

VJAČESLAV I. IVANOV AND THE QUESTION OF ART.
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“NUDUS SALTA! CEL’ ISKUSSTVA”¹

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[...] я слышал с неба зов:
“Покинь, служитель, храм украшенный бесов.”
И я бежал...
(V.I. Ivanov, ‘Palinodija’, 1937)

Как тяжело ходить среди людей
И притворяться непогибшим,
И об игре трагической страстей
Повествовать еще не жившим.

И, вглядываясь в свой ночной кошмар,
Строй находить в нестройном вихре чувства,
Чтобы по бледным заревам искусства
Узнали жизни гибельной пожар!
(Aleksandr Blok, May 10, 1910)

“Nudus salta! Цель искусства –
Без покровов, без оков
Показать, кто ты таков,
Темные поведать чувства
Заповедных тайников –

Все, что в омурах роится
 Под блестящим, гладким льдом, –
 Распечатать мертвый дом,
 Где от бела дня таится
 Подсознательный Содом.”

– Мне священна Муз ограда.
 Жару чистых алтарей
 Дар мой – агнец лучший стада
 И плоды, первины сада,
 Не гнездо нетопырей.

Музам горный ключ породы
 Мил и в пустынях природы
 Чобр и тмин, и дикий злак.
 Лей очистительные воды,
 Отвратясь, в подземный мрак.
 (Iz 'Rimского dnevnika', Rim, 18 fevralja 1944)

Ivanov's untitled poem appears in his 'Rimskij dnevnik' with the date February 18, 1944. The poem is based on the final typescript copy of the poem. Three earlier typescript versions of the poem date from February 15 through 17, 1944.² The poem underwent some small but significant changes in those few days. In the course of my analysis I shall have occasion to refer to the evolution of the poem.

The poem consists of four stanzas of five lines each. On the semantic plane the poem may be divided into two parts, each consisting of two stanzas. The first two stanzas – for convenience's sake only I shall refer to them as part one of the poem – appear in quotation marks. In this part of the poem an unidentified persona issues a command: "Nudus salta!" ("Dance naked!"), declaring, in sum, that the "purpose of art" is to disclose the cavernous and carnal underground of human nature. In part two of the poem, that is, the third and fourth stanzas, the poet himself steps forth and, avoiding any direct polemic with the speaker in part one, declares his devout commitment to the Muses: a classical and pastoral world where art and the artist are characterized by their sacrificial and devotional functions. In the final line of the poem the poet returns to the theme of the underground, suggesting, with an imperative of his own, that art may play a purifying role in man's dark underworld.

Let me examine the poem in greater detail.

Part one of the poem posits a hidden netherworld of "temnye [...] čuvstva" (dark [...] feelings), a chthonic realm of passions out of sight and off limits. The poet speaks of "pokrovu" (covers), "okovy" (fettters), "zapoved-

nyj tajnik" (a secret hiding place or recess); he refers to "omuty [...] pod l'dom" (deep hollows or pits at the bottom of a river or lake³ [...] under the ice); a "mertvyj dom" and, finally – hiding in the dead house – an almost anthropomorphic "podsoznatel'nyj Sodom".

Ivanov's end rimes in the second, third and fifth lines of stanza one lead the reader to the nethermost "house" of debauchery – "l' dom", "mertvyj dom", "Sodom". Enclosure is the dominant spatial motif in the first part of the poem. In the early drafts of the poem the "unconscious Sodom" is not only inhabiting the "dead house", but is "hiding from God's punishment" ("[...] gde ot Bož'ich kar taitjsja/podsoznatel'nyj Sodom"); in a second version "a spellbound Sodom" ("zakoldovannyj Sodom") is hiding from God's punishment ("[...] gde ot Bož'ich kar taitjsja/zakoldovannyj Sodom"). In the final typescript of the poem Ivanov replaced "ot Bož'ich kar" with "ot bela dnja" and restored "podsoznatel'nyj Sodom", thus veiling the notion that Sodom – our unconscious – is under a spell in the dead house and that his great antagonist is God. We may note in passing that Ivanov's lines echo, though with a different emphasis, his view expressed in *Ėllinskaja religija stradajuščego boga* (*The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God*), to wit, that "the principle of cosmos and order in everything, having effected a profound transformation of our inner primeval chaos yet not transformed it altogether, has outwardly subdued it and confined it to the sphere of the subconscious, whence it breaks out volcanically in destructive eruptions".⁴

