Studies in East European Thought (2020) 72:279–290
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11212-020-09396-w

«Snovidets Mnemoziny»: dreaming of Mnemosyne: Evgeny Boratynsky's poetry in Vyacheslav Ivanov's aesthetics

Yulia Yu. Anokhina[1]

Accepted: 4 November 2020 / Published online: 4 January 2021

Abstract
The article is devoted to the Russian Symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov's perception of Evgeny Boratynsky's poetry. The specific focus is on Ivanov's interest concerning the way Boratynsky's lyrics relate to his philosophy of art. The article examines various types of lyrics in which Ivanov echoes Boratynsky's poetry. One of these is a revival of the genre of "friendly epistles," a genre that was popular in Russian poetry of the Golden Age. In poems of this type, Ivanov uses some of the artistic principles typical of "Pushkin era" poems and refers to Boratynsky's works. The article features Ivanov's address to Boratynsky in the poem "Before Boratynsky's portrait," which serves Ivanov as a means to express his main aesthetic concepts. The article concludes with a suggestion that one of the reasons why these poets belong to the tradition of "the poetry of thought" is the influence of Goethe on both.

Keywords Artistic philosophy · Poetry · Romanticism · Symbolism · Evgeny Boratynsky Vyacheslav Ivanov

Introduction

Russian Symbolists, it is usually believed, revived the memory of Boratynsky's poetry after its oblivion in the second half of the nineteenth century that followed the poet's death. Oleg Lekmanov points out that "the senior Symbolists won the author of *Twilight* back if not from complete oblivion, then certainly from the perception maintained since Belinsky of Boratynsky as a minor, less-than-relevant poet" (Lekmanov 2011, p. 30). The Symbolist's were interested in Boratynsky for a number of factors, including a general interest in philosophy and in the poetics of romanticism (which was seen as a basis to the Symbolist aesthetic quest), as well as an interest in the specific features of the Boratynsky's style and in the prominent cognitive content

✉ Yulia Yu. Anokhina
julia.ane@yandex.ru

[1] Research Laboratory "Rossica. Russian Literature in the Global Cultural Context," A. M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia

of his works. The ways of reviving this interest in Boratynsky that was adopted by turn-of-the-century poets varied: Briusov and Verkhovsky carried out archival research, edited texts for publication, and wrote historical and literary papers on the poet's works, while Bely, Mandelshtam and Khodasevich made Boratynsky's poetry the reference point for their own poetic quest (see Gel'fond 2012). As the Symbolist poets brought Boratynsky's work to their contemporaries' attention, his poetry aroused interest not only in poets and literary critics, but also in philosophers like Vasily Rozanov and Ivan Il'in, who found aspects of the poet's work consonant with their ideas and often cited his poems to substantiate their philosophical opinions (see Anokhina 2018). And the perception of Boratynsky's poetry by the poet and philosopher Vyacheslav Ivanov displays a kind of synthesis of poetic, philological and philosophical approaches: Ivanov's poetic method is in certain ways close to Boratynsky's, and he often turned to the earlier poet's works in order to clarify his own aesthetic positions.

Vyacheslav Ivanov and Evgeny Boratynsky as representatives of the "poetry of thought"

The idea of identifying Ivanov and Boratynsky as belonging to the same poetic tradition was first put forward by Silver Age literary critics. In his review of Ivanov's first book of poems, *Kormchie zvezdy* [Pilot Stars] (1903), the poet and literary critic Aleksandr Kursinsky noted that the kinship between Ivanov's works and the lyrics of Boratynsky and Tiutchev was expressed in their common reliance on intellectual sources. In this way the Silver Age poet was taking up the tradition of the "poetry of thought" (Kursinsky 1903, p. 3). In his comment on Ivanov's *Roman Sonnets*, Khodasevich suggested that the description that Pushkin gave to Boratynsky—"No one can match Boratynsky in terms of the feeling that he has managed to inject into his thoughts"—could be applied to Vyacheslav Ivanov "even more precisely than to Boratynsky himself" (Khodasevich 2015, p. 606). According to Khodasevich, the two poets are also alike in that their philosophizing does not turn into moralizing: "The lack of didacticism protects it against the charge that it lacks the special 'simple-mindedness' that Pushkin demanded from poetry and which he was indeed able to find in the poetry of the 'pensive' Boratynsky" (Khodasevich 2015, p. 607). Similarly, the philosopher and literary critic Ivanov-Razumnik writes in his *Russkaya literatura XX veka* [Russian Literature of the twentieth century] (1920): "The ponderous and sumptuous philosophical poetry of V.I. Ivanov harks back to Baratynsky[1] and Tiutchev; with its archaic wording, it brings us back almost to the eighteenth century, to Derzhavin, to Freemason rationalists and mystics" (Ivanov-Razumnik 1920, p. 28).

