

ACMEIST MYTHOPOETICS: NIKOLAI GUMILEV, VIACHESLAV IVANOV, AND “EIDOLOGY”

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Recalling her first husband Nikolai Gumilev, Anna Akhmatova once said, “Vsego nuzhnee poniat' kharakter Gumileva i samoe glavnoe v etom kharaktere: mal'chikom on poveril v simvolizm, kak liudi veriat v Boga [It's most necessary of all to understand Gumilev's character and the most important element of this character: as a boy he came to believe in Symbolism the way people believe in God]” (cited in Davidson 64).¹ In this instance, Akhmatova should be taken at her word. To understand Nikolai Gumilev's conception of Acmeism, it is essential to examine his relationship to the Symbolists, and in particular to Viacheslav Ivanov, who acted as his mentor for a brief but crucial period immediately before the beginning of this movement.²

The foundations of Acmeism lie in the rift that occurred between Gumilev and Ivanov in 1911. Before this conflict, Gumilev had begun moving away from his former mentor, Valery Briusov, turning instead to Briusov's rival Viacheslav Ivanov and his Petersburg circle. Briusov himself had introduced Ivanov's poetry to Gumilev, suggesting that he study it to improve his understanding of metrics. Gumilev admired Ivanov's command of the qualities he most feared his own poetry lacked, formal virtuosity and philosophically sophisticated content. He also enjoyed the bohemian society that his charismatic new teacher kept. Despite reassurances to Briusov, the young poet quickly came under the sway of “Viacheslav the Magnificent” (Gumilev 1986, 253–61).

Ivanov's diaries from the year 1909 note that the young poet was a frequent visitor to his “Tower” apartment, which served as an important gathering

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1. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

2. Important preliminary work has already been done by Michael Basker 1994, Pamela Davidson, and Valerii Blinov.

place for the literary avant-garde.³ He writes of Gumilev with affection: “Den' byl sovershenno besplodnyi dlia raboty, rano pervannoi priedzdom Gumileva, kotoryi ostalsia obedat'. Ia liubliu ego i okhotno govoril s nim o mnogom i chital emu stikhi [The day was completely fruitless for work, [which was] interrupted early by the arrival of Gumilev, who stayed for lunch. I love him and gladly spoke with him at length and read him poems]” (Ivanov 1974, 782). Gumilev also actively participated in the *Obshchestvo Revnitelei Khudozhestvennogo Slova* [The Society for the Adherents of the Artistic Word], a society that grew out of the informal lectures at Ivanov's apartment known as the “Academy.”⁴ Correspondence from this period suggests that Ivanov had even seriously considered joining Gumilev on one of his famous journeys to Africa, although, to the younger poet's disappointment, he never did so (Gumilev 1986, 253–61). After Gumilev's death, Ivanov told Moisei Altman, “Ia ochen' liubil Gumileva, eto pokazyvaet vsia moia zhizn' [I loved Gumilev very much, my whole life shows this]” (Altman 1995, 89).

Gumilev and Ivanov's friendship exhibited signs of strain from the very beginning, however. Though Ivanov expressed admiration for Gumilev as a poet, the issues plaguing his interactions with the younger generation of writers during this period—mainly relating to his theoretical intractability and authoritarian attitude—affected his relationship with Gumilev as well. A case in point is the set of “response sonnets” they exchanged in 1909, Gumilev's “Sudnyi den'” [Judgment Day] and Ivanov's “Sonetto di risposta” [Response Sonnet]. These sonnets were part of a literary game, a variation of one played by thirteenth-century Italian poets in which one wrote a sonnet with the rhyming words left blank, and the second guessed the rhyming words and wrote them into a second sonnet. As Mikhail Gasparov points out, Ivanov's response to Gumilev subtly corrected one of his rhymes (Gasparov 1993, 209–10).⁵ Gumilev obviously admired his teacher's technical prowess and regularly attended his classes on poetics.⁶ In this sense, Gumilev's sonnet could be read as a challenge, and Ivanov's as a reminder of his own superiority in this area; the exchange itself highlights the competitive dynamics of their master-student relationship.

This incident was hardly isolated. Ever since the 1907 death of Lidia Zinovieva-Annibal, Ivanov's second wife, artistic collaborator, and muse, he had

3. Andrei Bely's memoirs (1933, 24) suggest that the concept of Acmeism was born in Viacheslav Ivanov's apartment (see Timenchik 1974, 40). Kornei Chukovsky also recollects that as a young poet Gumilev was accepted into Ivanov's circle “radushno, kak rodnogo” [“joyfully, like kin”] (Chukovskii 2001, 440).

4. See Timenchik's 1989 article for more, including partial transcripts of the discussions.

5. The editors of Gumilev's *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* commentary read Ivanov's response as an improvement rather than a correction (Gumilev 2007, 415).