The carnal instincts, then, have been committed to deep and dreamy dungeons. Art's function, according to the speaker in part one, is to give full expression to man's repressed or suppressed impulses and drives. In "dancing naked" we cast off our "fetters", our "covers", our restraints and awaken the "unconscious Sodom". Taken literally, the command "Nudus salta!" in Ivanov's poem might be seen as a call for a dance of debauchery and death, a kind of *danse macabre*; esthetically the injunction to "unseal the dead house" ("raspečatat' mertvyj dom") is a command to disclose human nature precisely and naturalistically. The purpose of art, one may conclude from the first two stanzas of the poem, is revelation of the flesh. The moral corollary of the speaker's naturalism is "vse dozvoleno".

The speaker in the first part of the poem is very clear about his prescription: to "dance naked", whether literally or figuratively, is not merely to disclose an *aspect* of ourselves hidden from the light of day, but "to show who you [i.e. we] are" ("pokazat' kto ty takov"). Sodom, then, defines our identity. In unsealing the dead house we disclose carnal nature, that is, *human* nature. Thus the esthetic program of the speaker in part one is predicated upon a distinct worldview – a thoroughly *despiritualized* view of man.

Part two of Ivanov's poem opposes the sacred world of the Muses to the profane world of Sodom. The poet, that is, the creator of the whole poem,

in contrast to the speaker in part one, acknowledges the existence of two worlds, each of which impinges upon the other. He himself, however, stands with the sacred and with the purified and purifying art that is organic to it.

Before turning to the second part of the poem I would like to call attention to two literary allusions that fortify the poet's critique of a de-spiritualized art and of a moral underground. I distinguish, of course, between the point of view of the unidentified speaker in part one and the point of view of the poet – a view that embraces the entire poem and organizes for us an organic and integrated structure of images and meaning.

The phrase “*mertvyj dom*” most obviously signals Dostoevskij's presence in the poem. Yet it is not only *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma* (or, for that matter, *Zapiski iz podpol'ja*) that is echoed here – to this specific allusion I shall return at the end of my discussion. The call to unseal the dead house and to awaken the unconscious Sodom brings to mind, also, the lugubrious and lubricious world of the “contemporary corpses” (“*sovremennyj mertvec*”) in Dostoevskij's pseudo-grotesque sketch, ‘Bobok’ – a work in which Dostoevskij parodies, among other things, the debased realism, or naturalism, of a de-spiritualized world.⁵ This world finds its most perfect representative in the cynical and Sadean figure of Baron Klinevič. Awakening with other corpses and surveying a sepulchral world of still-living, yet rapidly decomposing corpses (only two months and then – “bobok”, “bobok”), Baron Klinevič (a variant of the Marquis de Sade) invites his fellow corpses in their remaining time unashamedly to engage in a debauch of unbridled sensuality. Like Sade, Baron Klinevič has a very clear sense of the role of narrative art in the breakdown of moral culture. He proposes a kind of symposium, or Decameron, of the dead, in which nobody will lie. Here is Klinevič's “*Nudus salta!*”:

– Мы все будем вслух рассказывать наши истории и уже ничего не стыдиться. Я прежде всех про себя расскажу. Я, знаете, из плотоядных. Все это там вверху было связано гнилыми веревками. Долой веревки, и проживем эти два месяца в самой бесстыдной правде! Заголимся и обнажимся!

– Обнажимся! обнажимся! – закричали во все голоса.

– Я ужасно, ужасно хочу обнажиться! – взвизгивала Авдотья Игнатьевна [...]

– Главное, что никто не может нам запретить.

(“We'll each tell our stories to the others and be ashamed of nothing. I'll tell you about myself first of all. I'm a carnivore in essence, you see. Up there, all such things were held together with rotten ropes. Down with ropes! Let's live these two months in the most shameless truth! Let's bare our bodies and our souls!” ‘Let us bare ourselves!’ cried all the voices. ‘I'm terribly, terribly

eager to bare myself,' squealed Avdot'ja Ignat'evna [...] – The main thing is that nobody can stop us. [...]"

