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# SLAVONICA

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# REALISTS AND IDEALISTS: THE CASE OF VIACHESLAV IVANOV VERSUS ANDREI BELYI

Roger Keys

The general outlines of Andrei Belyi's personal and artistic relationship with Viacheslav Ivanov have been well delineated by Georges Nivat in his article 'Prospéro et Ariel',<sup>1</sup> and many of the remaining gaps in our knowledge will doubtless be filled by the Russian scholar Nikolai Kotrelev when he eventually publishes his long-awaited redaction of the correspondence between the two writers. The points of contact and divergence between their theories of art and symbolism have also attracted a good deal of expert critical attention since Johannes Holthusen first analysed the subject in his 1957 Habilitationsschrift *Studien zur Ästhetik und Poetik des russischen Symbolismus*.<sup>2</sup> What I wish to do in this article is to revisit certain aspects of the Realist/Idealist controversy which sprang up between the two writers during 1908, in order to focus not so much on the theoretical surface of the debate, as on its underlying personal and religious implications, implications which would cast light on the deeper meaning of Belyi's artistic achievement in the period up to and including the writing of Petersburg, implications which would sour his relationship with Ivanov thereafter and for which Belyi seems to have been unable to forgive him. As everybody knows, the body of aesthetic theory which Belyi produced in the period to 1912 presents interpreters of his work with enormous problems. Many of the articles were written at great speed for the periodical press, and this helps to explain what John Elsworth has described as Belyi's 'tendency to start afresh each time he sets pen to paper, to re-formulate in new terms ideas that have been expressed before.'<sup>3</sup> But it was not just a question of repetition. Belyi placed excessive reliance on using the conceptual schemes of other thinkers as springboards for developing his own ideas. The result was that all too often both his own philosophical positions and his adopted frames of reference disappeared in a mass of well-nigh impenetrable theoretical jargon. All sense of logical development might collapse. This wilful loss of perspective within the individual article was compounded in 1909 and 1910 when Belyi came to select material for inclusion in three volumes of his essays.<sup>4</sup> Chronological order was largely abandoned in favour of grouping articles according to supposedly thematic or stylistic criteria which were either not easy to detect or quite superficial. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Kant, the neo-Kantians, Humboldt, Potebnia – all might be grist to the mill of Belyi's 'theory of symbolism', but the result was unlikely to be a model of enlightenment for those who made the attempt to follow it.

Not surprisingly, Belyi was at pains in his later memoirs to explain exactly what it was that he had been trying to achieve in that rather haphazard corpus of writing. 'By symbolism', he said, 'I meant artistic-creative activity within us; by theory of symbolism I meant the answer to such questions as: how is it that this activity within us is possible and what are the principles which direct it? This activity I saw as being autonomous, primary, integral, determining not only artistic creation, but also the creative nature of our thoughts and actions, both as individuals and in society.'<sup>5</sup> This retrospective attempt on Belyi's part at rescuing order from apparent chaos seems clear enough and emphasizes an immanent, 'this-worldly', perhaps even Nietzschean strain in his thinking about art and artistic creation that came to be present fairly early on. But what does not emerge from Belyi's later discussions of the subject is any clear indication of how this view of art evolved from, or might at least be reconciled with, his attempts elsewhere to define 'symbolism' as a 'method for depicting [Schopenhauerian] Ideas in images'<sup>6</sup> or 'symbols' as Solov'evian 'windows on eternity.'<sup>7</sup> In fact, his 'theory of symbolism' went through several complex transformations during the period to 1912, not all of them logically congruent. He seemed a past master at pointing in different philosophical directions simultaneously without appearing always to be aware that he was doing so.

We know from Belyi's diaries that his earliest view of art was almost certainly influenced by his reading of Schopenhauer and was based on a belief that it is possible to acquire knowledge of the 'world beyond' through the contemplation of artistic 'symbols'.<sup>8</sup> The desire to possess such certain knowledge would remain a constant factor in Belyi's psychological development throughout the years that followed, as would his conviction that the artist and his art were of crucial importance in attaining it. What changed from time to time was his view of the way in which the artist gained access to such truths and of the processes by which his art might mediate them to others. It was difficult to find a place for the 'creative imagination' in his early theory, of course, because there the artist was regarded primarily as a clairvoyant able to glimpse pre-existent 'noumenal' truths and his language as a transparent, corresponsive medium enabling him to communicate such 'transcendent' knowledge to others with a minimum of distortion. Now Belyi actually claimed that, while he was writing Part Two of the Dramatic Symphony, he could definitely feel that somebody else's hand was moving his pen. 'Never did I write as instinctively as on that night,' he tells us.<sup>9</sup> And yet this entirely passive view of the artist's role in communicating 'transcendent' truths could hardly have accorded well with his experience of what it was like – on other occasions – to be a writer exercising his creative imagination or, indeed, to be a reader necessarily denied direct access to the 'divine' inspiration of others. There was no room for the specifically aesthetic moment in his early theory, in other words, or for the notion of individual creative truth which it implies. Belyi approached the problem on a number of occasions. In 'The Forms of Art', for example, he wrote that the 'inner truth' of what the artist depicts 'may be understood variously. One and the same scene, depicted by many painters, will be refracted, in Zola's expression, through the prism of their souls. Each artist will see different aspects of it. Therefore individualism is to some