6. The “response sonnets” were even discussed publicly in this forum. See Gasparov 1994, especially 95–96. For the importance Gumilev placed on his own mastery of form, see Gorodetsky's memoirs reprinted in Timenchik 1974, 28.

been seriously depressed. Though generally a patient mentor, Ivanov permitted himself more frequent ideological criticisms of new poets, as he did in the spring of 1911 when Gumilev presented his recently composed “Bludnyi syn” [Prodigal Son] to the audience at the Tower. By this point, Gumilev and Ivanov’s relationship had undergone a number of strains, though Gumilev had attempted to remain on good terms (Gumilev 1986, 253–61). This event, however, essentially ended those efforts. Michael Basker records that Ivanov responded to the new work with “unprecedented ferocity” (1994, 502).⁷ “Though no details are available,” he writes, “it is known that the issue under debate was ‘the limits to the freedom with which a poet might work traditional themes’” (ibid.). Gumilev’s poem made some key changes to the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son when he replaced the titular character’s brother with a sister, who presents him unexpectedly with a bride, as well as a feast, at the very end.⁸ By exchanging the jealous brother for a mysterious sign of divine grace in female form, Gumilev appears to adjust the original parable to make it more consistent with Ivanov’s conception of human salvation through submission to the divine, which, following the Symbolist conception of Sophia and the *Prekrasnaia Dama* [Beautiful Lady], often took on the appearance of a woman. By re-reading this parable in Symbolist terms, Gumilev tried to emulate his new mentor.

From Ivanov’s point of view, however, Gumilev had overstepped the bounds of artistic license into the realm of heresy. Ivanov recognized that antiquity produced many valid versions of particular myths. However, he frequently disapproved of adjustments that contemporary writers, whose goals were aesthetic rather than theurgic, introduced to ancient myths, and presumably he placed Gumilev’s changes in this category. Ivanov’s censure struck a serious blow to Gumilev. It was not long after this event, and probably in response to it, that he and Sergei Gorodetsky, another of Ivanov’s estranged protégés, began to organize the Acmeist movement.

Therefore it makes sense to interpret their first manifestos in terms of this polemic with Ivanov. A case in point is the word “eidologoiia,” or “eidology” in English, a term coined by the Poets’ Guild (Gumilev 2006, 495).⁹ Gumilev used it repeatedly over the course of his career, beginning with a 1913

7. Basker quotes the very brief minutes of this meeting published by V. A. Chudovskii in *Russkaia khudozhestvennaia letopis’*. The original text can be found in Gumilev 1991, I: 509. Nikolai Bogomolov, the author of this commentary, also discusses Akhmatova’s record of the event, which is generally consistent with Chudovskii’s.

8. Bogomolov notes that Gumilev conflated narratives from different books of the Bible in this piece (Gumilev 1991a, I: 509). Further discussion of this poem, including summaries of several intriguing interpretations that cast Gumilev as the prodigal son and Ivanov as his father, may be found in Gumilev 1998, 231–35.

9. Gorodetsky used the term, too, defining it in a speech from November 5, 1912, as a “sistema obrazov, prisushchaia kazhdoi vyravzvsheisia poeticheskoi individualnosti [a system of images inherent in every fully established poetic individuality]” (Gumilev 1991b, 3: 261).

review in the journal *Apollon* and continuing up to the last year of his life, 1921, where it appears in two manuscripts that were later published as articles—"Chitatei" ([The Reader], published posthumously) and "Anatomiia stikhovoreniia" [Anatomy of a Poem]—as well as in his lecture notes and in the unpublished notes for a book, *Teoriia integral'noi poetiki* [*Theory of Integral Poetics*]. While it is clear that he considered eidology important—in his later writings, he consistently lists it together with rhythmic, stylistic, and composition as one of the four essential components of poetry—its exact meaning has puzzled both Gumilev's contemporaries and later critics. The brief explanation he offered at the beginning of his lecture notes—"the study of images [nauka obrazov]" (Gumilev 2006, 495)—seems simple, but it later became clear that eidology meant more than that. "Anatomy of a Poem" explains that "eidologiiiia podvodit itog temam poezii i vozmozhnym otosheniim k etim temam poeta [Eidology sums up the themes of poetry and the poet's potential relations to these themes]" and "neposredstvenno primykaet k poeticheskoi psikhologii [directly connects to poetic psychology]" (Gumilev 2006, 242). The notes to his *Theory of Integral Poetics* complicates this term even further: "Poniatie eidologii: obrazy, vybiraemye potom, i otosheniie k nim. Poznanie poeta: dvenadtsat' bogov i dve pauzy. Dionis i Buddha. Tri podrazdeleniia: golova, serdtse, chrevo. Chetyre kasty (shest' vidov). Otosheniie k miru, vytekaiushchee takim obrazom [The concept of eidology: the images chosen by the poet, and [his] relationship to them. Knowledge of the poet: twelve gods and two intervals. Dionysus and Buddha. Three subdivisions: head, heart, womb. Four castes (six kinds). The relationship to the world that thus ensues]" (Gumilev 1991b, 3: 229). The section on eidology that appears later in his notes for his curriculum of lectures is no less mystifying, repeating many of the elements mentioned in the notes for *Integral Poetics* and introducing new concepts, like "vremia i prostanstvo i bor'ba s nimi [time and space and the battle with them]" and "vozmozhnost' poeticheskoi mashiny [the possibility of a poetic machine]" (Gumilev 1991b, 3: 230).¹⁰

