tower,” see Kuzmin 1998:66, 68, 69–71, 72–73, 76, 92–93, 98–99, 106–7, 110–12.

26. See GARF 102.244.20/46/B ll.70–70ob. (Osoboe otdelenie, 1914). The police did not consider Ivanov much of a threat to the established social order. According to this document, in 1914 they were unaware that Ivanov had moved to Moscow and that Lidia Dmitrievna had died in 1907.

27. For the history of the journal and its internal politics, see: A. V. Lavrov, “Zolotoe runo,” *Russkaia literatura i zhurnalistika nachala XX veka. 1905–1917. Burzhuazno-liberal’nye i modernistskie izdaniia*, ed. B. A. Bialik (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 137–73; William Richardson, *Zolotoe runo and Russian Modernism, 1905–10* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1986).

28. On Mystical Anarchism, see Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, “Transcending Politics: Vyacheslav Ivanov’s Visions of *Sobornost’*,” *California Slavic Studies* 14 (1992): 147–70; *ibid.*, “Theatre as Church: The Vision of the Mystical Anarchists,” *Russian History* 4, pt. 2 (1977): 122–41; Gennadii Obatnin, “Neopublikovannye materialy Viach. Ivanova po povodu polemiki o ‘misticheskom anarkhizme,’” *Litsa: Biograficheskii al’manakh* 3 (Moscow and St. Petersburg: Feniks, Atheneum, 1993), 466–77. Curiously, the term “mystical anarchism” was adopted by an actual anarchist party in postrevolutionary Russia, led first by A. A. Karelin (1863–1926) and then by A. A. Solonovich (1887–1937); see V. V. Nalimov, *Kanatokhodets. Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Progress, 1994), 140–70, 303–34. Nalimov denies a genetic connection between these political anarchists and Ivanov’s fellow mystical anarchist Georgy Chulkov (305–6).

29. For an English translation, see Lydia Zinovieva-Annibal, *The Tragic Menagerie*, trans. and with an introduction by Jane Costlow (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1999).

30. See Briusov’s reaction in *LN* 85:696–97.

31. RGB 109.10.3 ll.16, 19ob.

32. In 1917 Balmont confessed: “I am charmed by him, but he is a wise Fox with a fluffy tail”; quoted in A. A. Ninov, ed., “Perepiska s K. D. Bal’montom,” in *Valerii Briusov i ego korrespondenty* [*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, vol. 98, pt. 1] (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 239 n.8. Ivanov incurred similar ad hominem criticism throughout his life; cf. Anna Akhmatova’s view of Ivanov as a “Cagliostro” (Viach. Vs. Ivanov, “Besedy s Annoi Akhmatovoi,” *Vospominaniia ob Anne Akhmatovoi* [Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1991] 473–502:491); Akhmatova claimed she was “born to unmask Vyacheslav Ivanov. He was a great hoaxer [mistifikator], a Count Saint-Germain” (Anatoly Naiman, *Remembering Anna Akhmatova*, introduction by Joseph Brodsky, trans. Wendy Rosslyn [New York: Henry Holt, 1991], 85).

33. Bernard Pares, *My Russian Memoirs* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931) 132. Pares’s return visit in 1908 did not go unnoticed by the Department of Police (GARF 102.237.527 l. 226 [Osoboe otdelenie, 1908]).

34. RGB 109.10.3 ll.58–62.

35. See “Pevuchii osel,” ed. N. A. Bogomolov, *Teatr* 5 (May 1993): 159–91.

36. Quoted in M. Land, A. Tiurin, and G. Cheron, eds., “Pis’ma Maksimiliana Voloshina k A. V. Gol’shtein,” *Zvezda*, no. 4 (1998): 157–58.

37. On Ivanov's various mystical experiences in this period see especially Obatnin 2000:35–102.

38. Ivanov's nicknames at the Tower were Hyperion and Rumi. Hyperion and Diotima are personages in Friedrich Hölderlin's novel *Hyperion* (Davidson 1989:114–15). The question of Hölderlin's influence on Ivanov has never been addressed directly, despite striking similarities between the two poets; see Bird 1996:318.

39. See M. L. Gasparov, "Lektsii Viach. Ivanova o stikhe v Poeticheskoi Akademii 1909 g.," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 10 (1994): 89–106.

40. See E. Orlova, "Nikolai Nedobrovo: Sud'ba i poezii.," *Voprosy literatury* (January–February 1998): 148.

41. In 1917 and 1919 Ivanov wrote that he had completed his "second volume" on Dionysian religion in 1913 and had been seeking to have it published ever since (*Coll. Works* 2:22; Kotrelev 1997:194). The 1923 book, based on the Baku dissertation, is a reworked version of the 1913 manuscript, which in turn had developed out of Ivanov's additions to the original text of *Hellenic Religion*.

42. See Gertsyk 1996:125, 205. Ivanov originally planned to write an "esoteric" book consisting of "twenty three evening Latin revelations, with commentary" (206). On the textological problems of works Ivanov wrote on the basis of occult experiences, see Gennadii Obatnin, "Ob odnoi probleme podgotovki akademicheskogo sobraniia Viach. Ivanova," *Russkii modernizm: Problemy tekstologii* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2001), 201–8.

43. On Mintslova, see Maria Carlson, "Ivanov-Belyj-Minclova: The Mystical Triangle," *CM* 1:63–79; and Bogomolov 1999a:23–110.

44. RGB 109.47.2. See also Vera's diary in Bogomolov 1999a:311–34.

45. The comment appears in a draft of a 1946 essay where Ivanov compares Tolstoy's estate Yasnaya Polyana to Prospero's island; quoted in L. N. Ivanova, "Viacheslav Ivanov: Literaturnyi portret T. L. Sukhotinnoi-Tolstoi (Nezavershennye varianty)," *Russkii literaturnyi portret i retsenziia v XX veke. Kontseptsii i poetika. Sbornik statei i materialov*, ed. V. V. Perkhin (St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, Fakul'tet zhurnalistiki, 2002), 43.

46. While Ivanov was undoubtedly rejuvenated by the birth of his son, he had aged considerably due to the demoralizing situation at home; see Gertsyk 1996:132, 229–30.

47. See A. A. Kondiurina et al., eds., "Perepiska V. I. Ivanova i O. A. Shor," *Archivio III*: 188.

48. *Coll. Works* 2:17–18. Ivanov's work for Mikhail Katkov's conservative newspaper *Russkie vedomosti* was an early taint on his reputation in the eyes of some coevals; see Wachtel and Kuznetsova 1996:365.

49. While Ivanov's position in the 1910s was outwardly more patriotic-Orthodox, Gennady Obatnin has uncovered much evidence of the continuing strong influence of occult ideas (2000:147–70); see also G. V. Obatnin, "K opisaniiu pozitsii Viacheslava Ivanova perioda pervoi mirovoi voiny," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 26 (1997): 148–54; idem, "Shtrikhi k portretu Viach. Ivanova epokhi revoliutsii 1917 goda." *Russkaia literatura* 2 (1997): 224–30.

50. See Robert Bird, "General Introduction," *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Anthology*, trans. and ed. Robert Bird and Boris Jakim (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Press, 1998), 15.

51. RGB 249.3875.61.

52. On Ivanov's role in the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society and the related publishing house Put', see Gollerbakh 2000:121–27 and index.

53. The term “political romanticism” was first used in connection with Ivanov by Guido Carpi (1994:103–6). See especially Schmitt's critique of Novalis, whose political essay “Christendom, or Europe” (Novalis 1997:137–52) was cited at length by Ivanov (*Coll. Works* 4:256–59). In 1907 Ivanov (*Coll. Works* 3:113) echoed Novalis's view that history comprises “crystallizations” of transcendent events (Novalis 1997:148).

54. See especially Lev Shestov's ridicule of Ivanov's inconstancy (1993: 1:268–69, 272–74).

55. During this period Ivanov also published translations of Petrarch (1915) and worked on Dante's lyrics.

56. Aliansky 1969:58. See also: Carol Ueland, “Viacheslav Ivanov's ‘Malicious, Counter-Revolutionary Verses’: *Pesni smutnogo vremeni* Reconsidered,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 26, nos. 1–3 (1992): 77–96; M. A. Kolerov, “‘Liga russkoi kul'tury’ v Moskve (1917),” *De visu*, no.9 (1993): 55–57; Elena Takho-Godi and Viktor Troitskii, “‘Dukhovnaia Rus’—neosushchestvlennaia religiozno-natsional'no-filosofskaia seriia,” *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniia*, no.176 (1997): 127–45. In 1919 Ivanov also belonged to the organization Literaturnyi osobniak; see E. D. Grin'ko, “Dokumenty GARF o deiatel'nosti ob'edineniia ‘Literaturnyi osobniak.’ 1919–1930gg.,” *Otechestvennye arkhivy* 3 (1999): 68–70.

57. See GARF 395.9.314 ll.30b., 800b (staff listings dated 5 August 1919 and 4 October [1919]). For reviews written by Ivanov in this capacity, see K. Iu. Postoutenko, “Tri neizdannye retsenzii V. I. Ivanova,” *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 10 (1994): 237–51.

58. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917–1921* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), 136; see also 131, 143. For memoirs by Ivanov's students at LITO, see: M. L. Gasparov, “Vera Merkur'eva (1876–1943). Stikhi i zhizn',” *Litsa. Biograficheskii al'manakh* 5 (Moscow and St. Petersburg: Feniks, Atheneum, 1994), 5–97; O. A. Mochalova, “O Viacheslave Ivanove: Iz vopominanii,” *Novyi zhurnal* 130 (1978): 150–58.

59. On Ivanov's activities at TEO, see: Leonid Zubarev, “Viacheslav Ivanov v Teatral'nom otdel' Narkomprosa,” *Russkaia filologiia*. 8. *Sbornik nauchnykh rabot molodykh filologov* (Tartu: Tartuskii universitet, 1997), 127–33; “Viacheslav Ivanov i teatral'naia reforma pervykh poslerevoliutsionnykh let,” *Nachalo: Sbornik rabot molodykh uchenykh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Nasledie, 1998), 184–216.

60. *Vestnik teatra*, no. 26 (14–16 May 1919): 4.

61. *Vestnik teatra*, no. 29 (27–31 May and 1 June 1919): 2–3.

62. See Alexandre Gretchaninoff, *My Life* (New York: Coleman-Ross, 1952), 138. On Ivanov's friendship with Balmont at this time, see Bird 2000:72–73. Tsvetaeva entertained a short-lived passion for Ivanov, which she recorded in her notebooks; see Marina Tsvetaeva, *Neizdannoe. Zapisnye knizhki*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Ellis Lak, 2001), 165–73, 178–80, 188–89.

