

*The
Andrej Belyj
Society*



Newsletter

Number 8

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THE ANDREJ BELYJ SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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The Ninth Annual Belyj Society Meeting

The ninth annual meeting of the Andrej Belyj Society will be held during the 1989 AATSEEL conference in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, December 28, 1989. Here is the program:

Chairman: Charles Byrd, Indiana University
Secretary: Christine Tomei, Allegheny College

"The Abyss of Language and the Language of the
Abyss: Belyj's Symbolist Essays"
Laura Goering, Carleton College

"Kantian Aesthetics in Belyj's Article, 'O
celesobraznosti'"

Virginia Bennett, University of Hawaii-Manoa

"Making Sense of Synesthesia in *Petersburg*"
Charlene Castellano, Ohio State University

This year the Belyj Society will elect a Vice-President to succeed Christine Tomei, who will become President in 1989, at the conclusion of the term of Charles Byrd.

Making Sense of Synesthesia in *Petersburg* Abstract by Charlene Castellano

In his 1909 essay entitled "On the Brink" ("Na perevale"), Andrej Belyj names Charles Baudelaire and Friedrich Nietzsche "the two patriarchs" and "lawgivers" who, by "engrav[ing]" their "slogans" upon the face of "the new art," have "placed themselves at the head" of two Symbolist ranks. In exploring their complementary contributions to an essentially "unified symbolist movement in Europe," Belyj finds Nietzsche responsible for a philosophical school of human possibility which has been interpenetrated with images descending from Baudelaire's literary school of poetic form.

While a good deal of scholarly commentary has been devoted to those ideas constituting Nietzsche's philosophical school, very little has been said about the Baudelairean provenance of the poetic forms which Belyj finds within it. Yet Belyj's outline of a shared hegemony over the culture he inherited "from the second half of the nineteenth century" would suggest the Baudelairean aura to be worthy of study.

I attempted to open up this very line of inquiry in 1983 when, to this same forum, I presented synesthesia in *Petersburg* as a strategy by which Belyj devised a prose framework for sustaining the experience of apocalypse. This is a noteworthy achievement because it amalgamates the idea of time's duration to the notion that revelation occurs independently of the dimension of time. Yet Belyj embeds the apocalyptic moment so deeply into the temporal flow of his narrative that the revelatory experience becomes coextensive with the novel's plot. He thereby replaces

the fleeting ecstasies of Baudelaire's sensuous apprehension of time's void with *Petersburg's* ever-present affirmation of time's meaningfulness.

From ecstasy to affirmation might seem a long way to go, but Belyj gets there by embarking on Baudelaire's route through correspondences among sensations. Their roads part only when Belyj turns from an analogical to a tautological ordering of sensory phenomena. The tautological ordering of sensate experience allows Belyj to recenter the materials of his novel on the revealing rather than the reviling attributes of man's life in time.

In my earlier presentation on this topic I emphasized the means by which synesthesia in *Petersburg* reveals the essential integrity of the temporal world. What I wish to do now is to explore the ends served by the revelation of such unity. In other words, I wish to make sense of Belyj's use of synesthesia by explaining how it accomplishes the larger purpose of his aesthetic. I take this larger purpose to be the one given in "How We Write" and other essays in which Belyj discusses man's need to create himself through art. The goals of my discussion will be marked out along the following lines: How do the elements of synesthesia function within a prose text? On what basis are they to be read? By what principles can they be organized? What bearing do these principles have upon Belyj's understanding of creativity? In short, what was Belyj trying to do with his art that synesthesia allowed him to do, and why did he need to do it under the auspices of apocalypse?

Answers to these questions will be suggested by defining the role memory plays in facilitating sensory

correspondences. In particular, memory will emerge as the repository for those facts of personal experience which allow the past to communicate with the present and words to communicate with their meanings. This communication across the boundaries laid down by the segmentation of time is all-important, for it inspires man with the recognition that time does not fragment but rather integrates his understanding of who he is. Time therefore is not his Baudelairean adversary, but it is his creative substance. It is the medium of which he constitutes himself. In the correspondences among sensations, then, Belyj hears the call to create himself anew, thereby to behold his own -- and time's -- very human face.