extent essential in painting.’<sup>10</sup> But what was effectively an acknowledgment of ‘impressionism’ did not prevent his asserting a few pages later that ‘reality is not how it appears to us [...] Reality as we know it is different from reality as it truly is.’<sup>11</sup> And he was in no doubt, any more than Schopenhauer had been, that it was possible for art and the artist to penetrate the ‘deceptive veil of Maia’ that lies between us and the ‘real world’. As he wrote in an article of 1904, disowning Kant’s apparent denial of the possibility of metaphysics: ‘It is only beyond the gates of critical philosophy that genuine symbolism begins.’<sup>12</sup>

Belyi was quite right to regard the main burden of his early theory as being ‘anti-Kantian’, therefore,<sup>13</sup> or at least directed against the conclusions of the first Critique, and yet he was simultaneously exploring other areas whose theoretical rationale was precisely the opposite, for example, his concern with the laws of aesthetic perception and his interest in the sensuous embodiment of individual ‘forms of art’. He tried several times to assert the validity of ‘symbolism’ as a ‘method for combining the eternal with its manifestations in time and space,’<sup>14</sup> but articles like ‘Simvolizm kak miroponimanie’ rarely rose above the level of rather mechanical attempts at conflating immanent and transcendent postulates. More fruitful, although nowhere theoretically sustained, was the process by which Belyi became gradually aware that artistic images, as well as being transcendent bearers of pre-established meaning, might also symbolize or ‘express’ states of consciousness within the writer’s own psyche and, by extension, within that of his fictional characters as well. We can see this, for example, in the development of his attitude towards Chekhovian ‘impressionism’ and in his gradual acceptance of ‘mediated’ as opposed to ‘unmediated’ lyricism.<sup>15</sup> Evidence of this changing attitude could be seen in his creative work as early as 1898 (viz. the ‘sceptical’ mystery drama, ‘He Who Has Come’),<sup>16</sup> but it was not until 1907 or thereabouts that any particularly clear indications of his move towards a more immanent, ‘expressive’ aesthetic as opposed to a transcendent, ‘mystical’ one, began to appear in his critical and theoretical writings.<sup>17</sup> In an article published during September of that year he ventured to suggest that ‘symbolic art aims at revealing the inner meaning of the image, regardless of whether we acknowledge that meaning to be the expression of our own experience or to be something eternal (a Platonic Idea as they say).’<sup>18</sup> And by October he was able to risk omitting references to the ‘transcendent’ dimension entirely. ‘A characteristic feature of symbolism in art,’ he said, ‘is the desire to use an image taken from reality as a means of conveying an experienced content of consciousness. The dependence of images of the visible world on the conditions of the consciousness which perceives them, moves the centre of gravity in art away from the image itself to the way it is perceived. Thus realism turns into impressionism [...] The image, as a model of the experienced content of consciousness, is a symbol. And the method of symbolizing experiences by means of images is symbolism.’<sup>19</sup> But Belyi seemed unaware of the implications which his new ‘expressive’ theory was bound to have for the claims which he continued to make elsewhere for the transcendent authority of Symbolist artists as revealed in their art. The fundamental ambiguity of his position cut no ice with at least two of his Symbolist colleagues, however, the St Petersburg

poet and theoretician, Viacheslav Ivanov, and the leader of the Moscow 'school', Valerii Briusov.

The confusion of ends and means had bedevilled critical and aesthetic discussion in Russia since the time of Belinsky, of course, but some methodological order had been brought to the subject by Briusov and Ivanov in the early years of the century. Both wrote repeatedly and unambiguously of the epistemological boundaries which divide art and religion. Briusov confessed to Blok, for example, that he wished only to be a 'composer of verse, an artist in the narrow sense of the word – whatever exceeds that will be achieved by you younger ones.'<sup>20</sup> And Ivanov would eventually suggest reviving the word 'poet' in its original sense – 'the poet as a personality ("poetae nascuntur") as opposed to its use in our own day which aims to reduce a high appellation to the level of "artist-versifier acknowledged as gifted and skilled in his own technical sphere".'<sup>21</sup> Briusov and Ivanov may have held polar views of which was of the greater value, therefore – art itself or the personal beliefs of the artist – but at least they were agreed on a logical definition of what it was they were appraising. They rarely succumbed to what the British philosopher Collingwood would call the 'fallacy of precarious margins', when typically 'a combination of art and religion is elliptically called art, and then characteristics which it possesses not as art but as religion are mistakenly supposed to belong to it as art.'<sup>22</sup> Not so Belyi, who, for reasons of his own, was nowhere so consistent as in the blurring of such distinctions.