63. GARF 2306.1.318 l.108, 109ob.; cf. GARF 2306.1.321 l.132.

64. The accepted explanation is that Ivanov was granted a visa together with

Balmont, who left first and immediately broke a promise given to Lunacharsky that he would remain loyal to the Soviet government (*LN* 80:210; GARF 2306.1.321 l.260). There is no conclusive proof that the unsubstantiated rumors of Balmont's political betrayal were the deciding factor in canceling the visas of Ivanov, M. A. Artsybashev, Aleksandr Blok (in 1921), and others (*LN* 80:210, 293). In his letter to N. K. Krupskaja dated 18 July 1920, Ivanov lays the blame squarely on Balmont (GARF 130.4.254 ll.35–39), but less than three months later, in a letter to Lunacharsky from Kislovodsk, Ivanov indicates that shaky diplomatic relations with Italy were also a factor in canceling his "mission" to establish a "Studio della civiltà slave" (GARF 2306.1.429 l.111). See R. Bird and E. Ivanova, "Byl li vinoven Bal'mont," *Russkaia literatura*, no. 3 (2004): 55–85.

65. See the protocol of the meeting from 12 August 1920 in GARF 2306.1.319 l.96; see also the letter to the People's Commissariat of Health in GARF 2306.1.322 l.257.

66. See GARF 2306.1.429 l.111–111ob.

67. On Ivanov's life in Baku, see: N. V. Kotrelev, "Viach. Ivanov: professor Bakinskogo universiteta," *Trudy po russkoi i slavianskoi filologii XI: Literaturovedenie, Uchenye zapiski Tartuskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 209 (1968): 326–38; E. A. Millior, "Besedy filosofskie i ne filosofskie," *Vestnik Udmurtskogo universiteta, Spetsial'nyi vypusk* (1995): 11–28; Ivanova 1992:86–119; Altman 1995. Ivanov's stepson, Konstantin Shvarsalon, remarked that in Baku Ivanov had taken "a vow of silence. [. . .] A vow not only of poetic silence but in a profound sense" (Lavrov 1976:150; cf. N. G. Chulkova, "Ty—pamiat' smolknuvshogo slova . . .": Iz vospominanii o Georgii Chulkove," *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniia*, no. 157 [1989]: 149).

68. See *Archivio III*: 49–132.

69. See *LN* 85:542–43; RGALI 237.1.54 l.1–2 (letter to P. S. Kogan dated 12 July 1923).

70. See G. Bongard-Levin, "Neizvestnoe pis'mo Viach. Iv. Ivanova akademiku S. F. Ol'denburgu," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 10 (1994): 255; RGALI 444.1.360 ll.1–2 (letter to P. N. Sakulin dated 18 July 1922).

71. On Ivanov's attempts to emigrate, see Bird 1999b.

72. *Coll. Works* 3:852; see also Ivanova 1992:125; Shor 1971:173.

73. I. V. Gete, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30-ti tomakh. Iubileinoe izdanie*, vol. 2 (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1932): 77–95). Originally Ivanov was listed as a contributing editor to the edition (see RGASPI 142.1.589 l.22; see also his earlier correspondence with Khodasevich in IRLI 607.264). Although Ivanov clearly preferred to participate in Soviet or Soviet-sponsored publications in 1924–30 (see Shishkin 1989:497–98), his 15 May 1926 letter to the editor of the Paris journal *Blagonamerennyi* indicates that he was ready to contribute to émigré undertakings; see Archbishop Ioann (Shakhovskoi), *Biografiia iunosti* (Paris: n.p., 1977), 223; see also Bird 1996:82. Ivanov's poetry and translations continued to appear sporadically in anthologies during the Soviet period, sometimes without attribution.

74. See: Klimoff 1974:95–119; Pamela Davidson, "Hellenism, Culture and Christianity: The Case of Vyacheslav Ivanov and His 'Palinode' of 1927," *Russian Literature and the Classics*, ed. Peter I. Barta with David H. J. Larmour and Paul Allen Miller

(Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996): 83–116. For an indication of how Ivanov's concept of Dionysus changed in emigration, see: Bird 1996:327–28; Klimoff 1988; Bird 1997:84 n.20. The phrase “renunciation of Dionysus” stems from I. N. Golenishchev-Kutuzov's articles (1930a, 1930b) in two of the main organs of Russian emigrés, which, with Ivanov's express leave (Shishkin 1989:494–95), contributed to the creation of a new image for Ivanov in emigration. Still, in 1926 Ivanov delivered a public lecture based on his Baku dissertation (Muratov 1926) and subsequently translated it into German (excerpted in *Castrum Peregrini* 48 [1961]: 7–32; 168–69 [1985]: 96–129).

75. For this reading, see Bird 1997:77–80.

76. In his publication of the Solovyovian formula approved for Ivanov's use, Andrei Shishkin (1997:560–62) concurs with the version of events recounted by Olga Shor and Ivanov's daughter, Lidia, namely, that it *replaced* the disavowal usually pronounced at such rites by those entering the Catholic Church. However, there is no proof that the Commission for Russia of the Congregation for the Eastern Church approved such a substitution, something most unlikely in the conservative and antimodernist age of Pius X. Moreover, the curial approval cited in Shishkin's article postdates the rites by several days.

77. D'iakov Vasilii, *Leonid Fedorov: zhizn' i deiatel'nost'*. (*Sokrashchennaia versiiia.*) (N.P.: n.p., 1992), 59; S. S. Grechishkin and A. V. Lavrov, eds., “Konst. Erberg (K. A. Siunnerberg): “Vospominaniia,” *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo Doma na 1977 god* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1979), 130–31. Siunnerberg's account is imprecise; Fedorov must have attended a meeting of the Society of Lovers of the Artistic Word on 18 February 1912, at which Ivanov read “Some Thoughts about Symbolism” (published as “Thoughts about Symbolism” in *Trudy i dni*, no. 1 (1912): 3–10; *Coll. Works* 2:605–12) and Bely read “Symbolism”; see Blinov 1998. This was Fedorov's third secret trip to Russia (see Cyril Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew (1865–1944)*, trans. and rev. by Serge Keleher [Brian O'Ceileachair] [L'viv: Staurpegiion, 1993]: 280). Perhaps during his meeting with Fedorov Ivanov expressed his view that “Orthodoxy is in general too masculine, or rather it is too feminine and therefore its ideals are excessively masculine. Catholicism is the other way around: it is tied to Rome [masculine gender in Russian], and it deepened and supplemented the Eastern ideal by the doctrine on the Mother of God—*immaculato concepcio*, for example” (quoted in A. El'chaninov, “Vstrechi s Viacheslavom Ivanovym [iz dnevnika 1909–1910 gg.],” *Vestnik RSKhD* 142, no. 3 [1984]: 61). E. Gertsyk claimed that “there was nothing confessional in his Christianity; it was *his*, born from the depths of his experience, and however he may have subsequently defined himself, whether as a heretical gnostic or a Catholic, only this simple kernel was truly joined to his spirit” (1996:130).

78. See the family correspondence from this period in D. Ivanov 1996.

79. “Chetyre pis'ma V. I. Ivanova V. F. Khodasevichu,” ed. Nina Berberova, *Novyi zhurnal* 62 (1960): 285–86.

80. Muratov 1926:3.

81. Previous attempts to land a professorship at Cordova and Cairo had fallen through; see Ivanova 1992:161–62; D. Ivanov 1996:26–27.

82. Ivanova 1992:171–72. For a summary of Ivanov's as yet unpublished lectures,

see: M. dell'Isola, "Il pensiero religioso russo," *Bilychnis*, year 16, fasc. 4, vol. 24, no. 4 (1927): 270–73.

83. B. N. Ternovets, *Pis'ma, dnevniki, stat'i* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1977), 229. On Ivanov's life at the Collegio Borromeo, see *Vjačeslav Ivanov a Pavia*, ed. Fausto Malcovati (Rome: n.p., n.d.). See also *Nuovo Bollettino Borromaico*, no. 29 (December 2000): 7–15; no. 21 (April 1988): 68–74.

84. See Ivanova 1992:225; see also the letter to Ivanov dated 13 November 1937 from the Soviet consul in Italy (RAVI).

85. See Bird 1999b:321.

86. Ivanov later referred to his German translation of this letter as its definitive edition; see Ivanow 1937a.

87. See: Tommaso Gallarati Scotti, "Disputa al 'Borromeo,'" *Interpretazioni e Memorie* (n.p.: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1960), 346–48; Alessandro Pellegrini, "Incontro con Venceslao Ivanov," *Corrente*, 15 April 1941, pp. 2, 5; Cesare Angelini, "Poeta russo a Pavia," *Il piacere della memoria* (Milan: All'insegna del pesce d'oro, 1977), 25–26; Ivanova 1992:180.

88. Quoted in Elda Garetto, ed., "Perepiska Viach. Ivanova i Ol'gi Resnevich-Sin'orelli," *Archivio III*: 471.

89. See *Psaltir'. Na slavianskom i russkom iazykakh* (Rome: Vatikanskaia tipografia, 1950).

90. See Andrei Arkhipov, "Viachslav Ivanov—kommentator Novogo Zaveta. Predvaritel'nye zamechaniia," *Europa Orientalis* 21, no. 1 (2002): 39–94. The best known (partial) reprinting is *Novyi zavet Gospoda nashego Iisusa Khrista v russkom perevode s parallel'nymi mestami i prilozheniiami* (Brussels: Zhizn' s Bogom, 1964).

91. These visiting Russians all left memoirs of their Roman exile. See: Zinaida Gippius, "Poet i tarpeiskaia skala," *Illustrirovannaia Rossiia*, no. 2, 660 (1 January 1938): 2–3 (rpt. in Ivanova 1992:371–73); Boris Zaitsev, "Italiia: Vnov' v Rime," *Russkaia mysl'*, no. 166 (26 August 1949): 8 (included in Boris Zaitsev, "Viacheslav Ivanov," *Dalekoe* [Washington, D.C.: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1965], 48–57; rpt. in Ivanova 1992:329–36); on Nikolai Otsup's poetic memoir, see chapter 7.

92. *Sovremennye zapiski* had previously published poetry by Ivanov without his consent. Il'ia Golenishchev-Kutuzov also included new poems by Ivanov in his two articles on the poet (1930a, 1930b).

93. See Ivanov's Latin poem to Bowra in D. V. Ivanov and A. B. Shishkin, eds., "Viacheslav Ivanov. Iz neopublikovannykh stikhov: Druzheskie poslaniia. Iz neopublikovannykh perevodov. *Dubia*," *Archivio III*: 43.

94. See also an earlier version of the poem entitled "City Dweller" ("Gorozhanin," 1915) in *Coll. Works* 4:42.

1. LYRIC, RITUAL, SYMBOL

1. *SE* 126, 278 n.83; Ivanov 1907. Later, Ivanov removed the quotation from "The Path to Emmaus" (*Coll. Works* 2:77).

2. See, e.g., *SE* 77–78, 262 n.26; *Coll. Works* 2:637–38.

3. Davidson 1989:159. The original letter (RGB 109.9.38 ll.22–23) was missing as of August 2002.

4. See: Fritz Graf, “Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology: New Texts and Old Questions,” *Masks of Dionysus*, ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Faraone (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 239–58; Christoph Riedweg, “Initiation—Tod—Unterwelt: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikationssituation und narrativen Technik der orphisch-bakchischen Goldblättchen,” in *Ansichten griechischer Rituale: Geburtstags-Symposium für Walter Burkert*, ed. Fritz Graf (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1998), 359–98. Gérard Genette has called this phenomenon a “rhetoric of figures”; see his “Figures,” *Figures of Literary Discourse*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 58.