The Abyss of Language and the Language of the Abyss: Belyj's Symbolist Essays Abstract By Laura Goering

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the word "*bezdnna*" had become part of the general Symbolist lexicon. The word had come to be associated with a sense of impending apocalypse and symbolized the depths awaiting mankind if it failed to find a resolution to the spiritual crisis of the turn of the century.

Yet it had largely ceased to be a "living word" and had become a "*potuobraz-poluternin*," shorthand for expressing a frozen complex of ideas based largely on the Book of Revelations. Such usage was antithetical to the definition of language Belyj was to develop in "*Magija slov*." Following Wilhelm von Humboldt (as translated and interpreted by Aleksandr Potebnja), Belyj argued that language was not *ergon* -- "*mertvov proizvedenie*" -- but *energeja* -- "*samyj process proizvodstva*." Language is an "*organ, obrazujuščij mysl'*," the speech act is always a creative act, with meaning ultimately being created by the recipient. Belyj's task, then, was to revive this ossified word, restore its "inner form," and inspire the reader to his own creative-cognitive act.

The abyss is one of the few images in Belyj's work that illustrate his maturing concept of the symbol in all its complexity. It combined an image from nature with the inner experience of the artist; its spatial primary meaning could be extended to include a temporal metaphorical meaning; the word itself could be easily resemanticized to recover its etymological roots and revitalize its "inner form" ("*bez dna*"); and

the image carried with it a complex history that provided the educated reader with the associations necessary to recreate its meaning for himself, a meaning that was changeable, contradictory and infinitely expandable.

In this page I argue that Belyj's use of abyss imagery in his essays is both a manifestation of Humboldt's dynamic model of meaning creation and a metaphor for the more general principle of synthesis that was the backbone of his theory of Symbolism. Moreover, gradual changes in Belyj's use of abyss imagery during his "Symbolist period" correspond to changes in his view of reality and the nature of Symbolism.

An analysis of Belyj's use of abyss imagery reveals a complex layering of subtexts, including the Bible, Egyptian mythology, the German mystics (especially Jakob Boehme), Tjutčev, and Nietzsche (whose abyss imagery draws heavily on Pascal). Two main strands of thought become apparent. Before 1906 Belyj, still under the influence of Schopenhauer, tended to define reality in terms of a deceptive world of appearance behind which stands the true world of essences. The unveiling of the abyss thus corresponded with the attempt to know noumenal reality through mystical experience.

Beginning around 1906, however, Belyj began to view reality more as the union of inner and outer experience for the cognizing subject. The abyss and its veil thus came to stand for elements of inner and outer experience, respectively, both of which were part of the necessary synthesis. In Belyj's later writings the covering over the abyss does not merely represent

the deception of logical form, but rather is the "golden Apollonian carpet," which is as essential to the creative act as is the spirit of Dionysus which dwells in the abyss.

The abyss and its covering can be viewed as a metaphor for the tripartite structures Belyj sets up in "Magija slovy," with the abyss symbolizing inner experience and the "carpet," the world of images. The artist's goal is to synthesize the two--inner and outer, infinite and finite--into a "living unity." While on the one hand the word "bezdnna" is an apt metaphor for Humboldt's and Potebnja's belief in the infinite number of possible meanings that can be assigned to a given word, on the other hand it is itself a prime example of the multiplicity of meanings that can coexist in a single word.