These remarks show that the idea of the similarity between the artistic methods of Ivanov and Boratynsky was fairly well-established in critical literature on turn-of-the-century Russian poetry. Maria Gel'fond, the author of a book on Boratynsky's

[1] Both forms—Boratynsky and Baratynsky—are used equally commonly.

influence on twentieth-century Russian poetry, argues that the artistic worlds of Ivanov and Boratynsky demonstrate "a certain similarity in their poetics, related as it is to the nature of philosophical verse" (Gel'fond 2012, p. 61). For both poets, "poetry has become a way of rationally comprehending the world" (*ibid*.). The common sources of philosophical ideas embodied in the works of the two poets have also been identified (in particular, the philosophical system of Schelling). The Lithuanian poet and scholar Tomas Venclova, in his analysis of Ivanov's poem "*Yazyk*" [Language], points out that in this work "human language, the sign systems of culture are made to resemble the language of nature." Venclova notes that "this idea, which goes back to Schelling and to the representatives of the 'Society of Liubomudrie', was viewed positively by Vyacheslav Ivanov, as it also was by Baratynsky, Tiutchev, Fet…" (Venclova 2016, p. 290). The similarity of the artistic worlds noted in critical studies allows us to ask about the role of Boratynsky's poetry in Ivanov's aesthetics. Was Boratynsky's poetic legacy really "only a small gem in a colorful necklace of experiments or illustrations to theoretical positions," as Grigory Vinokur argued, when criticizing the Symbolist reading of Boratynsky in the State Academy of Artistic Sciences in 1925 (Vinokur 2002, p. 40); or does Ivanov's interest in Boratynsky have a distinct philosophical and aesthetic justification?

Boratynsky's poetry in Ivanov's diaogues with other Symbolist poets

Ivanov's interest in Boratynsky was probably sparked by his active participation in the literary milieu of his time and his interaction with other poets, who were interested in Boratynsky in historical and literary terms. Thus, in one of his June 1908 letters to Valery Briusov, Ivanov congratulates Bryusov for having found an unknown version of Boratynsky's poetic epistle "Gnedichu, kotoryi sovetoval sochiniteliu pisat' satiry" [To Gnedich, who advised an author to write satires]. We know that Pushkin did not like this work, writing to Del'vig that "it is much too mild" (Pushkin 1979, p. 58). But the polemic nature of the epistle seemed sufficient to Ivanov, and at first he even wanted to cite part of it as an epigraph in his response to Andrei Bely. Ivanov wrote to Briusov:

> Congratulations on your excellent discovery. I confess that I feel greatly tempted to use these lines of Baratynsky's as an epigraph to my note:
> "I must admit that hundred times a day/[…]/Amusing shoppers with literary abuse" – in order to teach Andrei Bely, that "journal-reading fanatic," a lesson.
> By doing this, you will make me very happy. Vyach.
> (Vyacheslav Ivanov 2016, p. 351).

The lines in full citation are indeed very satirical:

> I must admit that I am ready a hundred times a day
> To frighten the daylights out of eccentric Parnassians,
> To tell these journal-reading fanatics, whispering in their ear if need be,
> That they are bringing shame on themselves by their impudent railing;
> That they should be ashamed of mangling both wit and taste

And of amusing shoppers with literary abuse.
(Baratynsky 1982, p. 399)

Later Ivanov changed his mind and the article "B.N. Bugaev and *Realiora*" (1908) was published without the epigraph. (Vyacheslav Ivanov 2016, p. 353). This episode can be regarded as an example of Ivanov's "appropriation" of Pushkin-era poetry. Boratynsky's satirical attitude had for a certain time become consonant with Ivanov's literary polemics with Bely.