5. Viacheslav Ivanov, “Pered zhertvoi,” *Fakely* 1 (1906): 59–61.

6. [G. I. Chulkov], “Predislovie,” *Fakely* 1 (1906): [3].

7. F. I. Tiutchev, *Lirika*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 148–49. Ivanov developed the image in his narrative poem “The Sun’s Ring” (“Solntsev persten”); see *Coll. Works* 2:472–82.

8. Viacheslav Ivanov, “Fakely: Difiramb,” *Fakely* 1 (1906): 9. In this publication Ivanov’s poem was called “Torches” and lacked the choruses of the Oceanides.

9. See part 1, “Redefining the Family,” in William G. Wagner, *Marriage, Property, and Law in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 59–223. See also Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

10. RGB 109.10.3 l.420b.

11. Ivanov regularly linked the tragic to the representational mode of mimesis. For example, in 1916 he wrote that without catharsis theater is distinguished from the epic only by its “mimeticism” (*Coll. Works* 2:211). However, he leaves open the definition of the representational mode of the epic.

12. Viacheslav Ivanov, review of Tancred de Visan’s *Paysages Introspectifs*, *Vesy* 10 (1905): 65. Cf. *SE* 13, 99; *Coll. Works* 2:537, 90.

13. See Wachtel 1995a:3–18. He has called this phenomenon Ivanov’s “responsive poetics” (1998).

14. On Ivanov’s efforts to create the “third” member of his marriage, see Olga Shor’s commentary to his diaries in *Coll. Works* 2:756–67, 825; see also Bogomolov 1999a: 242.

15. See *Coll. Works* 1:137. The image of the “tender mystery” also appears in Schiller (“Der Homeruskopf als Siegel” [“das zarte Geheimnis”]; Wachtel 1998) and Byron (*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, 3.103 [“tender mystery”]; *The Corsair* 1.14.347 [“tender secret”]). In each case at least one Russian translation of the nineteenth century included the phrase “nezhnaia taina.” The words are also found together in Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*; see K. Lappo-Danilevskij, “Labyrinthe der Intertextualität: Schiller und Vjačeslav Ivanov,” *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 59, no. 2 (2000): 317–46; see also Gertsyk 1996:209. The “tender mystery” also appears in works by Konstantin Balmont (see Bird 2000), Aleksandr Scriabin (in his “Preliminary Act” (published in: “Zapisi A. N. Skriabina,” *Russkie propilei*, ed. M. O. Gershenzon, vol. 6 [Moscow: Izdanie M. & S. Sabashnikovykh, 1919], 209, 240–41), and Valentin Krivich (pseud. of V. I. Annensky; “V sirenevyy chas” [*Solntse Rossii*, no. 48 (1913)]). The image also had an afterlife in Russian philosophy, especially in the works of Pavel Florensky, who relates the image back to Ivanov; see Florensky 1994: 3, pt. 1:134–35.

16. *Zaria* means both dawn and sunset, an ambiguity that is unavoidably lost in my translation. Although the rising sun indicates that dawn is meant here, for Ivanov dawn and sunset were two hypostases of a single cosmic entity.

17. There is, however, a clear intertext for the poem in Balmont's 1901 "The Voice of Sunset" ("Golos zakata"); see Bird 2000:78.

18. *BP* 2:234; corrected according to RGB 109.3.2 l.1.

19. The poem was first published as part of a cycle of ten lyrics under the collective title "My Home: A Mystical Cycle"; see V. Ivanov, "Moi dom: Misticheskii tsikl," *Russkaia mysl'* 9 (1916): 1–7.

20. *Coll. Works* 4:75; text corrected according to RGB 218.136 no.30. For a more detailed analysis of this poem, see Bird 1998.

21. The variants of the handwritten manuscript do not differ significantly; see RAVI, "Rimskii dnevnik," k. 2, p. 1.

22. There is an interesting parallel to this poem in Vincent van Gogh's letter of 28 January 1889 to his brother, Theo. Discussing a version of the painting *La Berceuse*, van Gogh relates: "I have just said to Gauguin that following those intimate talks of ours the idea came to me to paint a picture in such a way that sailors, who are at once children and martyrs, seeing it in the cabin of their Icelandic fishing boat, would feel the old sense of being rocked come over them and remember their own lullabys." *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1959), 129.

2. EPIC, MYTH, ALLEGORY

1. On *Tantalus*, see: G. Chulkov, review of *Severnye tsvety: Assiriiskie*, in *Voprosy zhizni*, no. 6 (May 1905): 171–74; Gertsyuk 1905; Shor 1971:81–84; Hetzer 1972; Toporov 1989:89–111; Borisova 2000:64–69, 74–76; Murašov 1999:208–58. Bely (1965) read *Tantalus* as an allegory for Ivanov's own inner conflict; see Altman 1995:28. See also Davidson 1996:379. On Ivanov's dramaturgy in general, see: Stakhorsky 1991; Borisova 2000; A. L. Porfir'eva, "Viacheslav Ivanov i nekotorye tendentsii razvitiia uslovnogo teatra v 1905–1915 gody," in *Russkii teatr i dramaturgiia, 1907–1917: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Leningrad: Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi institut teatra, muzyki i kinematografii im N. K. Cherkasova, 1988), 37–53; Tomas Venclova, "On Russian Mythological Tragedy: Vjačeslav Ivanov and Marina Cvetaeva," in *Myth in Literature*, ed. Andrej Kodjak, Krystyna Pomorska, and Stephen Rudy (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1985), 89–109 (Russian version in Venclova 1997:141–55).

2. See Hetzer 1972:190.

3. See Viacheslav Ivanov, "Syny Prometeia," *Russkaia mysl'*, no. 1 (1915): 1–36. Among the handful of studies of *Prometheus*, see: Losev 1976; Mureddu 1993; and Borisova 2000:69–76. For related items, see Davidson 1996:375.

4. In his 1906 diary Ivanov noted cryptic "thoughts about dramas" that indicate a planned drama "[a]bout an epic *vita* of Christopher (not a mystery)" (*Coll. Works* 2:752). In 1907 Ivanov called Leonid Andreev's play *The Life of Man* (*Zhizn' cheloveka*) "a tasteless dramatic poem or, if you please, mystery play" (*LN* 85:498–99), but in 1908 Ivanov contrasted modern theater with "the medieval spectacles of universal and holy events as reflected in miniature and purely signifying forms on the

stages of the mystery plays” (*SE* 21; *Coll. Works* 2:546). This vagueness also pervades the sole extended study of Russian symbolist drama and the mystery play; see George Kalbous, *The Plays of the Russian Symbolists* (East Lansing, Mich.: Russian Language Journal, 1982), 10–11, 24–26, 31–56 (with a brief discussion of *Tantalus* as “mythological mystery play” on page 37).

5. *DP* 240. Ivanov quotes Goethe’s letter to Karl Selter of 4 August 1803; see *Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Selter in den Jahren 1799 bis 1832*, ed. Ludwig Geiger (Leipzig: Reclam, n.d.), 77.

6. Solovyov 6:79–80; quoted in Wachtel 1994: 63. See George Steiner’s discussion of *Faust*, Part 2, and Byron’s mysteries as “a kind of dramatic cantata” (208) and “a foreshadowing of Wagnerian opera” (210) in *The Death of Tragedy* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 198–210.

7. On *Infancy*, see: Ueland 1992, 1995; Ternovsky 1987:174–75; Aleksandr Arkhangel’skii, “*Mladenchestvo* Viacheslava Ivanova i filosofii detstva u Borisa Pasternaka,” *CMR*: 285–94; L. K. Dolgoplov, *Poema Bloka i russkaia poezii kontsa XIX–nachala XX vekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 123–26; Michael Wachtel, *The Development of Russian Verse: Meter and Its Meanings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 149–53.

8. The theme of childhood as Eden had two recent precedents: L. D. Zinov’yeva-Annibal’s *Tragic Menagerie* (*Tragicheskii zverinets*; 1907) and Velimir Khlebnikov’s “Menagerie” (“*Zverinets*”; 1909). On the connections between Khlebnikov and Ivanov, see A. E. Parnis, “Viacheslav Ivanov i Khlebnikov,” *RDEK* 277–88.

9. Cf. Fedor Tiutchev’s “How suddenly and brightly” (“*Kak neozhidanno i iarko*,” 1865), which Ivanov often quoted in his essays. See *SE* 6; *Coll. Works* 1:824.

10. The “free-thinking books,” later identified as “Büchner, Moleschott, and Strauss” (*Coll. Works* 1:243), precisely correspond to the books that a certain sub-lieutenant places on ecclesiastical lecterns in place of his icons in Dostoevsky’s *Demons* (Dostoevsky 1972: 10:269).

11. The battle takes place at the foot of a tall staircase, which associates it with Jacob and his “theomachic” struggle with the angel (Gen. 32:24–30).

12. Ueland takes this passage to mean that there were two statues in front of the iconostasis (1995:334–35). This is impossible in a Russian Orthodox church, given the Orthodox ban against religious sculpture, so it must indicate a vision of real angels.

13. Ivanov’s 1937 article “Two Beacons” presents a different interpretation of Pushkin’s poem, according to which the two statues represent two “moral worlds opposed to each other” but united “under the sign of one Beauty,” which is not fully incarnated and therefore “inaccessible in its divine transcendence” (*Coll. Works* 4:334–35).

14. Apropos of *Man*, Andrei Shishkin has written that “the history of the publication of the text merges with the history of the development of the text in its interpretation by the author. The history of the text’s commentary is the history of the text” (Shishkin 1992:53). Indeed, the complex and dense text of *Man* could hardly exist without scholarly commentary; at various times—and with varying degrees of success—it has been annotated by Pavel Florensky, Sergei Averintsev, Olga Shor (Deschartes), and Viacheslav Ivanov himself. The difficulty of interpretation has

been squared (or cubed) by the publication of Ivanov's own translation of the first part into German (Roman Dubrovkin, "Nemetskaia versii melopei 'Chelovek.' Popytka interpretatsii," *CMR* 301–30) and of an Italian translation closely supervised by Ivanov (Fausto Malcovati, "La traduzione italiana de *L'Uomo* di Vjačeslav Ivanov," in *Dalla forma allo spirito: Scritti in onore di Nina Kauchtschischwili*, ed. Rosanna Casari, Ugo Persi, and Gian Piero Peretto (Milan: Edizioni Angelo Guerini, 1993), 109–26; see also idem, "Istoriia perevoda poemy *Chelovek* na ital'ianskii iazyk," *RDEK* 261–66; Ivanova 1992:181–82). Both translations are accompanied by extensive correspondence and other supporting materials. In addition, Ivanov developed similar philosophical ideas in articles from various periods, most notably in his anti- or "transhumanistic" essays "Legion and Sobornost'" (1916), "On the Crisis of Humanism" (1919), and in the neo-Catholic "Christian humanism," which he developed in emigration. Viewed together with its textual history and its paratextual accretions, *Man* becomes a running commentary on Ivanov's evolving worldview after 1915.