Disputes concerning the relative merits of ideological as opposed to formal criteria were a regular occurrence in Symbolist circles during the first decade of the century, of course, and most of the disagreements appeared to involve Belyi. As always, there was more to this than met the eye, however, since Belyi on other occasions was far from denying the validity of the formal approach to art. The exchange which took place between him and Briusov on the pages of *Vesy* during 1905 was entirely typical. Briusov had taken exception to what he took to be his colleague's blind adherence to religious criteria as revealed in his article, 'The Apocalypse in Russian Poetry'. 'You can say what you like,' wrote Briusov, 'but it is possible to value poets by the vices and virtues of their poetry alone, and by nothing else [...] You [, however,] evaluate poets by their attitude to the "Woman clothed with the sun".'<sup>23</sup> Belyi agreed that his particular way of expressing himself on this occasion might have merited Briusov's censure, and he went on to state quite firmly that in his opinion literary criticism should be rooted in 'awareness of the idea that artistic works are independent of adjacent areas of activity (like those of religion, society and science).' But, he wondered, did he really need to keep on proclaiming ad nauseam a commonplace which had long been known to the two of them? And was Briusov really attempting to exclude the possibility of employing what he called 'other methods' in relation to art?<sup>24</sup>

Like Briusov at this time, Ivanov also insisted on drawing a clear and logical distinction between the gifted individual or 'prophet' on the one hand, who claims privileged knowledge of the ends of existence, and the creative artist on the other who, while he may happen also to be such a gifted individual, is unable to claim prophetic authority by virtue of his art alone. In the first case the



individual might 'rise' a *realibus ad realiora*, but if he were to attempt to express that superior knowledge through the medium of art, then he would have to 'descend' a *realioribus ad realia* in order to do so. The basic outline of this idea had been expressed by Ivanov as early as 1905 when he had written in *Vesy*: 'We mortals are unable to perceive the Beautiful except through the categories of earthly beauty [...] For us there can be no beauty should the precept: "Remain faithful to things Earthly" be breached.'<sup>25</sup> Having defended the autonomy of the aesthetic realm in this early article, he went on in later ones to consider in greater detail the position of the artist himself who, as an individual, might or might not have genuine faith in the existence of some transcendent order. Since this was a question of the poet's personal belief, it stood outside the realm of art entirely, and to the extent that the poet's creed could be directly communicated through what he wrote, it would be at the level of a personal, lyric intuition, no more.<sup>26</sup> Such poets might then be called 'realistic symbolists' in the ontological sense of the word, as opposed to artists who lacked such 'essential' intuitions. These he referred to as 'idealistic symbolists'.<sup>27</sup> The latter, he declared, would look to the 'enrichment of their own perceiving Selves [...] The mystery of the thing [-in-itself], the *res*, would be almost forgotten. On the other hand, the luxuriant splendour of their all-cognising and all-experiencing Selves would be royally enhanced.' For idealistic symbolists 'the symbol, being merely a means of artistic representation, is nothing other than a signal designed to establish contact between isolated individual consciousnesses.' For realistic symbolists 'the symbol is also a principle linking separate consciousnesses, of course, but here collective unity is achieved through the mystical vision of a single objective essence, one and the same for all.' Finally, in order to ensure that the topical relevance of his words did not escape his intended audience, Ivanov suggested that 'both these streams have entered the veins of contemporary Symbolism, making of it a hybrid phenomenon, its Janus-like unity as yet undifferentiated, and one which will rely on the fortunes of its subsequent evolution to reveal as separate entities the two outwardly unified but inwardly warring elements of which it is composed.'

Ivanov's critique was particularly forceful, therefore. While naming no names, he had not scrupled to refer to one of the 'two elements in contemporary symbolism' as 'illusionism', 'aesthetic idealism', 'devotion to beauty as an abstract principle'. For such poets, he said, 'the phenomenal world is the mirage of *Maia*.' But alas! for them 'the veil of *Isis* conceals not even a statue, perhaps, but emptiness, "le grand Néant" of the French decadents.' Belyi's response was immediate. 'All the time I have wanted to believe you, but I can detect a kind of duplicity in you,' he wrote in a letter. 'Your paper contains a latent, camouflaged attack against Moscow. [...] You say to me in private that idealism and realism in contemporary symbolism are two elements warring in the soul of the artist, whereas your paper contains nothing of the kind: there you talk about two trends [in Symbolism: 'techeniia']'.<sup>28</sup> 'Why did Mr Ivanov need to create this "bogyman" of his – symbolic idealism?' he wondered elsewhere. 'Obviously to brand somebody. But whom? [...] I must state that Mr Ivanov is not the only person who accepts the reality of symbolism and the providential significance of the