Scholars have elucidated some of the ambiguous elements of Gumilev's eidological project—the system of gods and castes, for example, refers to an elaborate schema Gumilev developed for categorizing poetic personalities (Gumilev 1991b, 3: 330)—but its general meaning and origin have remained unclear. Part of the reason for this may be that Gumilev's opponents, and in par-

10. The longest extant description of eidology can be found in a separate set of lecture notes found in L. Luknitsky's archive. This text does not discuss myth, but it is still polemical: it focuses on the personalities expressed in a given poetic work, and, with a glance back toward Acmeism, laments that the "nadzemnyi mir slishkom izpol'zovan v poezii [the celestial world is too [frequently] used in poetry]" and that the "podzemnyi mir [eshche ochen'] malo razrabotan v poezii [the world below [is still very] little worked with in poetry]" (Zobnin 92). For more, see the "Eidologia" section in Zobnin's article, 87–90.

ticular Blok, considered eidology the epitome of Gumilev's Salieri-like efforts to destroy poetry by reducing it to a pseudo-formalist systematization (Gumilev 2006, 495).¹¹ Such opponents were unlikely to devote much effort to the elucidation of their enemy's program. Another source of confusion was the artificiality of the word itself. Blok described eidology as "dlia menia neponiatno, kak nazvanie chetvertogo kushan'ia dlia Truffal'dino v komedii Goldoni 'Sluga dvukh gospod' [incomprehensible to me, like the name of Truffaldino's fourth dish in the Goldoni comedy 'Servant of Two Masters']" (Blok 1996, 19). Some conflated it with the German phenomenological term "eidology," in spite of the fact that Gumilev's German was famously terrible (Eshelman 1993, 62).

Of course the etymological root of "eidology," as several scholars have now pointed out (see, for example, Doherty 127, Gumilev 2006, 495, and Shelkonikov 9–10), is not *eidōs*—Greek for "idol" or "image," the root of "eidology"—but a similar word, *eidolon*, which also means image, but carries a secondary meaning of "spirit" or "shade." This term was used widely in the Silver Age, especially among Theosophists and Symbolists, to refer to powerful or iconic images.¹² It was also important to one of their touchstones, Plato, who gave the word negative connotations by using it to refer to falsified images propagated by sophists in *The Sophist*.¹³ In *The Birth of Tragedy*, one of the period's most influential texts, Nietzsche notes that "the Platonic distinction and evaluation of the 'idea' and 'idol,' the mere image, is very deeply rooted in the Hellenic character" and goes on to recognize the same distinction in his argument (73).¹⁴ Moreover, the Greek authors Stesichorus,

11. Later, in emigration, Vladislav Khodasevich would recall the polemics surrounding "eidology" and reject this concept when considering his own book of poetics: "Поэтика делится на неск<олько> разделов: просодия, эйдология, и т.д. Большинство их восх<одит> к [общей] риторике и общей эстетике. Они сложны, спорны—я не решился бы предложить их по разным [...] причинам. Ограничусь просодией—[чистой] первой основной поэти<ческого> ремесла [Poetics is divided into several sections: prosody, eidology, and so on. The majority of them derive from rhetoric and aesthetics. They're complicated, open to question—I wouldn't dare to propose them for various [...] reasons. I'll limit myself to prosody—[the pure] first foundation of poetic craft]." See Bogomolov 2011, 236. Gumilev's student Georgy Adamovich also used "eidology" to describe Pasternak's "Spektorskii" in 1925. See Timenchik 1974, 31.

12. See, for example, Senelick, Venclova, and especially Ronen. This last article goes so far as to use the word "eidolon" to discuss mythopoeism and Acmeism, but it does not make reference to "eidology" or to Ivanov's use of the word; rather, the sentence about "eidola" refers to Annensky, who to the best of my knowledge did not use this word in his writing, although he did engage with the concept of the shade/image.

13. See Svas'ian 100: "Interesno, chto u Platona slovo eto nosit, kak pravilo, brannyi kharakter; 'fabrikant obrazov'...—takuiu kharakteristiku zasluživaiut u nego sofist, poet i khudozhnik. [It's interesting that in Plato, as a rule, this word is used as invective; 'manufacturer of images'...—in [Plato] the sophist, the poet, and the artist deserve this description]." Svas'ian goes on to cite *The Sophist*.

14. It is worth noting here that the young Gumilev was very influenced by Nietzsche. For more on this, see Rusinko.

Herodotus, and Euripides used it to describe the false Helen created by Hera to take the place of the real one during the Trojan War (Nagy xi–xii).