15. On the dating of poems, see Kuznetsova 2001:242, 248.

16. On the genre of the garland of sonnets and its connection with Ivanov's "Two Cities," see A. B. Shishkin, "Russkii venok sonetov: istoki, forma i smysl," *Russica Romana* 2 (1995): 200–201.

17. Cf. the songs of the waves in Scriabin's *Preliminary Act*; see Morrison 2002:319–20, 323).

18. Cf. the song of the light shaft or beam in Scriabin's *Preliminary Act* (Morrison 2002:323).

19. See Ivanov's articles "Thou art" (1908; *Coll Works* 3:262–68); "Legion i sobornost'" (1916; 3:253–61); "Lettera ad A. Pelligrini sopra la 'Docta pietas'" (1934; 435–50).

20. B. F. Shletser, "Zapiska B. F. Shletsera o Predvaritel'nom deistvii," *Russkie propilei* 6 (1919): 118.

21. On Scriabin's *Mysterium*, see Morrison 2002:184–241.

22. On Ivanov and Scriabin, see: Marina Kostalevsky, "The Birth of Poetry from the Spirit of Criticism: Ivanov on Skrjabin," *Russian Literature* 44 (1998): 317–29; Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutic Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 308–20; Morrison 2002:189–93, 201.

23. De Schloetzer's account of the genesis of the *Preliminary Act* does not mention Ivanov (Shletser 1919:104). On the *Preliminary Act*, see also: A. Bandura, "O 'Predvaritel'nom deistvii' A. N. Skriabina," *Gosudarstvennyi memorial'nyi muzei A. N. Skriabina: Uchenye zapiski* 1 (1993): 118–26.

24. See Morrison 2002: 205–6; see also Morrison's translation of the *Preliminary Act* (313–47); originally published in M. O. Gershenson, ed., "Zapisi A. N. Skriabina," *Russkie propilei* 6 (1919): 202–47. Scriabin also borrowed images from Ivanov's poetry, most notably that of the "tender mystery."

25. Another instance of Ivanov's defense of Scriabin would be his first poem on Scriabin's death, published only twelve days later, a response to an even earlier memorial by Briusov; see Wachtel 1998. This poem, however, does not bear any direct relation to Scriabin's *Mysterium*.

26. V. I. Ivanov, "Zerkalo iskusstva," *Vestnik teatra* 4 (11 February 1919): 2.

27. RAVI (original in English).

28. Tomas Venclova takes this to symbolize “Christianity replacing paganism or, more precisely, the illumination of pagan symbolism with Christian faith” (1997:125). It can also be taken as a historical reference to the Exaltation of the True Cross by Empress Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, in the early fourth century.

29. This connection was previously noted by Stoinić (1988:158 n.21) and Venclova (1997:121).

30. Cf. Stepun: “Ich glaube, man kann den in rhythmischer Prosa geschriebenen Roman Iwanows als eine stilistisch und inhaltlich ‘verfremdete’ Autobiographie und Ikonographie der russischen Geschichte verstehen” (1964:208).

31. Vuk Karadžić, *Sabrana dela. Knj. 5. Srpske narodne pjesma. Knjiga druga. 1845* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1988), 219–21; quoted in Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 34–35.

32. On the symbiotic relations between Orthodox lands, see Dmitry Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

33. Tomas Venclova lists additional historical references; see 1997:136.

34. In his analysis of Ivanov’s treatment of the Petersburg myth, Sergei Dotsenko (1989) discusses passages from *Svetomir* from a section written by Olga Shor, which may or may not reflect part of Ivanov’s original plan (*Coll. Works* 1:486–87).

35. On the significance of Seraphim of Sarov for *Svetomir* and Ivanov’s historiography in general, see Sergei Dotsenko’s closely argued and penetrating analysis (1996).

36. For an exhaustive and enlightening analysis of Ivanov’s “mythopoesis” in *Svetomir*, see Venclova 1997:122–40.

37. See Dmitrii Bulanin, “*Translatio studii: Put’ k russkim Afinam, Puti i mirazhi russkoi kul’tury* (St. Petersburg: Severo-zapad, 1994), 122–23.

38. *Aeneid* 6.847–53.

39. Sergei Averintsev in *LLR* (662). Cf. Stoinić’s comment: “[T]he heroes of the tale are in a certain sense incarnations of Ivanov’s ideas and conceptions, and in the *Tale* they demonstrate Ivanov’s worldview” (1988:161).

40. On the dating of the essay (published in 1937), see Wachtel 1995b:112.

41. Gorislava was also the nickname of Princess Rogneda, who is mentioned in the Laurentian Chronicle.

42. On the links between *Svetomir* and *Skazanie ob indeiskom tsarstve* (a translation of an apocryphal letter to the Byzantine emperor Manuil), see Venclova 1997:129.

43. I am here reading “unsicheren” for “unsichtbaren” per Wachtel 1995b:205.

44. In general, this throws light on Ivanov’s archaizing poetic style. If Russian modernism saw itself as completing the first period of Russia’s modern history, Ivanov sought to commence the next period by returning to the initial position and reiterating Russia’s entire path of development.

45. E.g., «Какова ж она с виду-то, юже быти мниши блаженной памяти рабу Божию Гориславу?» (*Coll. Works* 1:280). An analysis of the orthography Ivanov used in the manuscript would be needed to gauge the full degree of this linguistic syncretism.

3. IVANOV'S THEORY OF DISCOURSE

1. C. M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism* (New York: Schocken, 1961), 12; emphasis in original.

2. Viacheslav Ivanov, review of *Sémiramis*, by Joséphin Péladan, *Vesy* 9 (1904):54.

3. I owe the formulation “intervention in ritual” to Danielle Allen, who in turn refers to Ralph Ellison’s writings on ritual and on art as a means to “revivify” inherited “traditions and values”; see *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison*, ed. with an introduction by John F. Callahan, preface by Saul Bellow (New York: Modern Library, 1995), 525–34 (cf. 96–99); Danielle Allen, “Ralph Ellison on the Tragi-Comedy of Citizenship,” in *Ralph Ellison and the Raft of Hope: A Political Companion to Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man*, ed. Lucas E. Morel (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 37–57. My usage of the formulation combines the roles of “ritualizing” and “experimental” poetry identified in modernism by Jacob Korg. On the one hand, “Ritual elements entered modern poetry through two channels: the survival in modern forms of ancient practices, and the self-conscious adoption of ritual language and symbols.” On the other hand, citing Renato Poggioli, Korg defines experimentalism as “an expression of [modernism’s] desire to align itself with the modern scientific temper of its time” (*Ritual and Experiment in Modern Poetry* [New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995], 7, 12). In Korg’s terms, I am essentially positing ritual experimentalism and experimental ritualism.

4. On the distinction between solipsistic and religious modernists see Keys 1996:21. Aage A. Hansen-Löve has said about these symbolists that, in their works, “the accepted values are either annihilated or negated, or even totally destroyed” (1991:166).

5. The idea that myth originates as an explanation of the ritual is usually traced to Emile Durkheim (1965:121, 152), but there is no proof that Ivanov was familiar with his work. In his 1918 lectures on “The Philosophy of Cult” Pavel Florensky drew a similar distinction between the liturgy proper and the meanings it accrues: “The system of concepts is originally a system accompanying the cult; they are *myths* that develop out of the cultic action itself, out of the ‘verbal’ ritual, myths that explain the cult or so-called *etiologial* myths, or else auxiliary formulae and terms of liturgy.” Florensky saw these myths as constitutive of *culture*, which he derived etymologically from *cult* (2004:75).

6. Brigitte Peucker, *Lyric Descent in the German Romantic Tradition* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 3.

7. On the connection between the epic and “despotism,” see Ivanov’s essay “The Crisis of Individualism” (“Krizis individualizma”) in *Coll. Works* 1:838; translated as *A Revolution of the Spirit: Crisis of Value in Russia, 1890–1924*, trans. Marian Schwartz and ed. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal and Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 71. Cf. Ivanov’s comment in his essay on Homer: “The development of democracy took the living soil away from the old forms of the epos” (1912:65).

8. A similar relationship can be observed between the three sections of Ivanov’s book on Dostoevsky: “tragedoumena,” “mythologoumena,” and “theologoumena.”

9. Hans-Georg Gadamer’s thesis that modernity is characterized by the victory of “method” over “truth” also addresses this development.

10. V. I. Ivanov, “K voprosu ob organizatsii tvorcheskikh sil narodnogo kolektiva v oblasti khudozhestvennogo deistva,” ed. Robert Bird, *Russkaia literatura*, no. 2 (2006): 189–97.

11. B. Shletser [Boris de Schloezer], “Russkii spor o kul'ture,” *Sovremennnye zapiski*, no. 11 (1922): 199.

12. S. A. Vengerov, “Ivanov (Viacheslav Ivanovich),” *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar*, Dopolnitel'nyi tom, vol. 1a (St. Petersburg: F. A. Brokgauz i I. A. Efron, 1905), 807. In 1905 Ivanov responded to earlier criticism by commenting to Vengerov: “I sincerely hope that I take down the wall which I seem to erect on purpose and artificially between my soul and the soul of my reader” (Kuznetsova 1993: 90).

13. Valerii Briusov, review of *Kormchie zvezdy*, *novyi put'*, no. 3 (1903): 214.

14. Valerii Briusov, *Dnevnik: 1891–1910*, ed. I. M. Briusova (Moscow: Izdanie M. i S. Sabashnikovikh, 1927), 142; idem, “‘O rechi rabskoi': v zashchitu poezii,” *Apollon* 9 (July–August 1910): 31–34.

15. Pamela Davidson, “The Legacy of Poetic Difficulty,” *CMR* 261; idem, “Gumilev's Reviews of Ivanov's *Cor Ardens*,” in *Russian Writers on Russian Writers*, ed. Faith Wigzell (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 51–66.

16. See the articles of 1916 and 1920 in Zhirmunsky 1977:107–110, 134–37; see also Zhirmunsky's 1921 article “Metafora v poetike russkikh simvolistov,” ed. V. V. Zhirmunskaiia-Asvatsaturova, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 35 (1999): 222–47.

17. Exceptions are Ivanov's allegorical readings of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* (*SE* 173–74; *Coll. Works* 3:381; “Klub-masterskaia iskusstv ‘Krasnyi Petukh'” *Vestnik teatra* 3 [8–9 February 1919]: 4) and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (*Coll. Works* 3:474, 476). See also Ivanov's typological discussions of tragedy in “On the Essence of Tragedy” (*Coll. Works* 2:190–204; translation in Senelick 1981: 210–22) and “The Aesthetic Norm of Theater” (*Coll. Works* 2:205–18); and his unfinished essay on fate in Aeschylus and Sophocles (RGB 109.5.25).