artist. We all expressed ourselves repeatedly on this subject in earlier years well before he appeared in the role of prophet.'<sup>29</sup> These words were eventually omitted from the feuilleton which Belyi published under his own name in *Vesy* for May, 1908, but what was printed was strong enough. Personal insult could not conceal the fact that Ivanov had hit his mark, however ('undermining trust in the reality of the religious experience of others,' Belyi protested).<sup>30</sup> This was not simply another stage in the polemic which had developed between the Moscow Symbolists and the St Petersburg 'mystical anarchists' grouped around Ivanov and Georgii Chulkov. The poet's words had reached to the heart of the emotional, philosophical and creative predicament in which Belyi found himself. The idea that there might be no transcendent order beneath creation was a possibility which he could scarcely bring himself to acknowledge, and yet, as Ivanov had realised, what else could underlie his inveterate tendency to pay lip-service to the formal integrity of art in one place while seeking proof of transcendence from it in another?

The question of whether Belyi's 'theory of symbolism', as it emerges from his myriad articles and reviews, is fundamentally metaphysical or not has been subjected to rigorous and exhaustive analysis by Steven Cassedy.<sup>31</sup> Does his theory, Cassedy asks, 'in its most comprehensive and far-reaching form, base its claim of universality [...] on any belief in the existence of a being or realm of experience that transcends the limits of ordinary knowledge and to which conscious subjects have access only through means other than those of ordinary knowledge?' In other words, is metaphysicality 'an intrinsic attribute of symbolism' as Belyi understands it, or is 'symbolism' simply a procedure 'placed in the service of other philosophical systems that may or may not be metaphysical?' (p. 286). Cassedy arrives at the conclusion that, while Belyi's theory 'has its formal origin in systems that are indeed metaphysical [e.g., those of Schopenhauer and Solov'ev], while it even, at times, masquerades as a metaphysical system in its own right, it is in fact a purely formal theory' in the Kantian sense. 'The purpose of Belyi's theory of symbolism,' he adds, 'is to describe the formal process by which conscious subjects universally produce meaning, regardless of what that meaning might be' (p. 287).

Cassedy goes on to draw an interesting analogy between Belyi's idea that 'inner experience' is 'symbolized' in the concrete products of human creative activity and the concept of the icon in Orthodox theology.<sup>32</sup> An icon is said to embody the 'duality of Christ's nature, the co-existence in Him of a transcendent (divine) component and an immanent (corporeal) component [...] When an icon-painter paints an icon or image [...] he is meant to bear in mind and imitate an original image based on an actual, visual experience of that subject [...] The image is thus meant to be an accurate reproduction of an original, and not something to which the painter contributes an imaginative element of his own [...]. The beauty of the icon is thus not meant to be appreciated for the aesthetic pleasure it produces, but is seen as a concrete embodiment of the Divine Grace it represents.' Cassedy's point is that, while Belyi's system is 'iconic through and through', it is only formally so in relation to the 'truth' which it may be said to embody. For, to narrow discussion to the aesthetic realm once more, in a

world in which the unity of religious belief has disintegrated, what unites religious truth and artistic truth can only be the coincidence of religious faith and poetic talent in the individual artist. Briusov accepted this,<sup>33</sup> as did Blok in his various discussions of contemporary 'lyricism'.<sup>34</sup> And Ivanov constructed just such an 'iconic' system with his theory about the prophet's 'ascent' *ad realiora* and the artist's corresponding 'descent' *ad realia*. Where Ivanov differed from Belyi was that he, like Kant, was willing to 'surrender the power of cognising, [...] to abolish knowledge, to make room for belief.'<sup>35</sup> This was something which Belyi could never bring himself consciously to do. As John Elsworth has written: 'His was not a traditionally religious temperament. The separation of the immanent and the transcendent, and the clear distinction between knowledge and faith, were contrary to his view of the world. The religious impulse coexisted in him with a rigorous rationalism,' and, he concludes, 'they are never quite resolved in his theory of symbolism.'<sup>36</sup>

Belyi's thought continued to develop along similar lines for a number of years – until his first serious encounter with the anthroposophical system of Rudolf Steiner in 1912, in fact. Whether attempting to resolve the contradiction between Christian eschatology and Nietzschean relativism on the one hand,<sup>37</sup> or trying doggedly, as Cassedy puts it, to 'bridge the gap separating Kant's first Critique from his second and third' on the other,<sup>38</sup> he was haunted by a single dilemma: the circle of faith refused to be squared by the certainty of knowledge. In the years that followed their earlier polemic Ivanov would lay his finger on the wound again and again, nowhere more clearly than in his 1916 review of Petersburg, 'Vdokhnovenie uzhasa', 'The Inspiration of Terror'.<sup>39</sup> Depicting Petersburg as the 'point of purchase of forces sent by the Devil to produce delusion ('navozhden'e') throughout Russia', Belyi, Ivanov argues, 'knows the Name at the sound of which all these spirits will melt like wax in the face of fire. But this Name, it appears, is not enough for him: superstitiously he casts about him for the Bearer of that name: might he not be visible somewhere or other?' And the author parades before his characters the lonely figure of someone 'sorrowful and tall with fingers turning numb'. Is this doubtful and evasive excuse for a Christ-figure, who more resembles a corpse than anything else, not itself a delusion called forth by terror and mortal anguish, Ivanov muses. Do we not see here that threshold called 'Terror' from which the Russian poet imperiously tears the veil 'to reveal the innermost recesses of the subtlest consciousness of an epoch which has lost its faith in God'?