Reading, Desire and World View in Belyj's
Petersburg

Abstract By Peter L. Barta

Presented at AAASS on November 5, 1989

In spite of the numerous references to the Greek god Apollo, Belyj's *Petersburg* produces a strong image of Dionysus. The theoretical basis of the paper is the thesis, developed by Harold Bloom, that texts do not exist in isolation and their relationship with precursory texts is determined by the "misprisions" which authors perform on each other. In this light, the paper examines Belyj's use of classical mythology and attempts to explain why Belyj's Apollo is underdescribed. Russian Symbolists, and Belyj in particular, considered the culture of ancient Greece in the light of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Belyj, like Ivanov, read this work as a transcendental history of culture and went further than Nietzsche in ignoring the larger context into which the classical text can be fitted in order to utilize its supposedly intrinsic meaning. Belyj's theoretical position accounts for his privileging of Dionysus in *Petersburg*. It seems that the Apollonian concept is existentially dependent on the Dionysian but not the other way around. I am proposing, however, that Belyj's concretization of the *Petersburg* myth--as embodied in *Petersburg*--has no significant connections with the historical Apollo, rather, only with Nietzsche's interpretation of this figure. In *Petersburg* the Apollonian and the Dionysian cannot coexist. The Dionysian essence bursts out, shattering the rigid Apollonian facade. The paper demonstrates on the basis of classical literary examples that the two gods are not antagonistic figures in Greek culture: instead of destroying each other, they compromise. The forces

which oppose Dionysus in classical tragedy are *hybris* and *amathia*, neither of which is an attribute of Apollo. Belyj's concept of the Apollonian is a result of interpreting Nietzsche's interpretation of classical mythology. However, the Greek god---whose image emerges from archeology and classical philology---provides no textual foundation to *Petersburg*. Belyj's Apollo is a masked Dionysus; consequently his identity in the novel is opaque.

"My Sorrow is Abundant": Mandel'stam's
Requiem to Belyj

Abstract by Olga Muller Cooke

Presented at SCMLA on October 28, 1989

During the summer of 1933 Belyj and Mandel'stam met in Koktebel, the location of Vološin's haven for artists. The Belyj whom Mandel'stam encountered there was not the same writer who had inspired such venomous criticism many years earlier. While Belyj served as interlocutor for Mandel'stam's *Razgovor o Dante*, he also aired his theories about Gogol' to Mandel'stam, theories drawn from *Masterstvo Gogolja*. Critics might argue that two poets could not have been more different, yet one discerns profound similarities between these two remaining giants of the Silver Age, especially during the 30's. Like Ovid, languishing in exile on the Black Sea shores, both writers cultivated the primacy of ethical values, of Russia's inextricable bond with a continuous European heritage, at a time when Stalinist Russia reflected few moral values. Both poets felt themselves at death's door. Upon learning of Belyj's death on January 8, 1934, approximately six months after their brief summer visit, Mandel'stam composed a poetry cycle, consisting of seven poems, the most famous of which is "January 10, 1934." Echoing the bard of "Slovo o polku Igoreve," Mandel'stam expressed his powerful lament, which he called a "requiem to Belyj and myself" with the line, "my sorrow is abundant." Indeed, his requiem was not only a testament of Belyj's past achievements, it was in Nadežda Mandel'stam's words a "coexperiencing of death."

The Medtner Papers at the Library of Congress
George Cheron

The Music Division of the Library of Congress unsealed in 1985 three large boxes of letters of the Medtner brothers: the pianist and composer Nicholas (1879-1951) and the philosopher and critic Emil (1872-1936). The bulk of this unknown archival material is made up of correspondence between both brothers covering the years 1914, the year when Emil Medtner took up residence in Zurich, Switzerland, until 1936, the year of Emil's death. Amidst the early years of this correspondence mention is made of Andrej Belyj, especially in letters from Nicholas' wife Anna to Emil. Andrej Belyj and Emil Medtner were close friends and ideological allies for quite a number of years. Both men were affiliated with the journal *Zolotoe runo*, and when Emil founded the Symbolist publishing house "Musaget" Belyj became a contributor to its journal *Trudy i dni*. Their friendship came to an end when Medtner became very critical of Belyj's interest in anthroposophy and issued the book *Razmyšlenija o Gëte* (1914) - a scathing attack upon Rudolf Steiner and his pronouncements on Goethe. Following their complete break in 1915, Belyj responded with a rejoinder to Medtner's book with one of his own: *Rudolf Stejner i Gëte v mirovozzrenii sovremennosti. Otvet Emilijs Metners na ego pervyj tom "Razmyšlenija o Gëte"*. It is this controversy that is the subject of several letters written by Anna Medtner to Emil.

I wish to thank the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies for support on this project.