18. Cf. *Coll. Works* 2:94.

19. In a later article Ivanov called “mimeticism” the “single method of scenic incarnation,” identifying variants of it, such as “iconographic mimeticism” (in Aeschylus and medieval mystery plays) and “typical mimeticism” (in Sophocles and Shakespeare); *Coll. Works* 2:208–9.

20. Jane Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (New York: Henry Holt, n.d.), 26. For a convenient overview of the writings on tragedy of Nietzsche, the Cambridge School, and subsequent scholars, see Simon Goldhill, “Modern Critical Approaches to Greek Tragedy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 324–47.

21. Ivanov explicitly refers to Veselovsky in his 1911 essay on Dostoevsky (*Coll. Works* 4:407; cf. *FTL* 9). I refer to Veselovsky's lectures from the early 1880s; in his later “Three Chapters from a Historical Poetics” (“Tri glavy iz istoricheskoi poetiki”) Veselovsky de-ritualized his understanding of early lyric poetry, attributing its syncretic character to the need for organizing labor through rhythmic play which thereby provides “psychic-physical catharsis” (1940:201): “The psychic-physical catharsis of play adjusts to the real needs of life. People live by the hunt, prepare for war, and they dance a hunting, military dance” (208). Veselovsky expressed many of the same ideas vis-à-vis the novel in opposition to Friedrich Spielhagen, who

influenced Bakhtin (Brandist 2002:93–4): “Istoriia ili teoriia romana,” *Izbrannye stat'i*, eds. M. P. Alekseev et al. (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1939) 3–22. On the epic see also: Aleksandr Veselovskii, *Izbrannye trudy i pis'ma*, eds. P. R. Zaborov et al. (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1999) 99–117.

22. For a discussion of the distinctions between ritual and drama, see: Simon Goldhill, “The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology,” in *Nothing to Do with Dionysus? Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*, ed. J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 97–129; Rainer Friedrich, “Everything to Do with Dionysos? Ritualism, the Dionysiac, and the Tragic,” in *Tragedy and the Tragic: Greek Theatre and Beyond*, ed. M. S. Silk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 257–83; and Xavier Riu, *Dionysism and Comedy* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 1–3.

23. Viacheslav Ivanov, review of *Stikhi o Prekrasnoi Dame*, by Aleksandr Blok, *Vesy* 11 (1905): 50.

24. My definition owes most to those found in the following sources: Redfield 1994:163–67; Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), xii–xiii; and Florensky 2004:212–15.

25. Ivanov had called the *Iliad* a tragedy as early as 1904; see *HR*2 68 and *RD* 1:207.

26. See *DP* 226. In the same year Ivanov also wrote the essay “Shakespeare and Cervantes,” where he hedges as to whether Shakespeare’s dramas are true tragedies (“in vain would one expect from his tragedies that ‘cleansing’ [catharsis] in which the ancients taught perfect tragedy should blossom in the viewer’s soul”) and adjudges that Cervantes “views life not tragically but epically” (*Coll. Works* 4:105, 107).

27. Cf. Karl Solger’s statement: “Allegory in art is based on conscious, symbolism on unconscious mysticism, and both have their limit, beyond which allegory becomes a mere game of the intellect and symbolism imitation of nature.” Quoted in Wheeler 1984:157; on Solger and the symbol, see also 128–35.

28. For other discussions of the epic in modernism and postmodernism, see: Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World-System from Goethe to Garcia Marquez*, trans. Quintin Hoare (London: Verso, 1996); Frederick T. Griffiths and Stanley J. Rabinowitz, *Novel Epics: Gogol, Dostoevsky, and National Narrative* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1990); and Paul Merchant, *Epic*, Critical Idiom 17 (London: Methuen, 1971). For a useful compendium of critical definitions of the epic, see R. P. Draper, ed., *The Epic: Developments in Criticism: A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

29. Quoted in Andrew Bowie, *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: The Philosophy of German Literary Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 83.

30. For a more recent argument that moves along similar lines, dividing artistic forms into “narrative” and “lyric” (or “diegesis” and “mimesis”), see Karol Berger, *A Theory of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 190–96.

31. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory*, ed. Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 83–85.

32. Belinsky also considered “the epic of our time” to be the “romantic poem,” i.e., the long poems of Byron and Pushkin, which “due to the clear presence of the lyrical element in them should be called *lyric poems*, although they nevertheless belong to the epic genre” (Belinsky 1954: 5:42–43).

33. Dostoevsky, whose authority for Ivanov was almost total, concurred with his teacher Belinsky: “There is not, and cannot be, any epic, indifferent tranquility in our time” (quoted in Jackson 1978:73).

34. In his *Teoriia poezii i prozy: rukovodstvo dlia srednei shkoly i dlia samoobrazovaniia* (2nd ed., Moscow: I. D. Sytin, n.d.), Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii divided the three literary “forms” (lyric, epic, and drama) into two “kinds”—lyric and imagistic [*obraznoe*] (39–53). In a remarkable essay entitled “The Lyric as a Particular Artistic Kind” (“*Lirika kak osobyi vid tvorchestva*,” 1907), he called the lyric “a special ‘spring’ of art,” claiming that “a poet, creating his images and developing them epically or dramatically, was simultaneously under the power of lyric emotion,” which he attributed to rhythm and linked to catharsis. D. I. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3rd ed., vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: Izdanie I. L. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskoi, 1912–14), 163, 171–72.

35. On Veselovsky’s “mixed” or “syncretic” genre, which he later broke into epic, drama, and lyric (understood as literary modes and periods of human consciousness), see Veselovsky 1940:398–400.

36. In a 1928 review of Karl Kerényi’s *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur*, Ivanov comments on the ancient novel: “The authors of romances, insofar as they are narrators of *pathe* [divine passion], therefore have the right to invoke the tragic muse.” *Athenaeum: Studii Periodici di Letteratura e Storia*, n.s., 6, no. 4 (December 1928): 273.

37. In his 1910 article “The Metaphysics of Tragedy: Paul Ernst” Lukács explicitly identifies lyricism with tragedy; see Georg Lukács, *The Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock (London: Merlin Press, 1974), 152–74. This article could have been known to Ivanov in its Russian translation; see Georg Lukach, “Metafizika tragedii,” *Logos* 3 (1912–13): 275–88.

38. Galin Tihanov has argued that the novel effectively replaced drama in Lukács’s terminology (2000:51). However, the novel is not attributed to the dramatic mode. Instead, Lukács sees it as a form of the epic reinvigorated with lyric-tragic energy, much like Ivanov’s concept of Dostoevsky’s “novel-tragedy.” Indeed, as Tihanov notes (57), Lukács would later write extensively on the distinction between the novel and drama.

39. See Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell, with an introduction by Fredric Jameson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962).

40. The inherent problems in Bakhtin’s theory of genre have long been recognized. Todorov felt “malaise” when addressing the topic (1984:85). Evelyn Cobley concludes that “Bakhtin seems to trace a generic tradition and a social history whose links are rarely developed beyond the suggestiveness of analogy”; “Mikhail Bakhtin’s Place in Genre Theory,” *Genre* 21 (fall 1988): 334. Some of this confusion may be explained by the wanton attribution of Medvedev’s book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* to Bakhtin (e.g., Todorov 1984:80–85), but it must be admitted that Bakhtin failed to provide a cogent theory of genre; see Tihanov 2001:71.

41. In an even later formulation Bakhtin identifies two types of discourse as “authoritative” and “internally persuasive,” although he again fails to make clear

that they are mutually dependent, i.e., that discursive authority is bestowed by having been persuasive (1981:342, 345); cf. Brandist 2002:185.

42. Several of Bakhtin's essays, such as "Genres of Discourse," adopt Medvedev's language but lead the argument in a more general linguistic direction, away from aesthetic discourse.

4. CATHARSIS

1. Nietzsche was not the first to use Dionysus as a symbol of modern irrational ideas. See Max L. Baeumer, "Nietzsche and the Tradition of the Dionysian," trans. Timothy F. Sellner, in *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, ed. James C. O'Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner, and Robert M. Helm (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1976) 165–83. On the romantics' conception of Dionysus, see Manfred Frank, *Der kommende Gott* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982). On Ivanov and Nietzsche, see: Stammer 1986; Mueller-Vollmer 1985:1–71.

2. Ivanov was known to refer to the Dionysian religion as "the New Testament of the Hellenes" (*DP* 291); see also Bird 1996:328.

3. A reference to Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, 209–10. On Isis's epithet "myriomys," see Burkert 1987:49–50.

4. See Ivanov's poem "Atlantida" (*Coll. Works* 2:470–71).

5. An allusion to Fedor Tiutchev's 1836 poem "Why are you howling, night wind" ("O chem ty voesh, vetr nochnoi").

6. Ivanov's occasional use of "nonbeing" to denote the chaotic or Dionysian element of self-renunciation refers to its otherness with respect to fallen consciousness and is not to be taken as an ontological definition. Terras (1986:326) also calls Ivanov's cosmology monism. The term *me on* was popularized in Russia by N. M. Minsky in his books *Pri svete sovesti* (1890) and *Religiia budushchego* (1905). In Minsky's own summary one reads: "In Meonism the deity is revealed as the absolutely-One, which, out of love for the world of multiplicity, voluntarily dies, eternally sacrifices itself for the world, and eternally resurrects in this world and in its striving toward the absolutely-One. The deity, when grasped in such a manner, seems more an eternally feminine principle than a masculine one." "Meonizm" N. M. Minskogo v szhatom izlozhenii avtora," *Russkaia literatura XX veka. 1890–1910*, bk. 3, ed. S. A. Vengerov (Moscow: Mir, 1914), 367–68.

7. Although Nietzsche's influence is visible throughout this discussion, it must be noted that Nietzsche himself was inconsistent in his portrayal of individuation, identifying it now as Dionysian (insofar as Dionysus is dissolved into his individual elements), now as Apollonian, insofar as it established and reinforced limits; see Nietzsche 1967:73–74, 143. On individuation, see also 185–88.

8. On the connection between Plato's *Timaeus* and the Orphic cosmology, see Burkert 1987:86.

9. In a letter to Ivanov dated 17 March 1914, Alexander Bakshy noted that Ivanov equivocates by defining the feminine as both unity and division. He also found Ivanov's use of Apollo to be problematic since the god's positive attributes (unity, masculinity) are ultimately incorporated into the Dionysian. See RGB 109.11.71.

10. Although, in a letter to Evsei Shor of 6 August 1933, Ivanov would later regret

the “pure immanentism” (read, “pantheism”) of “Thou art” (Segal 1994:342–43), the very same year he began to rework it for publication in German, making only a slight effort to bring the central idea in line with Christian doctrine.

11. For a detailed discussion of mystical concepts of the soul, many of which were incorporated by Ivanov into his synthetic account, see Louis Dupré, “The Mystical Experience of the Self and Its Philosophical Significance,” *Understanding Mysticism*, ed. Richard Woods (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1980), 449–66.