Belyi's conversion to the doctrines of Rudolf Steiner was fully congruent with what Ivanov had perceived as his desire to gain certain knowledge in the here and now of the world beyond. Although initially curious about Belyi's anthroposophical experiences, Ivanov remained sceptical about the doctrine and was unable to sympathize with what Belyi regarded as the most important ideological and personal development of his life. The last letter of substance written by Belyi to Ivanov is undated, but was most likely written in early 1919. It appears never to have been posted by Belyi and so remained in his archive, unnoticed by Georges Nivat when he did his research on the two poets' correspondence.<sup>40</sup> The reasons why Belyi may have thought better of sending it will

be obvious, for its tone of anger and hurt at being, as he saw it, undervalued yet again in the seriousness of his spiritual endeavours and the depth of his suffering, are without precedent in his correspondence.

Our last meeting showed me clearly, after I had returned home, that: yes, we can engage in a friendly exchange of 'points of view', but that converse between us will never arrive at the deed, where we are bound together in His Name ('Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'). This can never exist between us; you may preach Christianity; I also; we may exchange the cleverest of 'points of view'; these 'exchanges of opinion' (however 'sensitive and 'deep-feeling' you may be) will for me be nothing more than a 'pineapple in champagne'<sup>41</sup> ...And the cosiness of these 'nocturnal' conversations, their 'bourgeois quality' sickens me. My entire standing out against you is not expressible in logical terms: I am sickened by the whole structure of your life – egotistical, cosy as it is; your life nauseates me, so far as I can observe it from outside to be devoid of love, devoid of sacrifice; your spiritual cravings all seem to me to be the fine detail of a 'pineapple in champagne'. Where is your deed? Where is your sacrifice? I know that you may counter: 'And where is your deed?' To this, however, I would reply: 'If we cannot see into the kernel of one another, then nothing but conversation can take place between us.'

My path lies with those dear, kindred, and close souls whose lives are imbued with an inner, spiritual core, in the face of which you Pharisee-Epicurean-literary-celebrities raise your heads: for you, of course, it is incomprehensible that I should be with them, and not with you, the 'illustrious' and 'venerable': believe me, however: I feel as warm and happy with those anthroposophist friends and those young souls who approach us as I feel bored when I am in the company of the 'celebrities' [...].

You have no path, you have no truth, you have no deed!

Dear Viacheslav, you asked me to be truthful: and I am being truthful. It is very difficult for me to express this to your face, for you always charm one with the riches of your mind and the brilliance of your talent and the kindness of your heart: but I know that in the spirit you are poor, that in the spirit you are not kind. This is the fact of my deep understanding of you (it is not a question of logic, but of 'conviction'). And so, from the deepest spiritual sources where my love for you dwells, I say to you: 'Do not strut like a peacock. Forsake your splendours: repent, purify yourself; cry and weep. What is there for you to repent of? May your own 'I' give you the hint (as for me, I have nothing to do with it). You are free to take offence. But that is not the point. I promised to tell you my truth. And I say to you 'Repent!'

I remain your devoted and loving B[oris] Bugaev.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the friction caused by Belyi's vituperative attack on Ivanov's pro-war stance and subsequent anti-revolutionary position ('Sirin uchenogo varvarstva' ['The Siren-Bird of Scholastic Barbarism'], 1918),<sup>43</sup> the two writers collaborated on early issues of the journal *Zapiski mechtatelei* (Notes of Dreamers)<sup>44</sup> and met frequently in Moscow until March 1919 when Ivanov's name appears

to vanish from Belyi's 'Rakurs dnevnika' ('Abbreviated Diary').<sup>45</sup> In October 1920 Ivanov and his family left Moscow for Kislovodsk and later Baku where they remained for nearly four years. Belyi meanwhile departed Moscow for Germany in October 1921, not returning to Russia till two years later. At the end of May 1924 Ivanov was summoned to the capital to speak at the conference being held to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Pushkin's birth<sup>46</sup> – but this final opportunity for a rapprochement with Belyi did not take place. As John Malmstad has noted: 'No one had invited Ivanov's Symbolist colleague to take part or even to attend, and on 28 May he had left Moscow for the Crimea to spend the summer at the Koktebel' colony of Maks Voloshin.'<sup>47</sup> Belyi eventually returned to the capital on 12 September, a fortnight or so after the departure of Ivanov and his family for Italy, whence they never returned. He and Belyi were never to meet again.