Verses from Boratynsky's satirical poem also appear in Ivanov's poetic dialogue with another Symbolist poet, Iuri Verkhovsky, who, like Briusov, was interested in Boratynsky's work from the scholarly point of view. Verkhovsky in his poetic letter to Ivanov dated August 13, 1908, quotes lines from the same poem: "I remember a fine verse:/An impartial satirist is of considerable social value" (Lavrov 2015, p. 411). The citation was clearly meant to be identified; in fact the name of the poet appears in the same poetic epistle when Verkhovsky shares his plans for academic trips: "And in the footsteps of Boratynsky I want to be off to Kazan" (Lavrov 2015, p. 412). The name of the poet becomes a reference to the author's circumstances and at the same time a symbol of the era in the history of Russian poetry, the aesthetic achievements of which both participants of correspondence valued greatly.

Friendly poetic epistles occupy a special place among the works of Silver Age poets. Poems in this genre were created mainly with an eye to the poets of Pushkin's times, and in this regard, the poetic correspondence between Ivanov and Verkhovsky, which began in 1907, is no exception. As Aleksandr Lavrov, a literary scholar and expert in Silver Age literature, points out, "the content and stylistics of Verkhovsky and Ivanov's poetic epistles fully met the criteria that guided the poets of the Pushkin era in their own experiments" (Lavrov 2015, p. 402). As a result, the letters of Ivanov and Verkhovsky are filled with citations from the works of poets of the first third of the 19th century, including those of Boratynsky. Thus, for example, Ivanov's lines "I'll preempt with a mailed-in rhyme/The real-life rhyme of a kiss" (*ibid.*) clearly refer to the ending of Boratynsky's poetic epistle to Petr Viazemsky: "Although with postal prose/I pay my lazy tribute to you" (Baratynsky 1982, p. 272).

In a poem also addressed to Verkhovsky "*Pis'mo iz chernozemnoi derevni*" [Letter from a Black-Earth Village] (1913) Ivanov once again refers to Boratynsky. In the last octave Ivanov confesses that he had turned to Boratynsky owing to the poem's addressee:

The lyre is silent, but Baratynsky's string
Sounds here, disposing one more to singing,
Revived with humble prayers
By the landlord of this village.
A thought from the poet's hermitage
Is striving to reach you: you are not here!
A star has fallen – the song has been sung…
And what about you, what are you singing about, O poet?
(Ivanov 1987, p. 13).

Here, too, the name of the poet appears, as well as images characteristic of his poetry, namely, the images of a starry sky and a falling star that become a kind of reminiscence of Boratynsky's works, especially his early poem "*Vzgliani na zvezdy*" [Look at the stars] (1825) and the late poems "*Osen'*" [Autumn] (1837) and "*Moiu zvezdu ia znaiu, znaiu*" [I know my star, I know it] (1839). In "*Osen'*," the image of a falling (i.e. "shooting") star is not only associated with the death of Pushkin, but also symbolizes the end of the creative path of a wordsmith.

The dialogue of Ivanov and Verkhovsky on Boratynsky's poetry is expressed not only in their poetic correspondence, but also in prose articles. Verkhovsky's "On the Symbolism of Boratynsky" (1912) was written in response to Ivanov's "Thoughts on Symbolism" (1912) and "The Legacy of Symbolism" (1910), extending Ivanov's reflections on the nature of creativity and the forerunners of Symbolism. Verkhovsky's article proved to be a useful asset in the formation of Ivanov's theory of Symbolism, as the former tried to substantiate the idea of Boratynsky having been one of those whose works can be understood as symbolist in accordance with Ivanov's theoretical statements. It is interesting to note what Verkhovsky's idea of Boratynsky's poetry, formed under Ivanov's influence, gave rise to different assessments in Russian literary studies. Grigory Vinokur, who was the first to question the way Boratynsky's poetry was seen by the Symbolists (1925), considered it a distorted perception of the poet's work, while Svetlana Zvonova, a present-day scholar, notes, on the contrary, that thanks to Ivanov, Verkhovsky managed to clarify the understanding of Boratynsky's place in the literary process (Zvonova 2006, p. 61).