12. This phrase occurs in a passage absent from the original 1904 publication of the essay “Nietzsche and Dionysus”; cf. “the suffering Comforter” (Gerasimov 1984:191).

13. This is stated explicitly in *The Hellenic Religion*: “The most ancient beliefs did not know male immortal divinity [. . .] the idea of the divinity is an abstraction from the series of divinized sacrificial victims” (HR2 187, 188; cf. RD 1:193).

14. SE 157; *Coll. Works* 3:105; cf. HR2 161 (a passage added after the first publication). Ivanov also mentions the matriarchal theory in his 1919 lecture “On the Origin of Tragedy” (IRLI 607.122 1.34).

15. Lionel Gossman, *Orpheus Philologus: Bachofen versus Mommsen on the Study of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983), 33.

16. Ivanov tacitly acknowledges the cosmological and not strictly aesthetic nature of this construct in his 1913–14 essay “On the Limits of Art” (SE 75; *Coll. Works* 2:634).

17. G. G. Shpet, *Psikhologičeskii sotsial'no-go bytiia: izbrannye psikhologičeskie trudy* (Moscow: Akademiia pedagogičeskikh i sotsial'nykh nauk, Moskovskii psikhologičeskii institut; Voronezh: MODEK, 1996), 399.

18. As early as 1887 Ivanov planned an essay entitled “The Architectural Style of the Future” (“Arkhitekturnyi stil' budushchego”; RGB 109.1.3, ll.160b.–17), which indicates an interest in the theme independent of Nietzsche, whom Ivanov discovered only several years later.

19. For a detailed discussion of Ivanov’s idea of the “synthesis of the arts” and its practical implications for his views on art history, see Grazyna Bobilewicz, *Wyobraznia poetycka Wiczeslaw Iwanow w kregu sztuk* (Warsaw: Polska Akademia nauk, Instytut Slawistyki, 1995).

20. In a 1920 debate entitled “On the Future of Poetry,” Ivanov admitted the contradiction of such prescriptive articles as “Portents and Presentiments,” and then reaffirmed them: “I [. . .] have repeatedly allowed myself [. . .] excursions into this unknown area. I said that poetry would be such and such. This was, of course, a momentary mood, individual traits that were explicable only in the context of the full connection of ideas in which such premonitions of the future were given so prognostically, but I am still responsible for them to a certain degree. [. . .] [W]hat humanity awaits [from poets] is the creation of a great myth that would really show us life in another sense and another harmony, which will respond to the depths of our ultimate needs that have newly re-opened in man.” RGALI f. 225 op. 1 ed. khr. 41 ll. 5, 8.

21. On Ivanov and Wagner, see Rosamund Bartlett’s magisterial *Wagner and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

22. For a somewhat different reading of this passage, see Hansen-Löve 1991:188–89.

23. The word for veil [*pokrov*] is closely associated with the protection of the Virgin Mother, the object of religious veneration in Eastern Orthodoxy. In Nietzsche’s

Birth of Tragedy (§2) it is Apollo who holds out the Gorgon's head to quell Dionysian power.

24. Only Semyon Frank fully appreciated Ivanov's underlying iconoclasm; see Frank 1910:37.

25. Viach. Ivanov, "Estetika i isповedanie," *Vesy* 11 (1908): 48–49; cf. *Coll. Works* 2:571–72.

5. MATHESIS

1. The best summary is provided by Viktor Gofman (1937:64–65).

2. In the original publication of "The Joyful Science and Mindful Joy," which appeared less than two years before "The Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism," Ivanov seems to place himself within the group of artists he calls "the transformers of the world" (Ivanov 1907:49). The phrase was removed in the 1909 republication (cf. *SE* 117, 273 n.27; *Coll. Works* 3:66).

3. The quotation is from Solovyov's "First Speech on Dostoevsky" (1903: 3:174).

4. George Steiner has expressed a similar view that "grammar lives and generates worlds because there is the wager on God." *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 4.

5. The entire poem "Natur und Kunst" (1802), from which "limitation first shows the master" is taken, is a prime illustration of the moderate aesthetic at which Ivanov arrives.

6. On Goethe and Ivanov's symbolism, see Wachtel 1994:62–77.

7. See also *Coll. Works* 4:143, where Ivanov discusses Goethe's "symbolic plant" and Schiller's misunderstanding of the concept as denoting a nonexistent ideal plant.

8. Ivanov's most disparaging comments on the idealist symbolists are contained in M. S. Altman's notes of their conversations (Altman 1995:24–26, 37–38, 66–67, see also index). It must be noted that, although the first publication of Altman's notes had Ivanov saying that Balmont "is not at all a Symbolist" (Altman 1968:312), the definitive edition reads "he is not at all a Decadent" (1995:67). Although Bely is commonly seen as a realistic symbolist (indeed, he coined the term: "Vishnevyyi sad," *Vesy* no. 2 [1904]: 46), John Elsworth notes that his theories do not support such a classification according to Ivanov's system. *Andrey Bely: A Critical Study of the Novels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 34.

9. Viacheslav Ivanov, "O russkoi idee." *Zolotoe runo*, no.1 (1909): 88–90.

10. This is especially true of Mandelshtam; see: Blinov 1988, 1998; Ternovsky 1987:284–85. According to Bely, "Neither acmeism with its later protest against Russian symbolism, nor futurism and imagism—took place outside the limits laid down by the symbolists"; quoted in Keys 1996:12.

11. Ivanov 1914:83. The polemic between Ivanov and Gumilev may have begun with Gumilev's 1909 poem "The Parrot" ("Popugai"), which concludes: "the mystery is ugly [*taina—nekrasiva*]." Ivanov reacted angrily to the poem's parody of his "tender mystery" (1910:40).

12. Avril Pyman ends her *History of Russian Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) at 1910, leaving many of the symbolists' greatest artistic and theoretical achievements beyond the bounds of her account. For other overviews

of the crisis, see: Venclova 1989; 1997:103–16; Kuznetsova 1990; see also Gerald Janecek, “Viacheslav Ivanov’s ‘Alpine Horn’ as a Manifesto of Russian Symbolism,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 30–44.

13. Blok echoed this tripartite chronology in his companion piece to Ivanov’s “Testaments of Symbolism” (Blok 1960:425–36), as well as in the division of his poetry into three “volumes” or periods.

14. The subject of the artistic canon was a topic of heated polemic after Alexandre Benois’s “Artistic Heresies” appeared in the second issue of *Zolotoe runo* for 1906 (80–88); subsequent issues included articles by A. Shervashidse, Maksimilian Voloshin, and Dmitry Filosofov before petering out later that same year. It is notable that this entire polemic centered on the problem of individualism in art, and that Ivanov, who was involved in mystical anarchism at the time, did not directly participate in it. It was only in 1910 that the concept of the canon appeared in Ivanov’s works, whence it was picked up and developed by Vladimir Piast in his article “Nehto o kanone” (*Trudy i dni*, no.1 [1912]: 25–35).

15. Here Ivanov echoes Solovyov’s words at the end of “The General Meaning of Art”: “If it be said that this task exceeds the bounds of art, we reply: who established these bounds?” (1903: 6:83).

16. On “Manner, Persona, and Style” see: Gennadii Obatnin, “Razmyshleniia nad tekstologiei stat’i Viach. Ivanova ‘Manera, litso i stil’,” *Russkii modernizm: problemy tekstologii* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2001), 209–16.

17. The dichotomy of manner and style is characteristic of the aesthetics of the German romantics and as such is dismissed as derivative by such an authority as A. F. Losev (*Problema khudozhestvennogo stilia* [Kiev: Collegium, 1994], 139–40), who ignores the innovative concept of “persona.” A possible source of Ivanov’s innovation is Vassily Kandinsky’s 1911 book *On the Spiritual in Art*, where the artist identifies three stages of “personality,” “style,” and “pure artistry” (1977:33–34).

18. M. Jovanović sees Ivanov’s concept of style, with its personalist connotations, to have been of great importance for Bakhtin’s idea of the author (1993:236–37).

19. Nikolai Berdiaev, “O knige Viach. Ivanova ‘Po zvezdam,’” *Moskovskii ezhenedel’nik*, no. 42 (24 October 1909): 54.

20. Nikolai Berdiaev, “Ocharovaniia otrazhennykh kul’tur,” *Birzhevye vedomosti*, no. 15833 (30 September 1916): 2–3. Berdiaev expressed his criticism in a quite nasty, ad hominem form, particularly in his letters to Ivanov (see Shishkin 1996: 138–40).

21. Ivanov’s articles on Scriabin have a complex textual history (see SE 312 for a partial account). I cite “Scriabin’s View of Art” from the published proofs of Ivanov’s book *Skriabin* (Ivanov 1996) since it is a heavily revised version of the text that was included in *Coll. Works* 3:172–89). For ease of reference I cite “Scriabin and the Spirit of Revolution” from the collected works since the version printed in the 1996 *Skriabin* (63–72) includes only minor changes.

22. See Ivanov’s 1912 note on Orpheus, reprinted in *Coll. Works* 3:704–6. A comprehensive overview of Orpheus in Ivanov’s creative work is provided in Szilárd 2002:54–101; see also Victor Terras, “The Black Sun: Orphic Imagery in the Poetry of Osip Mandelstam,” *Slavic and East European Journal* 45, no. 1 (2001): 51–53.

23. DP 168. Originally published in Ivanov 1913:70–98. Ivanov’s German translation

of this chapter of *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism* is printed in Wjatscheslaw I. Iwanow, “Der Orphische Dionysos,” *Castrum Peregrini* 48 (1961): 7–32.

24. See *HR* 4/2:17.

25. In a remark dating from 1932 Ivanov suggests that he “experienced” first Dionysus, then Apollo, and “the ‘tender mystery’ of birth”; Viach. Ivanov, “Sententsii i fragmenty,” *Archivio III*: 38. This confirms that, like Orpheus, the tender mystery can be seen as a synthesis of Dionysus and Apollo.

26. See Vladimir Marchenkov, “Vladimir Solov’ev and Vjačeslav Ivanov: Two Theurgic Mythosophies,” in *Vladimir Solov’ev: Reconciler and Polemicist*, ed. Wil van den Bercken, Manon de Courten, and Evert van der Zweerde (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 211–21.

27. See Wachtel 1994:64 n.9. Wachtel quotes Zara Mints (Solovyov 1974:24–25) to the effect that Solovyov oscillated between the path of negation and the path of affirmation, to use Charles Williams’s terms for the two interdependent kinds of mysticism. Nowhere, however, did Solovyov place man’s (ethical) labors at the center of his symbolic aesthetics to the extent that Ivanov does.

28. In “Scriabin’s View of Art” Ivanov provides a completely different triad—imagination, inspiration, and intuition—to denote “those stages which, according to the teaching of the mysteries, the initiate passes through on his path of spiritual growth” (*SE* 223; 1996:29–30). These concepts, however, seem specific to the (theosophical) context. The term “learning” (*nauchenie*) occurs again in the 1916 essay “Shakespeare and Cervantes” (*Coll. Works* 4:108).