Excerpts of A. Medtner's Letters to Emil Medtner

13 September 1916

[...] Марго¹ рассказывала про Бугаева. Видит в нем раскол и трагизм от того, что в сущности он остался тот же, который подавлен другим Бугаевым, выработанным за эти годы. Но гармонии нет и ему явно тяжело. [...]

29 September 1916

[...] Вспомнила, что не написала Вам о том, что Киселев², думая что его скоро призовут, приводит в порядок свой архив и хочет передать мне Вашу переписку с Бугаевым. Я беру это в Ваш шкаф No 2; там внизу есть место. Я заинтересовалась узнать, какое у Николая Петровича впечатление от этой истории Вашего "разногласия" (даже смешно так называть т.д. было просто дурное поведение Бугаева) и просила сказать мне это совершенно откровенно. Он так и сделал. Находит, что единственная Ваша неполная правота в том, что Вы иногда употребляли тон нравоучительный, который мог раздражать Бугаева. Но только тон. А виноват, он говорит, кругом Бугаев. Находит, что это так ясно и очевидно из всего решительно, что всякий, кто прочел бы эту переписку, сказал бы, что виноват Бугаев [...]

18 October 1916

[...] Сегодня днем у нас была Марго. [...] Рассказывала, что

слышала главу из нового романа Бугаева.³ Читал он у Григорова. У нее впечатление то же, что и раньше т.е. она моментами видит проблески гениальности, но все в обшем очень не ровню и как она выражается - не настоящее. Рассказывала, что когда он был у нее и увидел Ваш портрет, то сказал - "Какое милое лицо." И потом сейчас же присовокупил - "и знаете, на днях выходит моя книга." [...]

Антропософы, конечно, невозможны. Чтобы водиться с ними нужен геройизм. Но тогда надо, чтобы это было на что-нибудь, очень надо по поводу А. Белого. [...]

17 November 1916

[...] Сегодня мы с Колей⁴ были у Марго. Она мне показала книгу Белого.⁵ Костя не хотел ее брать в руки и не позволил брать домой. Сидим мы у Марго и рассуждаем как раз о нем (наговорившись предварительно о том и чем сейчас все больны и о чем неизменно при встречах говорат). Она говорит нам, что в 7 ч. он должен прийти для переговоров о каком-то его докладе в Религиозно-философском обществе. Было еще только 6 ч. 20 м. и мы как раз собирались уходить и только что-то договаривали. Но тут входят и докладывают приход Белого, которому не вполне очевидно научившись у своих учителей чувству времени, но боясь быть неаккуратным и опоздав пришел на полчаса раньше. Марго обратилась к нам с вопросом, принять ли его или попросить подождать. Коля шутиливо заметил, что он уж не настолько труслив, чтобы

бояться даже Андрея Белого. Но надо было видеть как он входил! Горничная новая и нас не знает и ему не могла сказать, кто сидит у МК. Он шел явно не зная, что это мы, т.к. увидав нас так скрычился, что его даже жалко стало. Мы поздоровались с ним, как обыкновенным дальним знакомым и даже о протекших годах не было упомянуто. Коля обопелся с ним убийственно холодно так что теперь Белый его наверно ненавидит. У того не хватило и тут простоты и мужества: вздумал делать Коле комплимент по поводу его пушкинских песен, которые он за два дня слышал в день песни. Коля ответил грубоватым молчаньем. Совершенно сжегившись Белый попробовал мило пооткровенничать, как ему трудно со всяким справляться без Аси⁶ и как он обещал, чтобы только оделаться, читать лекцию в Бубновом балете. Тут мы вскоре ушли. Он очень изменился к худшему.