The frame narrator of 'Bobok' refers to this scene as "razvrat", "razvrat poslednich upovaniij, razvrat drjablych i gnijuščich trupov" ("debauchery, debauchery of last hopes, debauchery of feeble and rotting corpses").

'Bobok' is Dostoevskij's discourse on the moral and esthetics of the grave of contemporary society: *Telling all* is the literary corollary of moral "bezobrazie"; it preludes for Dostoevskij the final breakdown of moral culture: the loss of all measure and restraint, the breaking of all taboos, imminent death. It is no accident that in 'Bobok' the symptoms of a declining moral and social order are felt first of all in the breakdown of the sense of form. Dostoevskij provides several illustrations, for example: the narrator, Ivan Ivanyč, who loses control of his language, whose "style" becomes hackneyed – "u tebja, govorit (moj prijatel'), slog menjaetsja, rublenyj. Rubiš', rubiš'" ("your style is changing [...] It's like mincemeat. You chop things finer and finer"); or the hackneyed artist who, painting in the style of a naturalistic realism, meticulously depicts the warts on the narrator's face. "Idei-to net, tak oni teper' na fenomenach vyezžajut. Nu i kak že u nego na portrete udalis' moi borodavki, – živye! Èto oni realizmom zovut," Ivan Ivanyč exclaims ironically ("They don't have any ideas, you see, so now they go to town on these phenomena. But what a job he did on my warts in the portrait – they're alive! They call that realism").

Ivanov, in the first part of the poem, echoes the themes and imagery of 'Bobok': unbridled sensuality, fetters (the "rotten ropes"), nakedness and shamelessness. In this connection, it is noteworthy that he foregrounds precisely the motif of shamelessness in an early draft of his poem:

Nudus salta! Цель искусства,
Свободясь от всех оков,
Не стыдясь, что ты таков... (и т. д.)
(my italics – R.L.J.)

("Nudus salta! The goal of art, / Freeing oneself from all chains, / showing no shame for what you are [...])"

For poetic-semantic reasons, Ivanov changed the second and third lines to read: "Bez pokrovov, bez okov, / Pokazat' kto ty takov". On semantic and sound levels "Bez pokrovov" inaugurates the refrain of fetters that echo in the rimes of the second, fourth and fifth lines of stanza one ("okov", "-akov", "-ikov"). Ivanov dropped the words "ne stydjas'" – yet shamelessness is clearly implicit in the moral-esthetic program of the unidentified speaker: "Nudus salta! [...] Bez pokrovov". The word "pokrov" means "cover", but it also has an important related use, as in "Pokrov presvjatyja Bogorodicy" – the Protective veil of the Virgin or in the feast of the Intercession. Thus an art

or esthetic that tears away the “pokrov” not only is shameless, but is implicitly devoid of spiritual-religious guidance or patronage. Such an esthetic opens up the abyss of metaphysical evil – a phenomenon that preoccupies Gogol’ in his story ‘Portret’.⁶

In the second part of Ivanov’s poem the action shifts from darkness to the “light of day” (“bela dnja”). Here we cannot but note a contiguity between Ivanov’s poem and Tjutčev’s ‘Den’ i noč’. Ivanov’s “pod blestjaščim, gladkim l’dom”, his “bela dnja”, his “pokrov” recalls Tjutčev’s “Den’ – sej blistatel’nyj pokrov” (“Day – that brilliant cover”) which hides the “bezymjannaja bezdna” (“nameless abyss”).

День – сей блистательный покров –
 День, земнородных оживленье,
 Души болящей исцеленье,
 Друг человеков и богов!

Ivanov’s poem, as I shall point out again, echoes the motif of healing (“iscelenie”) at its conclusion. The coming of night, however, in Tjutčev’s poem brings an ominous baring of the abyss:

Но меркнет день – настала ночь;
 Пришла – и мира рокового
 Ткань благодатную покрова,
 Сорвав, отбрасывает прочь...
 И бездна нам обнажена
 Со своими страхами и мглами,
 И нет преград меж ней и нами –
 Вот отчего нам ночь страшна.