While Gumilev might have encountered this word in a number of places, I propose that his direct source for “eidology” was Viacheslav Ivanov’s programmatic essay “Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism” [Dve stikhii v sovremennom simvolizme], first given as a lecture and then published in 1908, and subsequently republished several times. Robert Bird points out that it was in this essay that Ivanov “made the greatest impression on contemporaries and subsequent critics,” and it certainly could not have escaped Gumilev’s attention (Ivanov 2003, 238). Here, Ivanov first draws the distinction between theurgic symbols, which could give rise to myths, and their non-theurgic, individualistic equivalents, assigning them to two opposing trends in art that he calls Realistic and Idealistic Symbolism. Realistic Symbolism, which is receptive art, presents the world as it truly is in a mystical sense. Idealistic Symbolism, on the other hand, shows an individual artist’s *idea* of the world, and in doing so presents an idiosyncratically transformed vision of reality. At one point, Ivanov concedes that this transformation is not always necessarily problematic: “Khudozhnik-idealist ili vozvrashchaet veshchi inymi, chem vosprinimaet, pererabotaia ikh ne tol’ko otritsatel’no, putem otvlecheniia, no i polozhitel’no, putem prisoedineniia k nim novykh chert [The idealist artist either returns things different from how he received them, having reworked them not only in a negative sense, through abstraction, but also in a positive sense, by endowing them with new features].” But he quickly returns to his former position by adding that Idealistic Symbolism “ili zhe daet neopravdannnye nabludeniem sochetaniia, chada samovlastnoi, svoenravnoi svoei fantazii [or else he provides combinations that are not justified by observation, the offspring of his autarchic, capricious fantasy]” (Ivanov 2007, 183; translation from Ivanov 2003, 19). Since by definition the individualistic perspective of Idealistic Symbolism estranges it from the essence of reality, art following this tendency necessarily falls short of Ivanov’s religious goals.

It is with reference to Idealistic Symbolism that Ivanov follows Plato by using the term “eidolon” negatively. For Ivanov, the distinction between Idealistic and Realistic Symbolism was analogous to the one Plato drew between sophists and philosophers. The poet uses an episode from *Faust* that refers to the ancient stories about the false eidolon of Helen to illustrate his point:

Эпоха Возрождения поняла античную древность, в которой искала освобождения от средневекового варварства, идеалистически: вызванная из обители Матерей волшебным ключом Фауста прекрасная Елена была призраком (εἶδωλον), тенью Елены древней, и магическим маревом стал для человека весь озаренный ею мир. (Ivanov 2007, 186)

The Renaissance had an idealistic understanding of classical antiquity, seeking in it emancipation from medieval barbarism: beautiful Helen, summoned from the dwelling of the Mothers by Faust’s magic key, was a phantom (*eidolon*), a shadow of the ancient Helen, and the whole

world she illuminated became for man a magic haze. (Translation adapted from Ivanov 2007, 19, and 2003)¹⁵

While Realistic Symbolism—which contained real myths accepted as such by the common people—was founded on mystic truth, Idealistic Symbolism presented ghost-like approximations of these myths as the real thing and revealed nothing more profound to its audience than *magicheskoe marevo*, “a magic haze.”¹⁶

One recalls Basker’s proposition that Ivanov had accused Gumilev of creating precisely this sort of myth during their dispute over “The Prodigal Son.”¹⁷ While there is no documented evidence that Ivanov specifically used “Idealistic Symbolism” or “eidolon” to criticize the younger writer’s poetry or poetics, I propose that Gumilev’s subsequent use of “eidology” to describe a central and positive element of Acmeism was a polemical response to Ivanov.

Gumilev first uses “eidology” in a review of Sergei Gorodetsky’s 1913 collection *Tsvetushchii posok*, or *Flowering Staff* (1974, 297–310). It should be recalled that Gorodetsky’s 1906 collection *Iar*¹⁸ (1974, 55–163) was once one of Ivanov’s models for the resurrection of mythopoeism in contemporary literature. Indeed, in “Two Elements in Contemporary Symbolism,” Ivanov describes how aptly one of the poems from *Iar*’ conveys the essence of Realistic Symbolism:

В «Яри» С. Городецкого есть несколько не лучших в книге стихов, в которых молодой поэт, предчувствуя тайну мифа, метко очерчивает его происхождение («Великая Мать»): [Here Ivanov cites the poem.] [...] Реальное мистическое событие—в данном случае брак Деметры и Диониса.—событие, свершившееся в высшем плане бытия, сохранилось в

15. Venclova’s 1994 article points out that the image of “haze” is closely related to the “shadow” of “eidolon.”

16. Ivanov utilized the term “eidolon” in other essays as well, many of which were written well after Gumilev formulated “eidology.” “Goethe na rubezhe dvukh stoletii” [Goethe on the Boundary between Two Centuries], published in 1912, refers to the same scene from Faust discussed in “Dve stikhii.” “Drevnii uzhas” [Ancient Terror], which first appeared in 1909, also refers to “eidola” negatively as a shade or covering that hides the truth (this time explicitly referencing Democritus’s conception of the term). Bird notes that Ivanov’s characterization of “eidola” is not universally negative (Ivanov 2003, 290), but for the period in question, the poet primarily uses “eidola” the same way he does in “Dve stikhii,” and Gumilev most likely responded to this usage of it.

17. Basker (1994) points out that Ivanov must have recognized Gumilev’s poem as an example of Idealistic Symbolism, but goes on to argue that Gumilev lost interest in mythopoeism after publishing “Akteon.”

18. This title, which comes from the name of the ancient Slavic god of fertility, spring, and male sexuality, *Iarila* (also called *Iarylo* and *Iaryla*), is difficult to translate. It refers to “vyssh[ee] proiavl[en]i[e] proizvoditel’nykh sil, obespechivaushchem maksimum plodorodiia, pribytka, urozhaii [the highest manifestation of productive powers, enabling a maximum of fertility, profit, harvest].” See Ivanov and Toporov 1990, 672. D. S. Mirsky renders *Iar*’ in English as “Vital Sap” (473).