Ильин⁷ купил эту книгу и читает мне очень много скверных мест оттуда. Ругает он Белого самыми последними словами. Говорит, что так где он хочет показать строгую научность - один туман. Гете он явно совсем не знает и опирается только на Штейнера. Ильин жалеет, что и сам не знает Гете и это единственно, что ему мешает отделать Белого ю.э

28 January 1917

[...] Сейчас получила от Маризетты⁸ открытку, из которой даю Вам маленькую выдержку: "более глупой, гнусной

залихватской и вонючей книги чем книга Белого в жизни моей не читала. Сначала и до конца это сплошное гвяканье, одетое в методологические штаны да и то на одних передних лапах. Белый самозабвенно оглупел и не замечает своего голого зада. В книге, кроме всего прочего, рад физико-оптических погрешностей; указания на то, что Белый отродясь не читал Гете; плохо знает немецкий язык; даже плохо знает самого Штейнера, которого лишь сделал местам для разбега. Комментарий Штейнера к Гете которые я читала в Цюрихе, гораздо умнее и проще того, что им приписывает Белый. Я нахожу, что Белый в книге в высшей степени рискованно обнажился и забыл, что нельзя повернуться сразу ко всем передними лапами, и что будут люди, которые оучутся у него за спиной, увидят приподнятый задок и сообразятся удобством позы. Когда развжжусь с лекцией, поплачаю и я на нем руку.⁹ Вот как она ег¹⁰ [...] Ильин пишет Белому письмо по поводу его книги против Вас. Это письмо будет литографировано и роздано по рукам. Один экземпляр будет выслан Вам. Бугаеву не поздоровиться! Ответить основательно на эту грязную книгу в печати Ильин считает унизительно т.к. это может дать повод Белому отвечать и нагромоздить еще новую ложь и ерунду. [...] К этой книге не отнеслись даже серьезно и в самом лучшем случае объясняют это по неформальности. Словом его книга настолько явно писквильная, что на нее даже нелюбо в серьезе всеражать. [...]

NOTES

¹Margo = Margarita Kirillovna Morozova (1873-1958). A personal friend of Andrej Belyj, who figures in his verse and prose. Her reminiscences of Andrej Belyj were recently published (*Andrej Belyj: Problemy tvorčestva*, Moscow, 1988, pp. 522-545) as well as her correspondence with Belyj (*Minuščee*, No. 6, Paris, 1988, pp. 415-440).

²N.P. Kiselov (1884-1965), secretary of the "Musaget" publishing house.

³The new novel was *Kotik Letacv*.

⁴Kolja = Nicholas Medtner.

⁵Belyj's book of rebuttal to Medtner's was issued in mid-November 1916, although the title page bears the date 1917.

⁶Asja Turgeneva (1890-1966) - Belyj's first wife.

⁷Ivan Aleksandrovič Il'in (1883-1954) - philosopher.

⁸Mariëtta Šaginjan (1888-1982) - writer. In her memoirs, *Čelovek i vremeja* (1980), Šaginjan speaks well of her friendship with Belyj.

⁹Anna Medtner has pencilled in the remark "sliškom gruba" following this passage.

*Kotik Letacv and the Readership
of Russkie vedomosti*
John M. Kopper

Before *Kotik Letacv* appeared in complete form in two issues of *Skify* (1917-1918), Andrej Belyj published selections in the Petrograd newspaper *Birževye vedomosti* (May, 1916) and in three Sunday editions of the Moscow daily *Russkie vedomosti*: Nov. 13, 1916 (no. 263); Dec. 4 (no. 280); and Dec. 25 (no. 288).¹ In late 1916 *Russkie vedomosti* normally ran a full eight pages every day but Monday, and included on its interior pages reviews of theater events, concerts, and exhibitions, as well as occasional pieces of fiction. The three selections from *Kotik Letacv* that appeared over Belyj's name in November and December of 1916 were all entitled "Otryvki iz detskix vpečatlenij."

In the final months of 1916 *Russkie vedomosti* was full of accounts of the disintegrating war effort, Woodrow Wilson's reelection, the deaths of Jack London (Nov. 22) and Emile Verhaeren (Nov. 27; Valerij Brijusov's obituary appeared in the issue of Nov. 17, O.S.), and the emigration of Polish Jews to the United States because of persecution from the Germans. A serialized translation of an article by H.G. Wells was running ("Čto ljudi dumajut po povodu vojny"). And from December 18 to 20 (issues 292-293) there gradually emerged, with thrilling suspense, the lurid account of Grigorij Rasputin's murder. The reader below who refers to "takoe žgučee vremeja" spoke truthfully.