The theme of “obnaženie” is central to both Dostoevskij’s ‘Bobok’ and Ivanov’s poem. Tjutčev does not link “obnaženie” with the motif of sensuality, but I think the suggestion is there. What “noč” does in Tjutčev’s poem is what Ivanov’s speaker in part one calls upon art to do: it tears away the “pokrov”, or cover, and opens up the abyss: Ivanov’s “tajnik”, “omut”, “mertvyj dom”, “Sodom”. In Dostoevskij’s subterranean dead house and Ivanov’s underworld of the unconscious what is particularly ominous and terrible, to put it in Tjutčev’s words, is that “there are no barriers between the abyss and us” (“I net pregrad mež nej i nami”). That is, the abyss is *in us*.

Unlike Tjutčev, however, Ivanov in his poem distances himself from his abyss by putting it in quotation marks, that is, making it the pronouncement of somebody else. Yet the poetic and dramatic power of part one suggests that the poet, even as he resolutely turns away from the abyss, fully acknowledges its depth and temptation, its power in human nature. Part one ends with the impressive and terrifying words: “Podsoznatel’nyj Sodom” –

terrifying precisely because Sodom is not an external, visible enemy belonging to the day, but an internal, intangible, nocturnal enemy who inhabits the dungeon of the spirit and attacks by stealth.

This motif of turning away from the abyss is apparent not only in the final line of the whole poem, but in the opening line of part two: "Mne svjaščenna Muz ograda". The poet in part two of his poem does not engage in a point by point refutation of the views on art set forth in part one; he does not use prescriptive language; he does not heavy-handedly say: "the purpose of art" is this and that. He approaches his theme indirectly, but personally. "Mne svjaščenna Muz ograda". He forcefully reminds us here that he is *not* the speaker in the first two stanzas. His habitation is not "le dom (l' dom)",⁷ not the "mertvyj dom", not "Sodom". His use of the word "svjaščenna" immediately marks the shift from the profane world of the underground to the high ground of the sacred.

What is it that is sacred to the poet? "Muz ograda". The word "ograda" may be understood in two related ways: it may mean enclosure or fence or wall, but it may also mean the protection or patronage that somebody affords. And, indeed, the poet places himself under the protection or guardianship of the Muses (the theme of "ograda", it should be noted in passing, picks up the earlier image and motif of "pokrov", or Protective veil, in the poem's subtext). Yet "ograda" also means "enclosure", as I have noted. Sacred to the poet is the enclosure of the Muses ("Muz ograda"). He chooses the classic sacred ground and patronage of the Muses, of Dionysia – grounds (I cite Ivanov's words in *Hellenic Religion*) where "great art" was born in the Dionysian rites and sacrifices, or services. Ivanov's "Muz ograda" most certainly alludes to a specific part of the Acropolis. Thus he writes again in *Hellenic Religion*:

This enclosure, which housed a theater and two temples of different antiquity, was the most important arena of Dionysiac art. Here the tragic muse first revealed herself to the human spirit in beauty's unfading forms.

Dionysiac worship or ritual, resulting in the art form of tragedy, is – in Ivanov's *Hellenic Religion* – a conflation of both Apollonian and Dionysiac elements, of both suffering and harmony: as in "rightful raving" – a madness expressing itself in sacred and prophetic ravings and raptures. "A fine line divided the redemptive from the destructive effects of the terrible Dionysiac element," writes Ivanov in *Hellenic Religion*. "They found rapture on the edge of the abyss, in the whirlwind of orgies, in the breath of a frenzied god."

How much of this vision of paradoxical and paroxysmal Dionysiac religious ethos, we may ask, is to be found in Ivanov's late poem "Nudus salta!"⁸ Do the Apollonian and Dionysiac, destructive and redemptive, the

sacred and the profane fuse with one another in Ivanov's poem as they do in *Hellenic Religion*? Do they exist in creative tension with one another as they do in Ivanov's later 'Precepts of Symbolism' ('Zavety simbolizma') – an essay in which Ivanov finds in Tjutčev's imagery and poetic thought the matrix of Russian Symbolism. The artist (and man), Ivanov writes there, in order to preserve his individuality,

limits his thirst to merge with the "limitless" [bespredel'nyĭ], his striving for "oblivion" [samozabveniju], for "annihilation" [uničtoženiju], for "a blending with the slumbering world" [smešeniju s dremljuščim mirom].