памяти хлебных колосьев, так как душа вещей физического мира... есть поистине причастница тайновидений и тайнодеяний плана божественного; и человек, причащаясь хлебу, делается в свою очередь причастником тех же изначальных тайн, которые и вспоминает неясно, только ознаменовательно памятью потусторонних событий: в этой смутности воспоминания—глубочайшее существо мифа. [...] Так верит поэт, так он познает интуитивным своим познанием. Мифотворчество—творчество веры. Задача мифотворчества, поистине,—«вещей обличение невидимых». И реалистический символизм—откровение того, что художник видит, как реальность, в кристалле низшей реальности. (Ivanov 2007, 199–200)

In Sergei Gorodetsky's *Iar'*, there are certain poems—not the best—in which the young poet, anticipating the mystery of myth, perspicaciously sketches its origin (“The Great Mother”). [...] A real mystical event, in this case the marriage of Demeter and Dionysus, has occurred on a higher plane of being. It is preserved in the memory of the ears of wheat because the soul of the things of the physical world... is truly a communicant of the secret visions and deeds of the divine plane. And the man who communes of the bread becomes in turn a communicant of those same primordial mysteries that he recalls with the vague and merely signifying memory of otherworldly events: this vagueness of recollection is the most profound essence of myth. [...] Thus does the poet believe, thus does he know with his intuitive cognition. Mythopoesis is the creation of faith. The task of mythopoesis is truly the ‘evidence of things unseen.’ And Realistic Symbolism is a revelation of what the artist sees as reality in the crystal of lower reality. (Ivanov 2003, 31)¹⁹

When Andrei Bely wrote a series of polemical responses to Ivanov's article, Gorodetsky himself published a response in 1909 entitled “*Idolotvorchestvo*” [The Creation of Idols], and in this article, he repeated Ivanov's terminology, defending his teacher's distinction between Realistic Symbolism and Idealistic Symbolism:

[...] Idea [sic] (ens realissimum) или εἶδωλον? Для многих поэтов вопрос этот является роковым. Куда направить творческую энергию: к ознаменованию ли сущего, или к преобразению видимостей, к созданию хрупких образов, не имеющих за собой бытия, а только распространяющих бытие?

The idea (the supremely real being) or *eidolon*? For many poets this question is crucial. Where to direct one's creative energy: toward the commemoration of that which exists, or toward the transfiguration of outward appearances, toward the creation of fragile images that have no real existence beyond themselves, that only disseminate ephemeral being? (Gorodetsky 2007, 808)

Here, Gorodetsky associates “idea” with true reality (“bytie” and Realistic Symbolism) and “eidolon” with the transitory world of appearances (“byvanie” and Idealistic Symbolism). His use of “eidolon” here underscores the importance of this term for Ivanov, as well as his allegiance to this Symbolist teacher.

A few years later, when Gumilev came to use the word “eidology” to distinguish between Symbolist and Acmeist uses of myth in the poetry of the renegade Symbolist Gorodetsky, he obviously intended to confront Ivanov. In Gumilev's 1912 review of Gorodetsky's *Iva* [Willow], he does not yet employ this specific word, but he does associate Gorodetsky's developing sense of

19. Ivanov also places a discussion of myth at the center of his brief 1907 review of *Iar'*.

image with his recent departure from Symbolism. Gumilev writes that “[s]tikhi simvolicheskie, v kotorykh obraz po sravneniiu s ritmom igraet chisto sluzhebnuu rol’—slabee drugikh [The symbolist verses, in which the image in comparison with rhythm plays a purely auxiliary role, are weaker than the others]” (Gumilev 2006, 136). Later, he adds, “Sergei Gorodetskii chuvstvuet, chto mera stikha est’ ne stopa, a obraz, kak v russkikh pesniakh i bylinakh, i kak by ni bylo sil’no perezhivanie, gluboka mysl’, oni ne mogut stat’ materialom poeticheskogo tvoreniia, poka ne obleklis’ v zhivuiu i osiazatel’nuu plot’ samotsennogo i deesposobnogo obraza [Sergei Gorodetsky feels that the measure of verse is not the foot, but the image, as in Russian songs and *byliny*, and however powerful an experience may be, or [however] deep a thought, they cannot become material for poetic creation until they have arrayed themselves in the living and tangible flesh of an image that is self-sufficient and capable of action]” (Gumilev 2006, 136). This discussion of the self-sufficient image is clearly related to the concept of “eidolon,” which, one recalls, encompassed not only the image, but also the individual artist’s unique use of the image. Gumilev then goes on to connect this concept of the image with myth:

Мифотворческий период Сергея Городецкого весьма многозначителен и, прежде всего, потому что поэт впал в ошибку, думая, что мифотворчество—естественный выход из символизма, тогда как оно есть решительный от него уход. Миф—это самодовлеющий образ, имеющий свое имя, развивающийся при внутреннем соответствии с самим собой,—а что может быть ненавистнее для символистов, видящих в образе только намек на «великое безликое», на хаос, Нирвану, пустоту? [...] Мечтающий о мифе Сергей Городецкий понял, что ему необходима иная школа, более суровая и плодотворная, и обратился к акмеизму. (Gumilev 2006, 136)