The practice of friendly poetic epistles in the manner of the Pushkin era is consistent with the philosophy of "life-creativity" [*zhiznetvorchestvo*] that was all-important for Ivanov (for more about the idea of connection between aesthetic theory and biographical practice see Wachtel 1994). Therefore, to understand the role of Boratynsky in these poetic epistles is to see a concrete example of the life-creative attitudes embodied in Ivanov's theory of Symbolism. In these works, Boratynsky appears to be "congenial" not only to Verkhovsky, a student of the poet's work, but also to Ivanov as a reader, so references to his works simultaneously become both a code, understandable to the participant of the dialogue, and a mechanism of stylization.

Ivanov's sonnet "Pered portretom Boratynskogo" [before Boratynsky's portrait] as an aesthetic manifesto

Ivanov engaged in a peculiar dialogue with the poet of the Pushkin era in his poem "Before Boratynsky's portrait" (1915). This text is another poetic statement of Ivanov about the poet who said that he hoped to find "readers in future generations." This poem, like the poetic epistles, is written in the spirit of the poetry of Pushkin's time, in a genre favored by the romantics—verses "to a portrait" (e.g. "For the portrait of Zhukovsky" by Batiushkov, "For the portrait of Chaadaev" by Pushkin, "For the portrait" by Lermontov):

Just as was true of the sons of bygone Atlantis,

A forehead sloped back toward the top of the head…
Was this not heaven pressing down
With its spheres on the <bone of>[2] caryatids?

The face is a tablet inscribed with disdain and injury!..
And one that's new is growing bright above it
(If the magic glass is not deceiving us):
Muses are kissing his restingplace.

Beyond the Lethe of bygone eras,
He, Mnemosyne's dreamer, could distinguish valleys
Faded like withered asphodel.

Like the rushing sound in a seashell, the din of past ages
Did not cease for him. Thus did the sacred hymn express
The silences and delirious rhapsodies of cosmic memory.
(Ivanov 1987, p. 32).

As Maria Gel'fond has determined, Ivanov is referring here to a lithograph by A. Münster based on the portrait sketch of Boratynsky by A. Lebedev (Gel'fond 2012, p. 61). "A forehead sloped back toward the top of the head" [*Do temeni pologoe chelo/Otkinuto*]—Ivanov thus characterizes the poet's appearance, and indeed in Lebedev's sketch Boratynsky is depicted with a startlingly high forehead. In Ivanov's sonnet, this feature appears as a key to his personality: the poem presents an attempt to "comprehend the inner through the outer" (Gel'fond 2012, p. 62). The *inner* (i.e., psychological state), unlike the *outer* (the poet's appearance), is expressed in the poem not statically, but in process. The state of the crisis is dialectically overcome by the power of art: "The face is a tablet inscribed with disdain and injury!../And one that's new is growing bright above it <…> Muses are kissing his restingplace." [*Chelo – skrizhal' nadmen'ia i obidy/I novoe nad nim rastet svetlo* […] *Ego pokoi lobzaiut Aonidy*]. The idea of the therapeutic possibilities of poetry appealled greatly to Boratynsky; it is expressed in the first line of his poem "*Boliashchii dukh vrachuet pesnopen'\e*" [Song ministers to the ailing spirit] (1834). It is significant that it is in this poem that Ivanov finds confirmation of his idea that "the word-symbol becomes a magical suggestion that allows the listener to partake of the mysteries of poetry" (Ivanov 1994b, p. 183).

Ivanov's idea of a poet's (seemingly generalized beyond Boratynsky here) place in the universe is expressed in the first quatrain of the sonnet. The poet's resemblance to the "sons of Atlantis" posits him as heir to the ancient legendary civilization. On the other hand, his "spatial" position is intermediate, as the poet combines the earthly (the material) and the heavenly (the spiritual). Therefore,

[2] In the Brussels collected works of Ivanov the text of the poem is printed with the mark "undeciphered word." Modern researchers of Ivanov's poetry were able to read the word "kost'" ("bone") in the manuscript of the poem.

in Ivanov's opinion, poets—like caryatids—not only "decorate" the universe, but are its bearing structures. Just as the column holds the architectural structure, the poet "holds" the universe: "Ne nebo l' naleglo/Navesom sfer na […] kariotidy?" [Was this not heaven pressing down/With its spheres on the […] caryatids?]

Ivanov's poem cannot be called XXX in the full sense, because only one feature of the poet's portrait—his face—is focused on. However, the high forehead as an artistic detail is multifunctional, as it both characterizes Boratynsky's inner world and generates a chain of associations that reveal Ivanov's idea of the place and role of the poet and poetry in the world.