He turns to the clear forms of daytime existence, to the patterns of "the gold-clothed veil" [zlatokannogo pokrova] thrown by the gods onto "the mysterious world of spirits" [mir tainstvennyĭch dučov], onto "the nameless abyss" [bezdnju bezymjannuju], that is, the [abyss] that does not find its name in the language of daytime consciousness and external experience [...].

Yet at the same time Ivanov insists on the centrality of the Dionysian element in experience and art.

And nonetheless [i vse ž], the most valuable moment in experience and the most prophetic in creation is submergence in that contemplative ecstasy where there are "no barriers" between us and the "naked abyss" that opens up – in Silence.⁹

The worlds of Tjutčev's "den" and "noč'" ("we now call them Apollon and Dionysus," Ivanov remarks in 'Zavety')¹⁰ seem to complement each other in Ivanov's explication. In "Nudus salta", however, the Apollonian-Dionysiac tension or dialogue has been radicalized and transformed into stark antitheses and choices.¹¹ It is a sober and chastened poet (like the persona of Blok's poem in the epigraph of this essay) that composes in 1944 the cautionary, almost didactic "Nudus salta". Ivanov no longer celebrates "submergence in that contemplative ecstasy where there are 'no barriers' between us and the 'naked abyss'". The silent abyss now emerges as an ominous, carnal, Dostoevskian "podpol'e"¹² – one which has its own spokesman. The "mertvyj dom", on the one hand, and the "Muz ograda", on the other, stand in stark opposition to one another, despite the clear identification of the "ograda" with Ivanov's beloved sacred grounds of Dionysus. Dionysus is "more mighty in the soul of Tjutčev than is Apollon", Ivanov wrote in 'Zavety'.¹³ In "Nudus salta", however, we may say that Apollon is "more mighty" in the soul of Ivanov than is Dionysus, that is, it is Apollon who establishes the terms and direction of the dialogue in "Nudus salta".

Puškin in 'Poët' speaks of Apollon calling upon the poet to participate in "sacred sacrifice" ("Poka ne trebuet poëta / K svjaščennoj žertve Apollon"). In 'Poët i tolpa' he refers to the poet's art in terms of "služen'e, altar' i žertvoprinošen'e". These motifs recur in Ivanov's poem. The fires of Ivanov's "čistych altarej" seem readied for a ritual cleansing and purification of the soul of its "podsoznatel'nyj Sodom". And, indeed, the motif of healing, of "iscelenie", is central to the poem. Yet these sacred fires stand ready for another symbolic offering:

Жару чистых алтарей
 Дар мой – агнец лучший стада
 И плоды, первины сада,
 Не гнездо нетопырей.

The poet's "dar", his "gift" – the "agnec lučšij stada, plody, perviny sada" – contrasts strikingly with the "гнездо нетопырей": bats, creatures of the caverns and of the night who lie outside or beneath the sacred grounds of the Muses. The poet's "gift" ("dar"), of course, is also his "talent" ("dar"), the art he dedicates to the Muses. That art with all its "fruits" is a product of his higher nature, not his darker side, the "nest of bats", the hellish world that he, like Dante, has passed through both as man and poet; for while the poet is not the speaker in part one of the poem, the speaker nonetheless is part of the poet and his experience. The negativity of that nocturnal world of bats and of the poet's emphatic rejection of it are conveyed obliquely in the thrice repeated syllables "ne, ne, ne" that structure the phrase: "*Ne, гнездо нетопырей*".¹⁴

The nest of bats signals a steep, if momentary, descent into the cavernous underworld. Space here is oppressive. In his choice of the Muses the poet also moves in a world of defined limits: the enclosure with its rituals of service and sacrifice. Yet in choosing the enclosure ("Muz ograda"), the world of Apollonian form, the poet in fact moves into the high and open spaces of the spirit, a divinized world of nature governed by the cyclical rhythms and rituals of the pastoral world of animal husbandry, the orchard, the garden and the desert.