Sergei Gorodetsky’s mythopoetic period is quite significant, and first of all because the poet fell into error, thinking that mythopoeism is the natural outcome of symbolism, whereas it is a decisive departure from it. Myth is the self-sufficient image, having its own name, developing in internal accordance with itself—and what could be more hateful to the symbolists, who see in the image only a hint of “the great facelessness,” of chaos, Nirvana, emptiness? [...] Dreaming of myth, Sergei Gorodetsky understood that a different school was indispensable for him, one more rigorous and fruitful, and he turned to Acmeism. (Translation adapted from Gumilev 1977, 121)

Openly polemicizing with Ivanov’s conception of myth as an essentially religious phenomenon, this review reinvents myth as an artistic practice valid on its own literary terms, and implicitly places mythopoeism under the Acmeist category of eidology.²⁰ In other words, it presents the sort of mythopoeism that Gumilev practiced in “The Prodigal Son,” which subverted the original story to the poet’s personal artistic vision, as the only correct model of mytho-

20. Basker’s 1994 article shows how in a short 1913 play Gumilev reworked the myth of Akteon not only to better relay his Acmeist message, but also to show how an Acmeist could use myth. After describing how Gumilev deliberately changed aspects of Ovid’s original work while preserving others, making his source obvious, Basker returns to the previously discussed conflict with Ivanov over “The Prodigal Son.”

poem. Later, in a review of Gorodetsky's next collection, *Flowering Staff*, Gumilev explicitly commends the poet's eidology (Gumilev 1977, 142).

Another significant use of "eidology" occurs in a review from 1913 in which Gumilev treated Ivanov alongside several lesser-known poets. This review is also structured polemically.²¹ While here Gumilev calls his old teacher one of the two most significant Russian Symbolists (along with Sologub) and offers nothing but praise for the volume *Nezhnaia taina* [*Tender Mystery*], he nevertheless calls him a "young poet" ["poet molodoi"] and concludes this section of the review with this challenge: "No kak dalek etot individual'nyi, odinokii rastsvet ot togo ravnovesiia vsekh sposobnostei dukha, kotoroe teper' grezitsia mnogim... Mezhdū Viacheslavom Ivanovym i akmeizmom propast', kotoruiu ne zapolnit' nikakomu talantu... [But how far away is this individual, lonely flowering from the balance of all the possibilities of the spirit that many now dream of... Between Viacheslav Ivanov and Acmeism [lies] an abyss that no talent can fill...]" (Gumilev 2006, 153).

Gumilev then goes on to denigrate Ivanov further by discussing clearly inferior poets in almost the same breath. He calls Vadim Gardner and Aleksei Skaldin, both Ivanov protégés (see Magomedova 1989 and Tsar'kova 2007) "diletantom" [dilettante] and "bednyi, zakhudalyi dvoinik" [poor, shabby double [of Ivanov]], respectively (Gumilev 2006, 153).²² Then he moves to Aleksandr Roslavlev, known as an epigone of Briusov (see Molodiakov 2007), and Ia. Liubiar and Vsevolod Kudriumov, two poets who seem to have been known in 1913 for their distinctively poor work.²³ According to Gumilev, Liubiar, who debuted with three books at once, "ne znaet [...] bol'shinstva samykh elementarnykh zakonov stikhoslozheniia [does not know [...] most of the most elementary laws of versification]" and Kudriumov's volume is "odna iz samykh nepriiatnykh knig sezona [one of the most unpleasant books of the season]" (Gumilev 2006, 154–55). Vadim Shershenevich is the only poet other than Ivanov to receive actual praise, and while Gumilev does

21. Davidson's 1994 article discusses how Gumilev's earlier reviews of Ivanov were even more overtly polemical. She argues, however, that Gumilev had abandoned his combative attitude by the time he reviewed *Tender Mystery*.

22. It is important to note that both Gardner and Skaldin participated in Gumilev's Poets' Guild as well, although Skaldin in particular was not well received because of his obvious loyalty to Ivanov. On Skaldin, Gorodetsky wrote "misticheskoe doktrinchestvo Viacheslava Ivanova nashlo sebe dostoinuiu zhertvu [the mystical doctrinism of Viacheslav Ivanov has found itself a worthy victim]." In his memoirs Georgy Ivanov asked why the Guild was involved with Skaldin at all. See Timenchik 1974, 37.

23. Liubiar was a pseudonym of Aleksei Konstantinovich Lozina-Lozinsky, and this collection was made up of poems that he had written in high school and in jail. In addition to Gumilev, Gorodetsky and Georgy Ivanov also wrote negative reviews of his work (see Morozov 381). However, it is also worth noting that, like Gardner and Skaldin, Lozina-Lozinsky was to some extent associated with the Acmeists. He was acquainted with both Gumilev and Akhmatova and wrote an article in defense of Mandelstam, although he reviewed Gorodetsky critically (Morozov 382).

not mention Ivanov's name explicitly in his discussion of Shershenevich's work, he does include jabs aimed at Symbolism:

В эйдологии (системе образов) он ученик Александра Блока, иногда более покорный, чем это хотелось бы видеть. Но уже проглядывает в его стихах стремление к четкости и договоренности, как бунт против настроения раннего немецкого романтизма в русской поэзии. Мне кажется, идя по этому пути, он может воплотить многое из того ценного, что уже брезжит в «Carmina». И, может быть, тогда только он освободится от устаревшей литературности, которая иногда холодит его лучшие стихи. (Gumilev 2006, 155)

In eidology ([his] system of images) he is a student of Alexander Blok, sometimes more obedient than one would like to see. But an attempt at concision and agreement can already be found in his verses, like a rebellion against the mood of early German romanticism in Russian poetry. It seems to me that [by] going along this path; he can give form to much that is valuable that already glimmers in [his collection] "Carmina." And, maybe, only then will he free himself from the antiquated literariness that sometimes makes his best verses cold.