## NOTES

1. 'Prospéro et Ariel: Esquisse des rapports d'Andrej Belyj et Vjačeslav Ivanov', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, vol.25/1, 1984, pp.19–34.
2. Göttingen, 1957.
3. *Andrey Bely: A Critical Study of the Novels*, Cambridge, 1983, p.8.
4. *Simvolizm*, M., 1910; *Lug zelënyi*, M., 1910; *Arabeski*, M., 1911. He described his criteria of inclusion in *Mezhdv dvukh revoliutsii*, L., 1934, p.376.
5. *Nachalo veka*, M.-L., 1933, p.114.
6. 'Okno v budushchee', *Vesy*, 1904, No.12; reprinted in *Arabeski*, p.139.
7. 'Krititsizm i simvolizm', *Vesy*, 1904, No.2; reprinted in *Simvolizm*, p.29.
8. A. V. Lavrov, 'Iunosheskie dnevnikovye zapisi Andreia Belogo', *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiia. Ezhegodnik 1979*, L., 1980, p.119. Diary entry for 1898. Cf. Belyi's words in the second version of his 'Vospominaniia o A. A. Bloke' (in *Epopeia*, 1922, No. 1, p.255.): 'By the word symbolism we understood something like the *genuine reality* of our perception of the spiritual world through images provided by the world of art.'
9. 'Material k biografii (intimnyi), prednaznachennyi dlia izucheniia tol'ko posle smerti avtora', written 1923, RGALI, fond 53, opis' 2, ed. khr. 3, entry for May, 1901.
10. 'Formy iskusstva', *Mir iskusstva*, 1902, No.12, reprinted in *Simvolizm*, p.159.
11. *Ibid.*, p.165.
12. 'Krititsizm i simvolizm', *Vesy*, 1904, No.2, reprinted in *Simvolizm*, p.29.
13. *Nachalo veka*, p.6.
14. 'Simvolizm kak miroponimanie', *Mir iskusstva*, 1904, No.5; reprinted in *Arabeski*, p.225.
15. See R. J. Keys, 'Andrey Bely and the Development of Russian Fiction', *Essays in Poetics*, 1983, Vol. 8, No.1, pp.29–52.
16. See R. J. Keys, 'Bely's Symphonies' in *Andrey Bely: Spirit of Symbolism*, ed. J. E. Malmstad, Ithaca and London, 1987, pp.21–26.

17. The question of the adequacy or otherwise of Belyi's early aesthetic for interpreting his actual works has also been raised by Vladimir Alexandrov. In his book, *Andrei Bely: The Major Symbolist Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass, 1985), he wonders how 'Bely's or the implied author's symbolic perceptions, which are implicitly graced by the Absolute', can be 'reconciled with characters in a narrative who are presented from the third person point of view, especially when the characters are associated with metaphysical evil and, as [is] the case in the *Second Symphony*, when they make egregiously erroneous symbolic perceptions. Are they and their perceptions symbols that the narrator-author has created? If so, it is not at all clear how they could be derived from the act of symbolic perception as Belyi described it in his first essays. Or are the characters' perceptions only simulations of symbolic perceptions? And are only some of the images in narratives truly symbolic, while others are not?' Answers to these and similar questions, Alexandrov concludes, 'must be inferred from Bely's works themselves. His theoretical essays deal with symbolism on too abstract or general a level to shed light on these problems' (p.13).

While there is certainly considerable justice in Alexandrov's remarks as far as Belyi's early 'mystical' theories are concerned, it seems to me that a number of essays which he wrote between 1907 and 1910 from what I have called the 'expressive' point of view do cast light on precisely those aspects of character and narrator 'authority' which the critic has raised. Unfortunately, Belyi never developed his insights into a concrete analysis of the possible hierarchies of 'point of view' in fiction, preferring instead to focus attention on the genesis of essentially lyric images in the poet's psyche.

18. 'Simvolicheskii teatr', *Utro Rossii*, 16 and 28 September, 1907; reprinted in *Arabeski*, p.300.
19. 'Ob itogakh razvitiia novogo russkogo iskusstva', *V mire iskusstv*, 1907, No.17 18; reprinted in *Arabeski*, p.258.
20. In 'Perepiska Bloka s V. Ia. Briusovym (1903–1919)', edited by P. Blagovolina, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, Vol.92, bk.1, M., 1980, p.489. Letter of early November, 1904.
21. 'Mysli o simvolizme', *Trudy i dni*, 1912, No.1; reprinted in *Borozdy i mezhi*, M., 1916 and subsequently in *Sobranie sochinenii* Vol.2, Brussels, 1974, p.609.
22. R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, Oxford, 1938, p.33.
23. 'V zashchitu ot odnoi pokhvaly. Otkrytoe pis'mo Andreiu Belomu', *Vesy*, 1905, No.5, p.38; reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, Vol.6, M., 1975, p.101. The offending article by Belyi, 'Apokalipsis v russkoi poezii', had appeared in issue No.4 (reprinted in *Lug zelënyi*, pp.222–47).
24. 'V zashchitu ot odnogo narekaniia. Otkrytoe pis'mo Valeriiu Briusovu', *Vesy*, 1905, No.6, p.40.
25. First published in *Vesy*, 1905, No.5 under the title 'O niskhozhdenii'. Reprinted in *Po zvezdam*, SPb., 1909 as 'Simvolika esteticheskikh nachal' and again in *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol.1, Brussels, 1971, pp.826–27.