It is noteworthy that the key words of the poem turn out to be specifically "Boratynskian." The word "*skrizhal'*" [tablet] reminds us of Boratynsky's poem "*Chto za zvuki?…*" [What are those sounds?…] (1841), where the image of "*muzykal'nye skrizhali*" [musical tablets] makes it possible for the hero of the poem, the "old blind beggar" to be equated with a prophet who has access to divine revelation. The verb "*nemstvovat'*" [to be mute (translated here as 'to express silences')] reminds us of the poem "*Bokal*" [Goblet] (1835) with its hero admitting that the truth is revealed to the prophet-poet only "*v nemotstvuyishchei pustyne*" [in the mute wilderness]. Finally, the ending of the poem contains a kind of answer to the question which Boratynsky asked himself throughout his creative journey and which he expressed in its most poignant form in the poem "*Rifma*" [Rhyme], the final text in Boratynsky's last collection of poems, *Sumerki* [Twilight] (1842): "*Pesnopevtsa zhar/– Smeshnoi nedug il' vysshyi dar*?" [Is the ardor of the poet a ridiculous ailment or the highest kind of gift?] Ivanov in his address to Boratynsky removes the dichotomy that tormented the poet, because for a Symbolist poet there is no contradiction between delirious rhapsodies and revelation: "Tak pamiat'yu Vselennoi/Nemotstvoval i bredil gimn sviashchennyi" [Thus did the sacred hymn express the silences and delirious rhapsodies of cosmic memory]. This is Ivanov's answer to Boratynsky's question concerning the nature of creativity.

Ivanov actualizes not only the specifically Boratynskian vocabulary, but also the imagery of classical antiquity, which, as Gel'fond has noted, "in almost all cases points back to Boratynsky" (Gel'fond 2012, p. 61). The images of Lethe and Mnemozyne play a particularly significant role here revealing the opposition of oblivion to memory, a theme that is extremely important for the poetic views of both men. The phrase "Mnemozyne's dreamer" is the link connecting the poetic worlds of Ivanov and Boratynsky.

On the one hand, this phrase shows that the essence of Boratynsky's poetry lies in its resurrectional quality. At the same time, the phrase leads us to at least two historiosophical poems by Boratynsky, "*Posedniaia smert'*" [The Last Death] (1827) and "*Na chto vy, dni*!" [What use are you, days!] (1840). In the first, the persona is in a state "between slumber and wakefulness" and sees the different stages of human development and, finally, becomes a witness of how the "last fate of all living things" is accomplished. In the second poem, the poet's persona, whose soul fell asleep, comes to a conclusion consonant with the famous phrase in Ecclesiastes that "there is nothing new under the sun." The body of the persona, who died spiritually, slumbers and is forced to watch "*pod veianiem vozvratnykh snovideniy*" [to the

gentle wafting of recurring dreams] the endlessly repeated daily cycles of individual and social life.

Ivanov, in referring to Boratynsky as "Mnemozyne's dreamer" points to his ability to remember the historical and extra-historical past. The issue of historical memory in Boratynsky's poetry evolved in significant ways during the poet's life. The personal admission in Boratynsky's rendering of Millevoye's "Lethe"—"ia minuvshee liubliu" [I love the past] later becomes a desire to read of the past amidst the "mute ruins" of Rome and "Finnish age-old granite" as though this had been inscribed on stone tablets. In his last collection, *Twilight*, the poet appeals directly to his contemporaries to cherish historical memory and the truth of the past (most vividly in the poem "Predrassudok!" [Prejudice!] 1841). Although the poetic philosophy of Memory was not developed by Boratynsky in detail, Memory became a kind of axiological dominant of his work; in fact one of the most important tasks of poetry, according to Boratynsky, was to overcome oblivion. And this is how Ivanov understood Boratynsky's poetry as well, referring to it as to "a thoughtful and darkly solemn melody," which "seems to be the voice of a dim memory of some ancient living knowledge that reveals to the poet the secret book of the world soul» (Ivanov 1994a, p. 186).