In addition to using the word "eidology," Gumilev makes reference to Ivanov's ideological ally Blok and mentions German Romanticism, a movement associated with both Blok and Ivanov.²⁴ Gumilev also discusses this baneful German influence in another article from the same year, the even more overtly polemical manifesto "Nasledie simvolizma i akmeizm" [The Legacy of Symbolism and Acmeism], in which he disparagingly associates it with Symbolism: "eta zhe simvolicheskaia sliianost' vseh obrazov i veshchei, izmenchivost' ikh oblika, mogla rodit'sia tol'ko v tumannoii mgle germanskikh lesov [this symbolist merging of all images and things, the mutability of their appearance, could be born only in the shadowy haze of Germanic forests]" (Gumilev 2006, 147).²⁵

While Shershenevich was not an Acmeist, Gumilev casts him as an ally, and indeed, at this point in time Shershenevich was polemicizing with the Symbolists himself. His *Futurizm bez maski* [*Futurism Unmasked*], also published in 1913, begins with a brazen challenge to Symbolism written in verse: "Pochti okonchena postroika / I nam zamenit dlia chudes / Simvolisticheskuiu troiku / Futuristicheskii ekspress [The construction is almost finished / And miraculously for us / The Futurist express train / Will replace the Symbolist troika]" (Shershenevich 1974, 3). Moreover, in another sign of semi-allegiance to Acmeism, "Carmina" includes a playfully flattering poem dedicated to Gumilev himself.²⁶

24. The reference to early Romanticism was especially directed toward Ivanov, in particular his project of translating all of Novalis's poetry and pleading his cause as a proto-Symbolist. See Wachtel 120–22.

25. The phrase "izmenchivost' ikh oblika" [mutability of their appearance] alludes to Blok's "Predchuvstvuiu tebia" [I Have a Presentiment of You] from the collection *Stikhi o prekrasnoi dame* [*Verses about the Beautiful Lady*]: "No strashno mne: izmenish' oblik Ty [But I'm scared: You will change your appearance]" (lines 6 and 12).

26. "N. Gumilevu posviashchaetsia" [Dedicated to N. Gumilev]. This poem appears in a section devoted to Shershenevich's translations and pays homage to Gumilev's own accomplished rendering of Theophile Gautier (Shershenevich 2000, 43).

Gumilev continued to discuss eidology and to polemicize with Symbolism even after the war, when the Acmeist and Symbolist movements had both effectively ended. Notes for *Theory of Integral Poetics*, as well as the articles "The Reader" and "Anatomy of a Poem," which he may have intended to include in this book, show that he continued to develop his ideas about poetic personalities and their relations to images. Chukovsky, noting the important role that eidology played in Gumilev's lectures on writing poetry, describes the term (and the rest of Gumilev's critical apparatus) as polemical: "Vsia eta naivnaia skholastika byla ot nachala do kontsa polemichna. [...] V te gody [...] vrazhdebnye Gumilevu predstavleniia o poezii s osoboi siloi byli vyrazheny v tvorchestve Bloka. [...] I vse eti tablitsy s anzhambemanami, pirikhiiami i eidologijami byli vyzovom Bloku [All of this naïve scholasticism was polemical from beginning to end. [...] In those years [the] notions about poetry that were hostile to Gumilev were expressed with particular force in the work of Blok. [...] And all these tables with enjambements, pyrrhics and eidologies were a challenge to Blok]" (Chukovsky 1989, 41).

Chukovsky's reminiscences here do not offer us a complete understanding of the situation at hand. While he recognizes that Blok was Gumilev's opponent (and he was indeed Gumilev's major rival at that point), the first usage of "eidology" dates back to the early days of Acmeism, when Gumilev still hoped that Blok might be an ally.²⁷ The Literary Studio at the House of Arts in which Chukovsky participated was not organized until much later, after the Revolution, and after Blok had rejected Acmeism in favor of an allegiance with Ivanov. At that point Ivanov's prominence in the St. Petersburg (at that time Petrograd) literary scene had eroded, while Blok's had increased, so Chukovsky's focus on the younger poet is understandable. In the wider context of Gumilev's earlier uses of the term, it becomes clear that not only Blok but also Ivanov and his school of "Realistic Symbolism" serve as his polemical targets.