The following extracts from *Kotik Letacv* were printed in the November 13 issue: "Na čerte," "Ty

esi," "Son," "Vselennaja," "Obmorok," "Drevnjaja tajna," and "Filosof." The December 4 contribution consisted of "Papa," "Progulka," and "Muzyka;" and the final, December 25 selection included excerpts from chapter six of the novel: "Sonja Dadarčenko," "Zakat" (not "Zakaty"), "Kloun Klesja," and "Vesna." Familiar as they are to readers of *Kotik Letcev*, the titles are in fact quite misleading, as the example of one issue, December 4, will show. The "Papa" of *Rasskie vedomosti* has nothing to do with the "Papa" sections in chapters two and three of *Kotik Letcev*; it begins with the middle of "Tysjačletija drevnego mira u menja za spinoj" (chapter five of the novel) and runs into the beginning of the following section, "Molodoj čelovek." "Progulka" in *Rasskie vedomosti* more or less coincides with "Passaž" (chapter three) and not with "Progulka" (chapter two). "Muzyka" draws from the beginning and ending of the "Muzyka" section in chapter five of the novel, but some of the central material is taken from "Snova obraza." Furthermore, Belyj has disrupted the sequence of episodes as they appear in the final version of *Kotik Letcev*, moving from chapter five back to chapter three and forward again.

As "texts" the *Rasskie vedomosti* selections are intriguing reminders that the edifice of the completed work---*Kotik Letcev* as we know it today---was once a fluid body. How seriously Belyj took the medium of *Rasskie vedomosti* will remain a matter of conjecture; his editing and collapsing of episodes betrays an effort to present material that would be accessible to a lay reader independent of context. A significant feature of *Kotik Letcev*, the broken line begun or closed with dashes and dots, is not evident in *Rasskie vedomosti* at all. The compact format of the newspaper may

have forced Belyj to suppress the spacing devices that characterize both the manuscripts and the published versions of much of his prose fiction.

The short texts below, each originally written on a post card, are readers' responses to the selections from *Kotik Letcev* printed on Dec. 4 and Dec. 25. They were sent to the editor I. Ignatov, and none was printed.² At the time the *Kotik Letcev* selections appeared, letters to the editor were a frequent but irregular feature of *Rasskie vedomosti*. They chiefly contained corrections of earlier stories and earnest, learned pieces addressing everything from the war effort to the need to propagate a more productive kind of crop seed. Ignatov no doubt found the *Kotik Letcev* responses too frivolous to print. There is evident irony in his decision, for the letters are themselves heartfelt responses to the perceived frivolity of Belyj. Despite their marginal literacy and a peevish tone that makes for humorous reading, the authors of these letters were right in noting the impropriety of *Kotik Letcev*, whose prose violated the decorum of *Rasskie vedomosti* far more seriously than their responses did. These reviews are amusing but just comments on the boldest prose ever produced by the Russian avant-garde, and represent the dawn of *Kotik Letcev* criticism.

Post cards in Belyj's possession, addressed to I. Ignatov, editor of "Русские ведомости," by its readers following the publication of Belyj's "Отрывки из детских впечатлений" in November and December of 1916.

6/12/1916

Мне раньше думалось, что ясность и общедоступность литературного произведения одни из основных его достоинств, но после появления в моей любимой газете "Русские Ведомости" "Отрывков из детских впечатлений" Андрея Белого приходится думать, что или я, как многие другие рядовые читатели, перестали понимать даже содержание текста рассказа [sic] или же Андрей Белый был впечатлительное необычайное "дитя". Но кому интересны его впечатления [illeg.]? В чем же суть этих впечатлений?

10/12/1916

Больно, за уважаемую редакцию Русс. Ведомости, что она поместила такой грубый окаястый набор слов. Это насмешило над читателем. Пишу не одно мое мнение. Такое жгучее время. Масса материала и занять 1/2 страницы такой чепухой? разверните наши журналы. Сколько в них начинающих много дающих писателей беллетристов.

26/12/1916

Чудному русскому языку, о котором так восторженно отзывался Тургенев в предсмертном письме к Льву Толстому, грозит большая опасность засорения и загромождения.⁴ Покуда еще не поздно, надо принять меры спасения языка Пушкина, Лермонтова, Тургенева и других русских образцовых писателей-стилистов.