This link between the concept of memory and aspects of aesthetics represents a partial anticipation of the theory of memory that Ivanov elaborated in some detail. However, while Boratynsky is characterized by romantic longings for the past, with historical memory and recollection being closely related (though not entirely identical) concepts for him, in Ivanov's theory of memory, in contrast,—as Elena Takho-Godi has pointed out,—Memory and Recollection are by no means identical. What is important here is that Boratynsky, whom Ivanov has here called "Mnemosyne's dreamer," finds himself in the company of those poets whose genius makes them capable of communing with the Apollonian memory, which "has the healing powers that restore the unity of a human soul and the world" (Takho-Godi 2019, p. 175).

Thus, in a poem where form and literary convention would seem to be primary (it is a sonnet that follows in the traditional Romantic "to a portrait" genre, and is addressed to one of the iconic poets of the Pushkin era), Ivanov formulates the key elements of his philosophy of poetry in a concentrated poetic form. The poet has insight into mysteries, he is a dreamer whose spiritual activity represents a condition of the stability of the world order. Addressing the portrait of Boratynsky becomes for Ivanov a pretext for expressing his philosophical and aesthetic views on the nature and meaning of poetic art.

Ivanov's interpretation of Boratynsky's philosophy of art

Vyacheslav Ivanov also addressed Boratynsky's work from the point of view of a philologist and translator. In a 1933–1934 tribute to the centenary of Goethe's death, Ivanov translated, into German, poems by Boratynsky and Tyutchev, both of whom had responded to the news of the German poet's passing. Ivanov accompanied his translations with a brief introductory essay that outlined the two poets' creative work and commented on the translated texts. In Ivanov's view, beyond

the aesthetic perfection of these poems is the fact that they must be counted among "the most beautiful things that were written in honor of Goethe" (Ivanov 1987, p. 163). They are also significant in the cross-cultural sense by demonstrating the importance of Goethe for Russian nineteenth century intellectuals. Each poem, Ivanov continues, reflects the distinctive character of its author's artistic method. The poetic approaches of Boratynsky and Tiutchev, just as the two specific poems, are neither compared nor juxtaposed, they are presented as two separate and independent works on a common theme.

In the interpretation of Boratynsky's poetry that Ivanov presents here, he draws on Pushkin's appraisal of the poet. He refers to two unfinished Pushkin essays on Boratynsky, as well as to Pushkin's "*Poslanie Del'vigu*"[Epistle to Del'vig]. Ivanov cites Pushkin's high opinion of his contemporary and, in general, appears to share most of Pushkin's judgments. He follows Pushkin in regarding Boratynsky's poetry as "metaphysical." Both the kind of philosophical ideas expressed in the verse of Boratynsky and the poet's artistic style are, in Ivanov's opinion, determined by Boratynsky's personal psychological features. Each of the traits ascribed to Boratynsky in Ivanov's psychological portrait of the poet is seen as a source of a particular aspect of his philosophy of art. For example, the "feeling of alienation" [*chuvstvo otreshennosti*] that Ivanov believed Boratynsky experienced, generates the Stoicism that is expressed in the poems. The poet's desire to view the phenomena of the changing world *sub specie aeternitatis* and in terms of the broadest possible generalization, similarly reveals a spiritual wound, because, according to Ivanov, Boratynsky had a "wounded heart" [*uyazvlennoe serdtse*]. Even the modest assessment that Boratynsky gave to his poetry in the poem "I am not blinded by my Muse…" [*Ne osleplen ia muzoiu moeiu*] (1827) is regarded by Ivanov as the result of his "hidden pride" [*zataennaia gordost'*] (Ivanov 1987, p. 164). Ivanov believes that the nature of the philosophical ideas put forward by the poet affects the style of his works. He maintains that the "monumentality" and "terseness" of Boratynsky's verse are related to his desire for generalizations. The solemn and majestic tranquility of the verse stems from the fact that Boratynsky embraced the idea of the unknowable nature of the divine (Ivanov saw "explicit agnosticism" [*otkrytyi agnostitsizm*] in his poetry). According to Ivanov, Boratynsky's historiosophical views were most vividly expressed in his poems "*Poslednii poet*" [The Last Poet] (1834) and "*Primety*" [Omens] (1836). (Although Ivanov does not name these poems, they can be identified from the cited quotations.) The poet's persona in "The Last Poet" is, in Ivanov's opinion, "summoned" [*vyzvan*] by Boratynsky as a medium: he is the only one who, unlike the rest of humanity, has not yet lost the ability to listen to the voice of nature. As in the poem "Before Boratynsky's portrait," the issue of memory appears here to be the most significant in the poet's work: "The spirit of our 'Pensieroso' seems to embrace—from the heights of a suprapersonal memory removed from the flow of time—all the motives and desires of human life as a single gloomy drama" (Ivanov 1987, p. 164).