26. See 'Estetika i ispovedanie' in *Vesy*, 1908, No.11. Reprinted in *Po zvezdam*, as 'Ekskurs II: Estetika i ispovedanie', and again in *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol.2, 1971, pp.566–72.
27. This terminology and the subsequent argument were developed in 'Dve stikhii v sovremennom simvolizme', a public lecture given on 8 March 1908 and then published in *Zolotoe runo*, 1908, Nos.3 4 and 5. Reprinted in *Po zvezdam* and again in *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol.2, 1971, pp.536–61.
28. RGB (Rossiiskaia Gosudarstvennaia Biblioteka), fond 109, papka 13, ed. khr. 75.
29. Quoted by A. V. Lavrov in his article 'Materialy A. Belogo v Rukopisnom otdele Pushkinskogo doma', *Ezhegodnik Rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo doma na 1979 god*, L., 1981, p.45.
30. B. Bugaev, 'Na perevale. XII. "Realiora"', *Vesy*, 1908, No.5, pp.59–62; reprinted in *Arabeski*, pp.313–18.
31. See his 'Belyi's Theory of Symbolism as a Formal Iconics of Meaning' in J. E. Malmstad (ed.), *Andrey Bely: Spirit of Symbolism*, pp.285–312.
32. Ibid. pp.303–07. Cassedy develops this analogy also in his article 'Toward a Unified Theory of the Aesthetic Object in Andrej Belyj' (*Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 28, No. 2, pp.205–22) and in the long 'Translator's Introduction' to his edition of the *Selected Essays of Andrey Bely*, Berkeley, 1985.
33. E.g., 'V zaschitu ot odnoi pokhvaly [...]', *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol.6, p.101: 'If in the depths of Russian poetry a new religion as yet unknown to the world is, as you claim, destined to arise, if Russian poetry is "providential", then the most outstanding exponents of this poetry will indeed be representatives of the "Apocalypse in Russian poetry". But should these latter turn out to be but second-rate poets, this means that poetry in their case has nothing to do with it!' He returned to the same question in his article of 1910, 'O "rechi rabskoi", v zashchitu poezii' (*Apollon*, No.9, reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii*, Vol.6, pp.176–79): 'Being a theurgist is, it goes without saying, very far from being a bad thing. But why should it follow from this that being a poet is something shameful? [...] There are no reasons for limiting a person's sphere of activity, of course. Why shouldn't a poet be [...] a theurgist? But to insist that all poets should absolutely *have* to be theurgists is [...] absurd. [...] And to demand that poets should cease to be poets in order to become theurgists is even more absurd. [...] The Symbolists will remain poets, just as they have always been. [...] Viacheslav Ivanov and A. Blok are magnificent poets: this they have proved to us. But whether they will turn out to be, I do not say great, but simply "good", theurgists, is very much open to doubt. I at least find it somehow difficult to believe in their theurgic vocation...'
34. E.g., 'O lirike', *Zolotoe runo*, 1907, No.6; reprinted in *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, Vol.5, pp.132–34: 'All praise to that fearless and strong individual who can hear a song or see the multicoloured pattern of a picture [...] and not believe the poet or the artist. [...] They are lyricists. They possess incalculable riches, but [...] if they observe the purity of

their element, they neither can, nor should *give* one anything. [...] *This is how I want it*, that is the lyric poet's maxim, and if he loses sight of it or replaces it with any other, then he will cease to be a lyricist. This maxim is his curse, radiant and pure. The whole of his freedom and servitude are contained within it. [...] Lyricism is the I, and the whole world of the lyric poet lies in the way he perceives the macrocosm. This is the enchanted, magic circle. [...] The macrocosm to him is alien. But rich and magnificent is his perception of it.'