[updated]

Я, простой человек, — сильно сомневаюсь в таланте Андрея Белого, у него просто набор слов, над которыми нужно ломать голову. Быть может когда Вы напишите [sic] объяснение к его отрывкам, как объяснили букве [sic] "Ъ" в его Петербурге, тогда быть может мы кое что и поймем, но теперь крайне затруднительно, что либо понять. Вместо [sic] старой ясной литературы, мне приподносят [sic] задачу 2+2=5, поневоле одуреешь и скажешь: стинь дьявольское наваждение... не надо нам такой литературы.

¹In the introduction to the Slavische Propyläen edition of *Kotik Letacv* (Munich: Eidos, 1964) [p. ix], Anton Hönig incorrectly identifies the number of the December 25, 1916 issue of *Russkie vedomosti*. The correct number is 298.

²Ignatov evidently passed the letters on to the author. They entered the Belyj archive and are preserved in CGALI as part of f. 53 op. 6 ed. 4.

³Over Belyj's piece in the Dec. 4 issue are war reports from the Macedonian, Italian, Near Eastern fronts, articles on the Duma elections and censorship of Duma speeches, and testimony regarding the conspiracy of Aleksandr Dubrovin, editor of the rightist *Russkoe znanija*, to murder Pavel Miliukov. The *Kotik Letacv* selection in the Dec. 25 issue is preceded by Vikentij Veresnev's short story "U černogo kry'ca."

⁴The author of this letter confuses two Turgenev documents. The writer's deathbed letter of June 29, 1883 urges Tolstoj to return to literary activity. See *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij i pisem: Pis'ma*, vol. 13, part 3 (1882-1883) (Leningrad: Nauka, 1968), p. 180. Turgenev rhapsodizes about the Russian language in "Russkij jazyk," written in June, 1882 and included in the collection *Stizotvorenija v proze*. See *PSSP: Sočinenija*, vol. 13, p. 198.

A grant from IREX and the cooperation of the staff of CGALI made possible the publication of these letters.

Belyj's "Teacher of Consciousness (Leo Tolstoj)"

Andrej Belyj's "Učitel' soznanija (Lev Tolstoj)," first appeared in *Znamja* (No. 6, Dec. 1920), pp. 37-41. Unlike his earlier essays on Tolstoj, such as "Lev Tolstoj i kul'tura" and *Tragedija tvorčestva: Dostoevskij i Tolstoj*, "Učitel' soznanija" depends almost exclusively on an understanding of anthroposophy, as well as a familiarity with *The Bhagavad Gita*. Although Steiner's name is not mentioned, the essay is so steeped in anthroposophical thought, that at times one suspects the two pivotal figures of Tolstoj and Steiner merge into one image of an archetypal Master, an enlightened yogi, if you will. Belyj seizes on an aspect of Tolstoj's spiritual persona that includes a contemplative discipline for the pursuit of the "higher Self," one of the principal features that attracted Belyj to Steiner. Interestingly, this essay may be a companion piece to Belyj's short story, "The Yogi" (1918), which deals with the world of meditation, astral travel and other supersensory experiences. For a fuller account, see my translation with an introduction, "Teacher of Consciousness (Leo Tolstoj)," *Tolstoj Studies Journal*, Vol. 2, 1989, pp. 61-69.

Olga Muller Cooke

Учитель сознания (Лев Толстой)

1.

В "Дневнике" Льва Толстого встречаются нас истины мудрости, многое из того, что им сказано, сказано над-индивидуальным сознанием, называемым в терминах философов Индии Манас, который есть "Я". Но "Я" — дух.

Появление в истории "Я" проблемы рисуется в великолепнейшем образе Кришны ученику пути Йога, Арджуне. Арджуна среди поля брани горюет: "Лучше питаться подаянием... чем убивать... И не ведаем, что лучше... быть побежденным или победить" (Бхагават-Гита). И Кришну ему отвечает: "Человек не может ни убить, ни быть убитым. Он не рождается и не умирает. Всярай лишь на дело, а не на плоды его... Отдайся Йоге; Йога есть искусство в действиях" (idem). Путь этих действий ведет к отрешенно от действий бесцельных; Йога — учение о вневещности в действиях, о покое в борьбе.