Another hint that Ivanov was still on Gumilev's mind at this moment is the reference to "poetic psychology" in the definition of "eidology" in "Anatomy of a Poem" (Gumilev 2006, 242). Ivanov connected psychology to individualism, and considered it a barrier to the communal mindset necessary for engagement with real myths. Moreover, in "The Reader" Gumilev attacks Ivanov's concept of the myth-creating poet as the masses' spiritual guide by explicitly distinguishing between collective religious experience and poetry, which engages individuals (Gumilev 2006, 235–36). Up to the end of his life, Gumilev was still framing his poetics in opposition to his erstwhile mentor.

Eidology's original connection to mythopoeism also continued to be important. While explicit references to mythopoeism in Gumilev's critical texts

27. Timenchik notes that Blok attended the first meeting of the Poets' Guild, but none thereafter (see Timenchik 1974, 31, especially note 28). In a diary entry from October 20, 1911, Blok himself also mentions attending an evening hosted by Gorodetsky at which Akhmatova and Gumilev were present (Blok 1989, 69).

became rare toward the end of his life, myth becomes increasingly important to him as an artist. Here, the plainly derivative pseudo-Symbolist myths of his early verse give way to the more distinctive and compelling use of myth that characterized his mature period. The preponderance of mythic elements in Gumilev's late poetry, especially in longer works like "Zvezdnyi uzhas" [Stellar Terror] and "Poema nachala" [Poem of the Beginning], have led some readers to attribute a "return to Symbolism" to the one-time Acmeist leader.²⁸ However, Gumilev's unceasing polemics with Symbolism show us that his late poetry represents a continuing development of his own movement.²⁹

Gumilev did not abandon his earlier positions, but rather refined them in his period of maturity. Eidological mythopoeism was always a part of Acmeism as Gumilev conceived it, and it surely informs many aspects of the last poetry he wrote, though an extended discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this article.³⁰ Gumilev's "mature period" responded to Symbolism by divorcing myths from their theurgic purpose and original context to express his individual poetic vision.

This polemic with Symbolism constitutes an essential element of Acmeism as Gumilev both theorized and practiced it from the very beginning of this movement to the end of the poet's life. Gumilev's connection of Acmeism to mythopoeism, a practice associated with Symbolism and especially with Ivanov's articulation of it, is a moment that particularly illuminates the nature of the exchange between these two schools. While this article will not attempt to elide Gumilev's conception of Acmeism with those of other poets, it does suggest that for him this school was not exclusively founded on the basis of aesthetic concerns, but rather was ineluctably entangled with his personal relationship to Ivanov. Several articles on Mandelstam have demonstrated that Ivanov played a critical role for the younger Acmeist as well.³¹ Both poets en-

28. Struve's 1964 introduction to Volume Two of the four-volume Gumilev edition suggests that Valery Briusov may have originated this opinion by articulating a slightly different variation of it after Gumilev's death, claiming that his former student had always been a Symbolist. Struve goes on to acknowledge that in this specific context, Briusov's categorization of Gumilev as "Symbolist" probably reflected his allegiance to the new Soviet state, which was little interested in the distinctions between pre-revolutionary poetic schools (xxxv-xxxvi).

29. It is even possible that in this category of works Gumilev deliberately reprises the working method of "The Prodigal Son" by refashioning famous myths and stories. Michael Basker (1994) points out that he does so quite intentionally in "Akteon."

30. Doherty's 1995 monograph on Acmeism argues that "eidology" is consistent with Mandelstam's concept of "psyche" (see 243) and informs Acmeist poetry as a whole. While this term's relevance to other Acmeists may be debated, "eidology" is certainly crucial for Gumilev's own poetic works.

31. See, for example, Kiril Taranovsky's and John Malmstad's detailed investigations from 1976 and 1986, respectively, of Ivanov's influence on Osip Mandelstam, especially Taranovsky 83 and Malmstad 247, in which they cite Mandelstam's explicit acknowledgment of Ivanov's influence. More recently, in 2011, Goldberg examined Symbolism's influence on Mandelstam and his generation using an effectively modified version of Harold Bloom's theory of influence.

gaged in a reappropriation of Symbolist poetics rather than a straightforward rejection of it.³² This evidence points toward an understanding of Acmeism founded not only on the achievements of its poetic exponents, but also on the literary-historical circumstances from which they emerged.

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32. Michael Basker's excellent article from 2000 on "Acmeist demonism" examines a specific instance of the Acmeists' usage of a traditionally Symbolist theme.

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Реферат

Эмили Вань

Акмеистическая мифопоэтика: Николай Гумилев, Вячеслав Иванов и "эйдолология"

В настоящей статье возникновение ключевого термина поэтики Н.С. Гумилева "эйдолология" рассматривается в контексте сложных отношений Гумилева с бывшим его учителем Вячеславом Ивановым. Как Иванов, так и Сергей Городецкий (в те годы, когда он был ивановским учеником) вкладывали в древнегреческое слово "эйдолон" отрицательный смысл, ассоциируя его с "идеалистическим символизмом" и тем самым отличая его от подлинного мифотворчества, которым занимается "реалистический" символист. Чтобы отмежеваться от символизма, Гумилев умышленно включает в акмеистическую программу именно "ложную" мифопоэтику, отвергаемую Ивановым. Развернутая в настоящей статье аргументация по-новому освещает как основы гумилевской поэтики, так и вопрос о зависимости акмеизма от символистского наследия.