The opening of the last stanza of the poem marks a radical ascent to the mountains: the highest point in the poem and in the poem's mythic universe. The habitation of the Muses is not a deep, not a dungeon, not a cavern inhabited by bats, but the mountains where water – not the roiling water in dark hollows at the bottom of a river, but the water of the pure spring – comes forth from the rock strata.¹⁵ The "gornyj ključ porody" of Ivanov's poem surely alludes to the Castalian Spring (sacred to the Muses) on the slopes of Parnassus in Greece. The mountain has two peaks, both frequented by the

Muses: one peak was sacred to Dionysus and the other to Apollo. Dear to the Muses, too, are the herbs and grasses that flourish in the deserts of nature.

The poem's final two stanzas with its references to "sad", "plody", the pair of spices "čobr i tmin", "gornyj ključ porody" and "čistitel'nye vody" may also echo lines, or images, from the biblical 'Song of Songs' ('Pesn' pesnej'), particularly from chapter iv, 14-16:

13:

Рассадники твои – сад с
гранатовыми яблоками, с
превосходными плодами, киперы с нардами.

14:

Нард и шафран, аир и корица со
всякими благовонными деревьями,
мирра и алой со всякими лучшими
ароматами;

15:

Садовый источник – колодезь живых
вод и потоки с Ливана.

16:

Поднимись ветер с севера и
принесись с юга, повея на сад мой, – и
полюбуются ароматы его! Пусть придет
возлюбленный мой в сад свой и
вкушает сладкие плоды его.¹⁶

Allusions to the 'Pesn' pesnej' in Ivanov's poem would also mark a logical shift in the poem from the unbridled sensuality of "Sodom" in the first part of the poem to a richly sensuous, lyric eroticism of 'Pesn' pesnej' – an eroticism that constitutes a lofty counterpart to that of the "zapovednyj tajnik".

The fourth and final stanza of Ivanov's poem starts in the mountains and descends to the desert. The descent, however, ends at the entrance to the underground. The poem that begins with a command ends with another command:

Лей очистительные воды,
Отвратись, в подземный мрак.

Here is the poet Ivanov's most overt statement (significantly in the shape of an image) on the function of great art. The most lofty role of art is cathartic: purification of man's dark instinctual underworld – the "podzemnyj mrak". Indeed, Ivanov's whole poem performs this function. The poet, paradoxical-

ly, does in his poem what the speaker in part one calls upon art to do: he unseals the dead house, but not to celebrate the dark instincts of human nature, but to spiritualize, or, at least, to neutralize them.

The poet "turns away" as he pours his purifying waters into the poisonous subterranean darkness. His gesture contains an element of moral revulsion, but, I believe, not squeamishness. The poet, after all, already has descended into the underground and ascended to the heights of the Muses. He now returns to the underground entrance *not* to descend into it again but, like Dostoevskij in *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*, symbolically to reclaim it. Thus Ivanov's poem, like Dante's *Commedia* and Dostoevskij's *Mertvyj dom*, is simultaneously a testimonial, an initiation and an act of redemption. As a work of art – here I borrow words from Ivanov's *Hellenic Religion* – the poem is a kind of "spiritual reeducation which the contemporary psyche undoubtedly needs".

Such were the thoughts of Vjačeslav I. Ivanov on the question of art February 18, 1944.

Ivanov's "Nudus salta" completes a movement that is already dramatically signalled in 'Palinodija' ('Recantation', 1927):

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 недвижной маски.
 И тел надменных свет, и дум Эвклидов строй.
 Когда ж, подземных флейт разымчивой¹⁷ 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.

The persona of 'Palinodija' presents himself as one who had not merely inhabited the "decorative temple of the devils", but as one ("služitel'") who had served the cult of that temple. Like the traveller Dante in 'Purgatorio I', the poem's narrator has just escaped from the underground. His condition is purgatorial: "[...] em v predgor'jach Fivaidy / Molčan'ja dikij med i žestkie akridy."