As in the case of the sonnet, Ivanov believes, historical and extra-historical memory in Boratynsky's poetry is inseparable from the individual and personal being of the poet.

In the second part of his introductory note, Ivanov comments on some aspects of the "On Goethe's Death" poem with the obvious goal of making the work, which is difficult even for the Russian reader, more understandable to the German reader. Ivanov emphasized that the idea of death as a female figure expressed in this poem goes back to folklore imagery and is associated with the fact that grammatically the Russian the word death [*smert'*] is of feminine gender. Ivanov defines the basic concept underlying the poem as "the idea of a human spirit's ability of cross the boundaries of personal consciousness by the power of its creatively sympathetic knowledge and to recover its identity in the very center of the universe" (Ivanov 1987, p. 164) Thus, according to Ivanov, the ideational content of the poem is based on the romantic notion of genius. The essay shows that the poetic "doctrine" of justifying the Creator is based on a specific understanding of genius. In the ending of the poem, two outcomes that are possible for the human soul after the end of earthly life are considered. One of them is defined by Ivanov as follows: "even if the Creator had deprived the human soul of its personal immortality, his verdict would have been justified by the fact that the soul, as can be seen in the case of Goethe, is capable of introducing eternal substance into its transient separate existence" (Ivanov 1987, p. 164).

Therefore, in Ivanov's opinion, Boratynsky justifies the idea of the absence of eternal existence for man by the genius' ability to embody the absolute in the temporal and transient. The other possible outcome for the soul—the possibility of its existence in eternity—in the case of a genius is justified by the ability of complete existence in real time, i.e. of existence during ceaseless spiritual endeavors, which even in life frees one from what is earthly. As Ivanov puts it: "But if the soul is granted a life after death, it will be all the easier for it to purify itself of the defects of earthly life, by becoming able to respond creatively and fruitfully to the gifts of the world of transience with the gifts of its love" (*ibid*.).

Ivanov emphasizes that Boratynsky justifies the Creator's plan for the immortality of the soul of a genius by the fact that this soul naturally and easily rids itself of the earthly at the end of its earthly life, precisely because it was able to embody the absolute (in the products of creativity) in the course of earthly existence, and thus begin the process of liberation on earth. In Ivanov's opinion, Boratynsky's theodicy rests on aesthetic foundations.

The brief introduction to the translation of the poem "On Goethe's Death" is indicative in several respects at once. It reflects Ivanov's approach to the interpretation of Boratynsky's poetic works: From his point of view, the ideational content of Boratynsky's poems and their philosophy are shaped by the psychological features of the poet's personality. It can also be said that the note presents a kind of "concentrate" of Ivanov's thoughts about Boratynsky's works, since Ivanov's obvious goal was to give a concise and accurate description of the poet's artistic world in the shortest possible form. That is why Ivanov neither mentions particular works, nor considers any individual ideas expressed in them, instead offering a "starting point" for a conversation about Boratynsky. Ivanov provides the German reader with the optics for a productive reading of the poem "On Goethe's Death": the unusual theodicy expressed in this work is presented in the context of the idea that the poet's worldview is founded on stoicism and agnosticism.

Conclusion

Ivanov's interest in Boratynsky was neither special nor systematic. Yet Ivanov seemed to feel a certain aesthetic affinity to this poet of the Pushkin era. And certainly it is not without reason that Ivanov's reflections on Boratynsky's poetry became a pretext for discussing the nature of the poetic word and creativity in general. Thus Ivanov paid special attention to those of Boratynsky's poems that can be called programmatic: "The Last Poet," "Omens," and "On Goethe's Death." These are the texts that expressed Boratynsky's view of the poet as a genius, as a prophet who possesses the knowledge that is not accessible to the common man. Such a view of the writer of poetry could be applied to Ivanov as well, as it is exemplified in the sonnet "Before Boratynsky's portrait." As for the figure Goethe, he is of great significance for both Boratynsky and Ivanov. The influence of the German poet can probably explain the consonance of the aesthetic philosophy of both "poets of thought."