35. I. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the second edition of 1787, translated by T. K. Abbott, Chicago, 1952, pp.9–10.
36. J. D. Elsworth, op.cit., p.35.
37. See his article 'Fridrikh Nitsche', *Vesy*, 1908, No.7, pp.55–65; reprinted in *Arabeski*, pp.60–90. See also Vladimir Alexandrov's comments on Belyi's earlier article 'Simvolizm, kak miroponimanie' (published in *Mir iskusstva*, 1904, No.5; reprinted in *Arabeski*, pp.220–40): 'Bely here refers approvingly to the interpretation of Lev Shestov, the Russian philosopher, that in Nietzsche's concept of the "eternal return" one must stress "eternity" and not "return". "In this light," Bely writes, "the eternal return...is the return of eternity," by which he meant God. Nietzsche failed to see this because of the confusion in his "methods of cognition"' (*Andrei Bely: The Major Symbolist Fiction*, p.48).
38. 'Bely the Thinker' in J. E. Malmstad (ed.), *Andrey Bely: Spirit of Symbolism*, p.315.
39. First published on 28 May 1916 in *Utro Rossii*, reprinted in *Rodnoe i vselenskoe*, M., 1917, pp.89–101 and in *Sobranie sochinenii* vol. IV, Brussels, 1987, pp.619–29.
40. RGB, fond 25, papka 30, cd. khr. 5.
41. A slighting reference to Igor Severianin's third book of verse *Ananas v shampanskom*, first published in Moscow in 1915.
42. 'Наша последняя встреча показала мне ясно, когда я вернулся домой, что — да: мы можем дружески обмениваться «точками зрения», но разговор между нами никогда не дойдет до дела, до связанности во Имя («Где двое и трое во имя Мое там, я посреди их»). Этого между нами быть не может; ты можешь исповедывать христианство; я — тоже; мы можем обмениваться умнейшими «точками зрения»; эти «обмены мнений» для меня как бы Ты ни был «чуток» и «проникновенен») будут лишь «ананасом в шампанском» ... А комфортабельность этих «ночных» разговоров, «буржуазность» их мне претит. Весь мой упор против Тебя не выразим логически: мне претит весь строй Твоей жизни эгоистический, комфортабельный; мне претит Твоя жизнь, поскольку я извне ее созерцаю: без любви, без жертвы; все Твои духовные алкания кажутся мне утонченной деталью к «ананасу в шампанском». Где подвиг Твой? Где жертва Твоя? Знаю: Ты мне можешь вернуть: «а где Твой подвиг». На это же я отвечу: «Если мы не видим ядра друг друга, то ничего кроме *разговора* между нами не может быть. [...]



У меня путь с теми милыми, родными и близкими душами которых жизнь окрашена внутренним духовным стволом, перед которым Вы фарисеи-Эпикурейцы-литераторы-«знаменитости» поднимаете головы: Вам, разумеется, непонятно, что я с ними: а не с Вами, с «прославленными» и «маститыми»: верьте же: мне тепло и счастливо с теми друзьями-антропософами и юными душами, которые подходят к нам в той же мере, в какой мне скучно, когда я в компании «знаменитостей»

Нет у Вас пути, нет у Вас правды, нет у Вас подвига!

Милый Вячеслав, Ты просил меня быть правдивым: я и правдив. Мне очень трудно выразить это Тебе в глаза, ибо Ты всегда очаровываешь душевным богатством и блеском таланта, и душев[ной] добротой; но я знаю, что Ты духовно нищ, духовно не добр. Это факт моего глубинного узнания о Тебе (дело не в логике, но в «убеждении»). Итак, от последних дух[овных] истоков, где обитает во мне любовь к Тебе, говорю Тебе: «Не ходи павлином. Брось свои великолепия: покайся, очистишься; плачь и рыдай. В чем каяться? Пусть Тебе подскажет Твое «Я» (я же тут не причем). Ты волен обидеться. Но дело не в обиде. Я обещал сказать Тебе мою правду. И говорю «Покайся!»

Остаюсь искренне преданный и любящий Б[орис] Бугаев.»

43. 'Sirin uchenogo varvarstva (po povodu knigi V. Ivanova "Rodnoe i vselenskoe")', *Znamia truda*, No.163, 24 March 1918 and No.170, 3 April 1918. Reprinted as a separate brochure, Berlin 1922. Heinrich Stammmler's otherwise exemplary article, 'Belyj's conflict with Vjačeslav Ivanov over War and Revolution' (*Slavic and East European Journal*, 18/3, 1974, pp.259–70) is marred by his failure to take into account the date of first publication of Belyi's work.
44. *Zapiski mechtatelei*, Nos I–VI, Petersburg, 1919–22.
45. 'Rakurs dnevnika', RGALI, f.53, op.1, ed. khr. 100. I am indebted to Professor John Malmstad of Harvard University for this information. .
46. V. N. Blinov, 'Chronology of the Life and Works of Vyacheslav I. Ivanov' in R. L. Jackson and L. Nelson, Jr. (editors), *Vyacheslav Ivanov: Poet, Critic and Philosopher*, New Haven 1986, p.461.
47. J. E. Malmstad, 'Silver Threads among the Gold: Andrei Belyi's Pushkin' in B. Gasparov, R. P. Hughes and I. Paperno (editors), *Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism: From the Golden to the Silver Age* (= *California Slavic Studies*, Vol. XV), Berkeley, 1992, p.431.

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