In "Nudus salta" the poet's connection with the devils' temple has been completely severed. Only the unexpectedly personal and demonstrative line, "Mne svjaščenna Muz ograda", hints, perhaps, that the poet's choice of the Muses may also have come with a struggle. The poet, in any case, now

identifies himself with the purifying springs of the mountains and the lofty dwelling places of the muses. Yet the poet, as we have seen, has not abandoned entirely the world of Dionysian art. Rather, he has purified it. Even in 'Palinodija' Ivanov does not state directly that he had "fallen out of love" with Hellas. He only asks in astonishment whether he has, indeed, fallen out of love ("Uželi ja tebja, Èllada, razljubil?"). The answer, as "Nudus salta" confirms, is yes and no. The poet has turned away from the devil's dead house, but not entirely from the classical world.

'Palinodija' not only marks the poet's escape from the temple of the devils, but his return to the Apollonian world of Puškin. Not accidentally does Ivanov's poem, in theme and imagery, echo Puškin's disenchantment in 'V načale žizni' (1830) with the immobile sculptured, classical, underground world of "idols" ("kumiry, Del'fijskij idol, sladostrastnyj [...] lživyj ideal – volšebnyj demon") in the "alien garden" of his youth; and echo, equally, Puškin's renewed allegiance (in his 1830 poem) to the humble and heavenly beauty and wisdom of his Madonna-like mentor of school days.

Но я вникал в ее беседы мало.
 Меня смущала строгая краса
 Ее чела, спокойных уст и взоров,
 И полные святыни словеса.

The poet who had strayed – "i často ja ukradkoj ubegal / v velikolepnyj mrak čužogo sada" – now recalls the "stern beauty" ("strogaja краса") of his sanctified teacher, gives heed to her stern guidance:

Но видом величавая жена
 Над школою надзор хранила строго.

The "gloom" of the classical garden *into* which the young Puškin "escapes" ("ubegal") as a youth, the mature Ivanov "escapes" *from* ("bežal"). Ivanov in 'Palinodija' responds to a "call from heaven", but it is also a call from Puškin, the poet of absolute truths.¹⁸

In "Nudus salta" Ivanov completes a movement from *Èllinskaja religija* through 'Zavety simbolizma' and 'Palinodija'. Old passions, old idols, have been cast out or exorcized; old syntheses outgrown. Not the gloom of Dostoevskij's "underground", not the ambiguous Dionysiac world, but Puškin's lofty Apollonian realm of "služen'e, altar' i žertvoprinošen'e" is celebrated. What emerges in the poem is the outline of a new synthesis of a purified classicism and Christianity. Of Christianity nothing is said in the poem, but what is *indicated* is unmistakable: "Dar moj – agnec lučšij stada."

NOTES

- ¹ An earlier condensed version of this essay, read at the Sixth International Symposium of the *Vyacheslav I. Ivanov Convivium* in Budapest (June 12-16, 1995), was published under the same title in *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 41, Budapest 1996, pp. 87-95.
- ² The original variants may be found in the archives of Vjačeslav I. Ivanov under the care of Dmitrij V. Ivanov in Rome.
- ³ Also a whirlpool, or rapid currents swirling in deep hollows or pits at the bottom of a river. A well known Russian proverb runs: "V tichom omute čerti vodjatsja", that is, under the quiet surface much that is devilish, unpleasant or simply unexpected may be taking place.
- ⁴ My citations in English here and elsewhere in my text from Ivanov's *Ellinskaja religija stradajuščego boga* are taken from Carol Anschuetz's English translation, *The Hellenic Religion of the Suffering God*, scheduled for publication by Yale University Press in 1998.
- ⁵ See my discussion of 'Bobok' in *The Art of Dostoevsky. Deliriums and Nocturnes*, Princeton, NJ 1981, pp. 288-303.
- ⁶ Gogol's corrupted painter in 'Portret', depicting reality in a naturalistic way, not only opens up a demonic reality, but becomes an instrument of evil, of the devil. The "faithful, slavish imitation of nature", Gogol' writes in the second version of 'Portret', is like a "transgression" ("prostupok"); it affects you "like a piercing, discordant scream". See my essay, 'Gogol's "The Portrait": The Simultaneity of Madness, Naturalism, and the Supernatural', in *Essays on Gogol. Logos and the Russian Word* (edited by Susanne Fusso and Priscilla Meyer), Evanston, Illinois 1992, pp. 105-111.
- ⁷ "L'dom": Is there an echo here to the once popular historical novel *Ledjanoj dom* (1835) by Ivan I. Lažečnikov (1792-1869)? The central image of the novel, an "ice palace" ("ledjanoj dvorec") actually existed. In Lažečnikov's novel 'Ledjanoj dom' is a symbol of the reign of Anna Ioannovna and despotic authority; it casts a shadow on all aspects of the novel's intrigue and passions. The "ice house", then, is a fitting image for Ivanov's dark and ominous underworld.
- ⁸ One detects in the poem, as in a medieval palimpsest, a faint trace of the "breath of a frenzied god". Ivanov's oxymoronic "zapovednyj tajnik" may constitute a reminiscence of Dionysiac "rapture at the edge of the abyss". "Zapovednyj tajnik" does not lend itself to easy translation. "Tajnik" has the meaning of "hiding place", "cache", of "recess". "Zapovednyj" is often used in the sense of reserve, e.g. "zapovednyj les" – "forest reserve", "preserve" or "sanctuary" – a place where one may be forbidden to go, or, in any case, where one is forbidden to cut down trees. "Zapovednyj" carries with it the idea of prohibition, but also the notion of the "sacral" or the "holy" (see, for example, "zapoved'" – precept, commandment, as in the ten commandments). The notion of a "zapovednyj tajnik", then, presents a disturbing ambiguity of