29. Ivanov’s German translation of this chapter of *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysianism* is printed in Wjatscheslaw I. Iwanow, “Pathos. Katharsis. Tragödie,” *Castrum Peregrini* 168–69 (1985): 96–129.

30. Hans-Robert Jauss, a representative of “reader-response criticism,” presents a more descriptive account consisting of three stages: *poiesis* (creation), *aesthesis* (reception), and *catharsis*. The latter he defines as “the practical employment of the arts for the social functions of conveying, inaugurating, and justifying norms of action,” giving the viewer “aesthetic freedom of judgment by affording him self-enjoyment through the enjoyment of what is other” (1982:35). Cf. Kenneth Burke: “[T]he agent’s action involves a corresponding passion, and from the sufferance of the passion there arises understanding of the act, an understanding that transcends the act[. . .]; the act organizes the opposition. [. . .] [T]he agent thus ‘suffers’ this opposition, and as he learns to take the oppositional motives into account, widening his terminology accordingly, he has arrived at a higher order of understanding” (1969:38–40). Burke formalizes this process into the tripartite *poiema*, *pathema*, *mathema* (67, 241).

31. Cf. the following: “Aristotle, requiring from tragedy ‘the cleansing of feelings,’ speaks in the language of telestics and cathartics, religious disciplines for the healing sanctification of the soul and body” (*DP* 213).

32. In addition to the sources mentioned in the text, see also Theon of Smyrna, *Philosophi platonici expositio rerum mathematicarum ad legendum platonem utilium*, ed. Eduardus Hiller (Leipzig: Teubner, 1878), 14, 20.

33. *SE* 16–17; *Coll. Works* 2:541; cf. 4:628; Obatnin 1994b:167; see also Ivanov 1927. In a private letter Pavel Florensky used the same triad to denote three periods of

his life (“Perepiska P. A. Florenskogo i V. A. Kozhevnikova,” ed. Hegumen Andronik [Trubachev] et al., *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 6 [1991]: 108–9). In a later text Florensky cites Theophylactus of Ochrid’s triad of cleansing–enlightenment–completion (which he renders into Greek as katharsis–mathesis–teleiosis) as a description of the three ranks of holy orders. According to Theophylactus, “Deacons cleanse with the proclamation of the teaching, presbyters enlighten with baptism, and bishops appoint holy orders in the laying on of hands” (2004:152–53). I suspect but cannot confirm a connection between Ivanov’s triad of catharsis–mathesis–praxis and anthroposophy, especially considering the interest “On the Russian Idea” elicited at the Theosophical Society. See Alba [A. A. Kamenskaia], “Russkaia idea,” *Vestnik teosofii* 1 (1910): 1–5, where on page 3 the author mentions the “mystical stages” of cleansing, enlightenment, and power.

34. Ivanov criticizes Aristotle in the following texts: *SE* 61, 104; *Coll. Works* 2:96, 210–11, 218, 618; 4:137, 391. See also Szilárd 2002:151 and Murašov 1999:199–201. Ivanov only agrees with Aristotle’s view that “poetry is closer to philosophy than history” (*Coll. Works* 3:113).

35. In addition to the texts discussed, see *De anima* 416b–417b; cf. Croissant 1932:155, 173–74.

36. See Burkert 1987:69. See also *Peri philosophias* fr. 15 (found in Synesius and Michael Psellus); Croissant 1932:154–55.

37. Ivanov cites the passage as “ten toiuton pathematon katharsin”; see *DP* 213 n.1.

6. PRAXIS

1. On the two ethical stances, see Viacheslav Ivanov, “O liubvi derzaiushchei,” *Fakely* 2 (St. Petersburg: Ory, 1907), 234–35; revised version in *Coll. Works* 3:132–33. Ivanov’s image of Byron has been addressed only briefly by René Wellek (1986:224).

2. In addition to two essays on Byron, Ivanov translated several of his lyrics and the narrative poem *The Island*. He linked the English bard to his own lyrical inspiration by stating that, through Byron, freedom “was ignited in the consciousness as a pilot star [*putevodnoi zvezdoi*], and in hearts as a burning flame [*pylaiushchim ognem*]” (*Coll Works* 4:294); the two metaphors refer to Ivanov’s most prominent collections of lyrics, *Pilot Stars* (1902) and *Cor Ardens* (1911–12). As was noted earlier, the title image of *Tender Mystery* (1913) may also have been inspired by Byron. In addition, Byron’s mystery dramas served as a model for Ivanov’s own dramas, especially *Prometheus*; see *Coll Works* 2:168.

3. Dostoevsky’s fullest depiction of “mangodhood” is the character of Kirillov in *The Demons* (1871–72). For Solovyov the opposition was basic to his philosophy of divine humanity. For a comparative analysis, see Kostalevsky 1997:81–111.

4. Cf. Ivanov’s 1904 “Nietzsche and Dionysus” (*SE* 177–188; *Coll. Works* 1:715–26).

5. Byron was familiar with Orthodox monasticism. Ivanov may have found in passages from *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (e.g., canto 2, stanza 27) a convenient link to his own religious and social theories.

6. In fact, many of Ivanov’s critics, such as Nikolai Berdiaev and Andrei Bely, developed their own more or less anarchic ideals. For instance, Bely’s advocacy of

“synarchy,” “synrhythmia,” and “synergia” as parts of symbolism (1965:471) is reminiscent of Ivanov’s “anarchy” and “mystical energetism.”

7. Ivanov’s most explicit denunciation of capitalism and endorsement of socialism (even “communism”) occurs in the 1908 essay “On Female Dignity” (“O dostoinstve zhenshchiny”; see *Coll. Works* 3:143–44).

8. The classic work on Byron and Pushkin remains V. M. Zhirmunskii, *Bairon i Pushkin. Pushkin i zapadnye literatury* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978). As I briefly discuss above (chapter 3, section “Metaphysics and Music”), Zhirmunsky’s approach was heavily influenced by Ivanov.

9. Ivanov follows the scheme presented by Ivan Kireevsky in his “Nechto o kharaktere poezii Pushkina” (1828). Further in the article Ivanov claims that Pushkin’s Byronism was “abstract and superficial” and posits the powerful influence of Chateaubriand (*Coll. Works* 4:308–9). This perhaps an example of Ivanov’s scholarly judgment correcting his more intuitive generalizations; the latter are more significant for me here.

10. This historical perspective is characteristic of Ivanov’s other literary-historical essays of the 1910s, such as “Goethe on the Border of Two Centuries”; see *Coll. Works* 4:111–56.

11. Marcus Levitt has noted that if, in Dostoevsky’s interpretation, Pushkin was a “pentacostal” event in Russian history (e.g., the revelation of a new era, glossolalia), Dostoevsky’s interpretation, celebration, and reiteration of it assumed messianic proportions (1989:133–35). This certainly was Ivanov’s view.

12. Maria Candida Ghidini recognizes a parallel between Ivanov’s discussion of Dostoevsky’s transforming experience and his own life with Lidia Dmitrievna Zinovyeva-Annibal (1990:178; 1993:198), although it might seem more promising to view her death (rather than their meeting) as such a transforming event for Ivanov.

13. See Jackson 1978:92–123.

14. For a fuller treatment, see Robert Bird, “Understanding Dostoevsky: A Comparison of Russian Hermeneutic Theories,” *Dostoevsky Studies: The Journal of the International Dostoevsky Society*, n.s., 5 (2001): 129–46.

15. For a detailed discussion of themes in this section, see Robert Bird, “Refiguring the Russian Type: Dostoevsky and the Limits of Realism,” in *A New Word on The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. Robert Louis Jackson (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 17–31.

16. The theme of the “positively beautiful man,” as Dostoevsky called Myshkin (1972: 28/2.251), has also been identified by Arkady Dolinin as the common thread in his later novels. See A. S. Dolinin, *F. M. Dostoevskii. Pis'ma. I. 1832–1867* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928), 13. Ivanov’s own reading of this theme had a great influence on the critic Boris Engelgardt, whose seminal work on Dostoevsky’s “ideological novel” contains quite a few passages borrowed from Ivanov’s essays (1995:270–308).

17. The “Excursus” originated as a rebuttal to Sergei Bulgakov’s paper “The Russian Tragedy,” which was read at the Moscow Religious-Philosophical Society. In addition to the published text, I have used a transcript of Ivanov’s original speech (*VIAMI* 64–68).

18. *VIAMI* 67–68. Ivanov here refers to the tale of the Gadarene Demonic (Luke

8:26–35; Mark 5:1–20), which is cited in the novel’s epigraph and mentioned by the character Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky at the end of the novel.

19. Note the concealed usage of “tender mystery” (“samoe neznoe, chto skazal Dostoevskiy o sokrovenneishikh tainikakh”), which is thereby tied to Russia’s anticipation of a new man.

20. René Wellek accuses Ivanov of “arbitrarily allegorizing” Dostoevsky (1986:233). For an opposing view see Terras 1993.

21. For analyses of Ivanov’s “thou art” theory, see: J. D. West, “Thou Art,” *CM* 1:231–38; V. V. Bibikhin, *Uznai sebja* (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1998), 28–42.

22. Note the late (1917) echo of mystical anarchism in this passage.

23. For René Wellek’s critique of Ivanov’s essays on Dostoevsky, see Wellek 1986:225–33.

7. EMIGRATION

1. The most recent English translation is *Correspondence across a Room*, trans. Lisa Sergio (Marlboro, Vt.: Marlboro Press, 1984).

2. P. S. Kogan, “Viacheslav Ivanov and M. O. Gershenzon. *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov*,” *Pechat’ i revoliutsiia*, no. 3 (1921): 223.

3. Viacheslav Ivanov and M. O. Gershenzon, *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov* (Petrograd: Alkonost, 1921), [7].

4. For more on the events of 1920, see Bird 1999b.

5. Robert Louis Jackson, “Ivanov’s Humanism: A Correspondence from Two Corners,” *PCPh* 346–57.

6. On this theme, see Bird 1997.

7. Letter to Abram O. Gershenzon dated 16 April 1920; RGB 746.21.4 l.60b.

8. I have left open the question of Ivanov’s ecumenism. Essentially Ivanov accepts the idea of “Unia,” according to which the Orthodox accept papal authority while preserving the Byzantine rite. The combination of traditional rite and papal authority explains why Ivanov felt he was now breathing with both lungs. Interestingly, Pope John Paul II adopted Ivanov’s imagery of the two “lungs” of the universal Church—with one significant difference: his image of the full Church seems to presume their equal coexistence, supposedly without the submission of the East to papal authority. See John Paul II’s address on Ivanov, reprinted in *Coll. Works* 4:702. For Ivanov’s account of his conversion (contained in a letter to Semyon Frank), see Frank 1963:359–62; additional documentation is provided in Shishkin 1997. For other views of Ivanov’s ecumenism, see: Dimitrij Ivanov Neuvecelle, “Vjaceslav Ivanov: Ou de l’anamnèse universelle dans le Christ comme fondement d’un humanisme slave,” in *The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations: An International Colloquium in the Vatican* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1982), 287–94; Cyril Fotiev, “Ivanov’s Letter to Charles Du Bos: Confessionalism and Christian Unity,” *PCPh* 358–66.