Acknowledgements The research was carried out at the A. M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IWL RAS) funded by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, Project No. №17-18-01432-П).

Funding This study was funded by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, Project No. №17-18-01432-П).

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

Anokhina, Yu.Yu. (2018). Lichnost' i poeziia E.A. Boratynskogo v russkoi filosofskoi mysli kontsa XIX – nachala XX veka: Vl. Solov'ev i V.V. Rozanov o poete [Personality and poetry of E.A. Boratynsky in Russian philosophical thought of the late 19th - early 20th century: V. Solovyov and V.V. Rozanov about the poet] In *Literatura i religiozno-filosofskaia mysl' kontsa XIX – pervoi treti XX veka: K 165-letiiu Vl. Solov'eva* (Vol. 2). Moscow: Vodolei.

Baratynsky, E. A. (1982). *Stikhotvoreniia. Poemy [Poems]*. Moscow: Nauka.

Gel'fond, M. M. (2012). *Boratynsky i poety XX veka [Boratynsky and 20th century poets]*. Moscow: Biosfera.

Ivanov, V. I. (1987). *Sobranie sochinenii [Collected works]* (Vol. 4). Bruxelles.

Ivanov, V. I. (1994a). *Sobranie sochinenii [Collected works]* (Vol. 1). Bruxelles.

Ivanov, V. I. (1994b). *Rodnoye i vselenskoe [The native and the universal]*. Moscow: Respublika.

Ivanov, V. (2016). *Issledovaniia i materialy [Vyacheslav Ivanov: Research and Materials]*. St. Petersburg: RKhGA.

Ivanov-Razumnik, R. V. (1920). *Russkaia literatura XX veka (1890–1915) [Russian 20th century literature (1890–1915)]*. Petrograd: Kolos.

Khodasevich, V. F. (2015). Knigi i liudi [Books and men]. In *Vyacheslav Ivanov: pro et contra* (Vol. 2, pp. 606–608). St. Petersburg: RKhGA.

Kursinsky, A. A. (1903). *Review of Ivanov's Kormchie zvezdy*. Moscow: Kurier, No. 88, May 27.

Lavrov, A. V. (2015). *Simvolisty i drugiye [Symbolists and others]*. Moscow: NLO.

Lekmanov, O. (2011). Boratynsky and high modernists. In *Studies in Russian modernist literature and culture: In honor of John E. Malmstad* (pp. 29–43). Frankfurt am Main [etc.]: Lang.

Pushkin, A. S. (1979). *Sochineniia [Works]* (Vol. 10). Leningrad: Nauka.

Takho-Godi, E. A. (2019). Healing by memory: The Case of Vyacheslav Ivanov. In *Regards croisés sur la mémoire de la Révolution russe en exil (1917 – 2017*). Volume 1 of *L'Age d'argent et l'emigration russe* (pp. 173–182). Service Éditions de l'Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 Lyon.

Venclova, T. (2016). "Iazyk" [Language]. In *Vyacheslav Ivanov: pro et contra* (Vol. 2, pp. 283–295). St. Petersburg: RKhGA.

Verkhovsky, Yu. N. (1912). O simvolizme Boratynskogo [On Boratynsky's symbolism], In *Trudy i dni*, 3: 1–9.

Vinokur, G. O. (2002). Boratynsky i simvolisty [Boratynsky and Symbolists]. In *K 200-letiiu Boratynskogo. Sbornik materialov mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii, 21-23 fevralia 2000, Moskva - Muranovo [To the 200th birth anniversary of Boratynsky. The Proceedings of the international Conference held on February 21-23, 2000, in Moscow and Muranovo]* (pp. 28–49). Moscow: IMLI RAN.

Wachtel, M. (1994). Vyacheslav Ivanov from aesthetic theory to biographical practice in creating life. In *The Aesthetic Utopia of Russian Modernism* (pp. 151–160). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Zvonova, S. A. (2006). *Tvorchestvo Yu. N. Verkhovskogo v istoriko-kul'turnom kontekste pervoi treti XX veka [Verkhovsky's creative work in the historic and cultural context of the first third of the 20th century]*. Dissertation, Perm.