- meaning. In the context of the stanza the phrase suggests something sinister: a secret hiding place or dwelling where morally reprehensible things take place; yet in the Dionysiac context this same hiding place may be a holy place, recesses or grounds where primitive rites, rituals or sacrifices, may take place. "Zapovednyj tajnik", in this interpretation, takes on the character of a secret, yet sacred place of corruption, or, to borrow words from Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, a place where "holiness and pollution are not yet differentiated".
- ⁹ See 'Zavety simbolizma', in Vjačeslav Ivanov, *Sobranie sočinenij*, II, Brussels 1974, pp. 590, 591.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 591.
- ¹¹ Ivanov seems to have taken leave of the orgiastic underground with a shudder: "Nikogda ne dopuskaet v sebe podpol'e." Ivanov is reported to have said on one occasion to his daughter, Lydia Ivanova (from a conversation between Vasily Rudich [Yale University] and Lydia Ivanova). See also Ivanov's poem 'Palinodija' (1927), discussed in this essay, for an expression of his renunciation at least of the "devils" ("besy") of the Dionysiac world.
- ¹² Ivanov's "mertvyj dom", of course, is Dostoevskij's "podpol'e".
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ The dark and unsettling connotations of "gnezdo netopyrej" find support in the Russian folk saying: "Netopyr' zaletaet v dom, k bede." Ivanov must also have been familiar with the lascivious couplet that belongs to the Dubia of Puškin: "Deva, nog ne topyr' / zaletit netopyr'."
- ¹⁵ The water, of course, comes from down *below*, but is purified in the mountain spring.
- ¹⁶ I am grateful to Professor Marina Kostalevsky of Bard College for calling my attention to possible reminiscences of images in Ivanov's poem to the 'Song of Songs', as well as for some other helpful comments.
- ¹⁷ In the original manuscript and in *Sovremennye zapiski* (Vol. LXV, 1937), where the poem was published for the first time, the penultimate word in the 8th line read: "bezumjaščeje" instead of "razymčivoj". For an exhaustive analysis of 'Palinodija', see Pamela Davidson's recent essay, 'Hellenism, Culture and Christianity: The Case of Vyacheslav Ivanov and His "Palinode" of 1927', *Russian Literature and The Classics* (edited by Peter I. Barta et al.), Amsterdam 1996, pp. 83-116.
- ¹⁸ In his discussion 'The Nest of Gentlefolk and the "Poetry of Marriage and the Hearth"', Waclaw Lednicki refers to Puškin as the poet of "absolute truths and the laws which derive from these truths, [laws which] in the poet's opinion, govern man's life inexorably". See *Bits of Table Talk on Pushkin, Mickiewicz, Goethe, Turgenev and Sienkiewicz*, The Hague 1956, p. 60. Lednicki earlier expounded these views in his book, *Aleksander Puszkyn*, Cracow 1926.