9. For “humanism” in the philological sense, see Ivanov’s comments in the following sources: *SE* 115, 123; *Coll. Works* 3:59, 64, 74, 530–31; 1905a:48; “K voprosu ob orfograficheskoj reforme,” *Voprosy zhizni*, no. 9 (1905): 256.

10. *SE* 171, 167, 171, 172; *Coll. Works* 3:372, 379–80. The term “transhumanism” is based on Dante’s *Paradiso*, canto 1.90.

11. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, rev. ed., ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 245; cf. Bird 1999a:100–101. Ivanov's only mention of Heidegger occurs in his 1934 "Discourse on the Orientation of the Modern Spirit," where he calls Heidegger "the most renowned of contemporary philosophers," who "makes fear the center of his speculations" (*Coll. Works* 3:476; cf. Bird 1999a:87).

12. Arthur Darby Nock, "Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments," in his *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 2:791–820.

13. See, e.g., "Palinodia" (1927; cf. Introduction) and the seventh poem for September in the *Roman Diary*; on the latter, see Dotsenko 1993. For examples of "revisionism" in Ivanov's late lyrics, see Klimoff 1988; cf. Mureddu 1994:295.

14. Viacheslav Ivanov, "Predislovie," in I'ia Golenishchev-Kutuzov, *Pamiat'* (Paris: Parabola, 1935), 12.

15. On Ivanov's concept of inner form and its connections to the Neo-Thomists and others, see Ghidini 1997:159–96.

16. Ivanov had previously mentioned "natura naturata" and "natura naturans" in his 1915 essay on Scriabin; *SE* 215, Ivanov 1996:13. In this same essay he approvingly mentions the scholastic term "transparentia formae" (1996:19), which he illustrates with Dante.

17. See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Nigel Leask (London: J. M. Dent; Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle, 1997), 338, 443.

18. The late (1938–43) essay "Thoughts on Poetry" (*Coll. Works* 3:651–72) is perhaps more satisfying, but here, too, one finds an uneasy conflation of various layers of Ivanov's concepts and texts with scholastic terms (666–69).

19. Although the "wave of arrogance" could also be translated as "the Caspian wave" (the Caspian Sea was known as "Khvalynskoe more" in Old Russia), I have opted for the figurative meaning, which I feel is dominant here.

20. See, e.g., the variants in a typescript of *The Roman Diary* in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (Fedor Stepun Papers, 172.69.2167–68); cf. Bird 1996:314–16.

21. RAVI, "Rimskii dnevnik," box 2, folder 1, p. 44a.

22. RAVI, "Rimskii dnevnik," box 2, folder 1, p. 43.

23. RAVI, "Rimskii dnevnik," box 2, folder 1, p. 45.

24. RAVI, "Rimskii dnevnik," box 2, folder 1, p. 46.

25. The idea of a poetic diary appears to be original with Ivanov—at least in Russian literature. Nikolai Otsup's *Diary in Verse*, while begun before Ivanov's, is more like a continuous monologue, with little attention paid to dates and events. Curiously, when Otsup visited Ivanov in 1944, the latter read him the poems for April from the *Roman Diary* (Shishkin 1997:537). Otsup reciprocated by mentioning Ivanov in his work in progress (Nikolai Otsup, *Dnevnik v stikhakh* [Paris: n.p., 1950], 234). See also poems by A. Chernyi published under the collective title "Iz rimskoi tetradi" (*Poslednie novosti*, 6 November 1928, 3), which provide a personal view of Roman sites quite similar to Ivanov's "Roman Sonnets" and portions of the *Roman Diary*.

26. Still, V. N. Toporov exaggerates when he claims that in the *Roman Diary* "Ivanov betrays his former constant predilection for a forced sound structure of the text and for the creation of anagrammatic structures" (1989:212), and that the book

contrasts with the “complexity and saturated refinement” of Ivanov’s earlier verse (210 n.33). His diction may be simplified, but Ivanov’s poetics remains substantially the same; see Dotsenko 1993.

27. Cf. the variant for March 1: “Zvuk ne tot-zhe l’—Rim i mir” (Bird 1996:315–16); see also Toporov 1989:210).

28. See 8 June and 6 July; *Coll. Works* 3:617, 619–20.

29. For a different treatment of these temporalities, see Lowry Nelson Jr., “Times and Themes in ‘Roman Diary,’” *CM* 1:201–3.

30. On the Orphic connotations of the image of beheading, see Ivanov 1994:113 n.1; Szilárd 2002:54–101.

31. See Ivanov’s poem “Madonna della Neve” in *Coll. Works* 3:521. In a 1927 letter Ivanov gives the feast of Madonna delle Neve and Vera’s birth as 6 August (D. Ivanov, 1996:29). Actually the feast day is 5 August, as Olga Shor notes (*Coll. Works* 3:832, 860).

32. Mureddu (1994: 295) has referred to this “reconstitution of the individual” as “Orphic anamnesis,” which she contrasts with the themes of Platonic and Christian anamnesis in *Roman Diary*.

POSTSCRIPT

1. Hegumen Andronik (Trubachev), D. V. Ivanov, and A. B. Shishkin, eds., “Perepiska Viacheslava Ivanova so sviashchennikom Pavlom Florenskim,” *VIAMI* 93–120:100.

2. *VIAMI* 101.

Bibliography

1. ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

- Archivio III* *Archivio russo-italiano III: Vjačeslav Ivanov—Testi inediti*. Ed. Daniela Rizzi and Andrej Shishkin. Salerno: Europa Orientalis, 2001.
- BP* Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Stikhotvoreniia, poemy, tragediia*. 2 vols. Introduction by A. E. Barzakh, with annotations by R. E. Pomirchii. Biblioteka poeta. St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1995.
- CM* *Cultura e memoria: Atti del terzo Simposio Internazionale dedicato a Vjačeslav Ivanov*. 2 vols. Ed. Fausto Malcovati. Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Pavia, 45. Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1988.
- CMR* *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 35 (1994).
- Coll. Works* Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Sobranie sochinenii*. 4 vols. Brussels: Foyer oriental chrétien, 1971–87.
- DP* Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Dionis i pradiionisiistvo*. St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1994.
- FTL* Ivanov, Vyacheslav. *Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*. Introduction by Robert Louis Jackson. Wolfeboro, N.H.: Longwood Academic, 1989.
- GARF* Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Moscow).
- HR1* "Ellinskaia religia stradaiushchego boga." *Novyi put'* 1904. 1: January, 110–34; 2: February, 48–78; 3: March, 38–61; 4/1: May, 28–40; 4/2: August, 17–26; 5: September, 47–70.
- HR2* Ellinskaia religia stradaiushchego boga. Unpublished book proofs. 1917. Held at RAVI.
- IRLI* Institut russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii dom, St. Petersburg).
- LLR* Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Lik i lichiny Rossii: Estetika i literaturnaia teoriia*. Ed. S. S. Averintsev. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1995.
- LN 80* *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*. Vol. 80: V. I. Lenin i A. V. Lunacharskii: *Perepiska. Doklady. Dokumenty*. Ed. I. S. Zil'bershtein and A. A. Solov'ev. Moscow: Nauka, 1971.

- LN 85 Grechishkin, S. S., N. V. Kotrelev, , and A. V. Lavrov, eds. "Perepiska s Viacheslavom Ivanovym (1903–1923)." *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*. Vol. 85: *Valerii Briusov*. Ed. V. R. Shcherbina, 428–545. Moscow: Nauka, 1976.
- MI *Viacheslav Ivanov: Materialy i issledovaniia*. Eds. V. A. Keldysh and I. V. Koretskaia. Moscow: Nasledie, 1996.
- PCPh *Vyacheslav Ivanov: Poet, Critic and Philosopher*. Eds. Robert Louis Jackson and Lowry Nelson Jr. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1986.
- RAVI Rome Archive of Viacheslav Ivanov.
- RD "Religiia Dionisa. Ee proiskhozhdenie i vliianie." *Voprosy zhizni*. 1905. 1: June, 185–220; 2: July, 122–48.
- RDEK *Vjačeslav Ivanov: Russischer Dichter—europäischer Kulturphilosoph*. Beiträge des IV. Internationalen Vjačeslav -Ivanov-Symposiums. Ed. Wilfried Potthof. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter.
- RGALI Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (Moscow).
- RGASPI Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (Moscow).
- RGB Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka (Moscow).
- RNB Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka (St. Petersburg).
- RV Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Rodnoe i vselenskoe: stat'i (1914–1916)*. Moscow: Izdanie G. A. Lemana i S. I. Sakharova, 1917.
- SE Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Selected Essays*. Ed. Michael Wachtel. Trans. Robert Bird. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001.
- VIAMI Viacheslav Ivanov: Arkhivnye materialy i issledovaniia. Ed. A. A. Gogotishvili and A. T. Kazarian. Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1999.

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- 130.4.254: Ivanov's letter to N. K. Krupskaia dated 18 July 1920
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- 2306.1.318, 319, 321, 322, 429: Materials for the protocols of meetings of the Sovet narodnykh komissarov (1920)

IRLI

- 94.76: Ivanov's letters to L. D. Zinovyeva-Annibal (1903)
- 607.264: Letters of V. F. Khodasevich to Ivanov (1919)

RAVI

- "Rimskii dnevnik": k.2 p.1
- Correspondence with Sir C. M. Bowra
- Letter from Soviet consul dated 13 November 1937

RGALI

- 225.1.41: Ivanov's remarks at a dispute "O budushchem poezii"
 237.1.54: Ivanov's letters to P. S. Kogan (1923–28)
 444.1.360: Ivanov's letter to P. N. Sakulin (1922–23)

RGASPI

- 142.1.589: Materials on Soviet edition of Goethe

RGB

- 109.1.3: "Arkhitekturnyi stil' budushchego"
 109.1.9, 14: Ivanov's travel diaries (1892)
 109.3.2: Manuscripts of Ivanov's poem "Primitiv" (1912)
 109.4.6: Drafts for lyric scenes on stories from Scripture
 109.5.25: Ivanov's unfinished essay on Sophocles and Aeschylus
 109.9.38, 43; 109.10.3: Ivanov's letters to L. D. Zinovyeva-Annibal (1895, 1900, 1906)
 109.11.71: Letters to Ivanov from Alexander Bakshy (1914)
 109.17.10: Ivanov's letters to I. M. Grevs (1894–1918)
 109.43.6: Ivanov's letters to M. M. Zamiatnina (1902)
 109.47.2: V. K. Ivanova's memoir on the death of L. D. Zinovyeva-Annibal (ca. 1910)
 218.136, no. 30: Ivanov's poem "Est' v Optinoi pustyni . . ." (1918)
 249.M3875.61: Ivanov's letter to V. V. Rozanov dated 5 March 1909
 746.51.10: Typescript on Socrates and method.

RNB

- 322.6: S. P. Kablukov's diary (1909)

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