На вопрос Арджуны, как выйти из войны, указывается Кришну наука: то — Йога. Не внешний отказ рекомендует она, а особые действия пресуществленья борьбы; очищение действенным действиям есть йога. "Пусть Йог... упражняется в йоге... его не потрясет даже самое тяжелое горе" (idem).

В чем йога? В умении подчинить себя вышнему "Я". И кто Кришну? Он — "Я", разорвавшее личность Арджуны, личинку,

он есть "Я" Арджуны, космическое сознание его: "Я есть источник возникновения вселенной." Люди суть пальцы одного организма, утравляющиеся друг от друга перчаткой, надетой на них, где перчатка суть коросты чувственной, личной жизни.

Как сбросить ее?

"Замкнув все врата, разум заключив в сердце, сосредоточив жизненное дыхание в голове... Кто покидает свое тело, повторяя... Оум, думая обо Мне, тот достигает" (idem беседа восмаая).

В йоге — две стороны: 1) погружение в сердце ума, 2) оживление сознания; путь погруженья ума — есть путь мистический; путь оживления сознания — гнозис; два делания сочетаются воедино: делание головное (или умственность) с деланием сердечным. История самосознания человечества есть рассказ о двух путях: о мистическом странствии и о гностическом странствии человека в эпохах; но оба пути — лишь перчатки, которые надо нам сдернуть; лишь в йоге становимся мы перед "Я", отрешенным от коростов чувственных и не ставшим — рассудочным "Я", или абстрактным "субъектом познания" философов нового времени. "Я" — имя Бога: "Я" — вышнее; но это "Я", в нас рождаясь, является нам, как "Он" в нас: "Отче Наш". После "Он" открывается в нас, как "Я" подлинное в "Я" неподлинном, и о том гласит Кришну: "Чувства велики"; выше чувств — ум; выше

ума—чистый разум; выше чистого разума — Он' (Idem).

"Я"—импульс Любыи, "Я" не то, что глядит на объекты лежащего мира, а то, что связует объекты с субъектом и делает: "Я"—это Ты'.

Июга это вскрывает конкретно: вот путь обретения покоя в борьбе, разрешение проблемы, поставленной среди брани Арджуной.

2.

Толстой есть предтеча грядущей Любыи; "Он", или Голос, читающий знаки судьбы человека, уже раздавался в нем явно; голос тот—Манас; "Он"—демон Толстого, подобный Сократову демону, и "Он"—больше: "Он"—громче; звучней, повелительней "Он" прожизнес из Толстого Толстым свое слово и "Им" стал писатель Толстой нашим новым учителем. В "Дневнике" Лев Толстой называет "Его" то "Отцом", то "Хозяином".

Манас—орел, распростертый над личным сознанием нашим, как Знание о сознании мировом; два крыла Его есть две стороны Разума: 1) сторона, облеченная в ясность дневного сознания рассудка и 2) сторона над-рассудочная, безъясная, не открытая в слове; мы знаем: об этой последней гласит философия Владимира Соловьева рассудочных и молчат бессловесно великие посвященные в Манас. И тот, и другие

являют Орла однокрылым; Орел—не вымывается явно для всех. Он вымывается явно в Толстом.

Этот ведет соединение Манаса с Жизным; его созвание "О жизни" есть верх опрощенной ясности в разоблачении Манаса древней ноги; здесь ясная мысль изрекается образом мудрости без рассудочной раби на ней; в Соловьеве еще много раби; и он напоитен народу; понятие—Толстой; и поэтому может во выгнтое слово свое он вложить углубляющий смысл; его мысль уж не зеркало отражения берегов в воде мысли, а самая глубина опрощенных вод, выявление жизни воды с ее "рыбами-мыслями"; можно закинуть в Толстого наш невод, и выгнать "рыб", и конкретно "питаться" всю жизнь; отражением берегов на воде, отражением даже небес "философии" Соловьева не питаешься в жизни; все "рыбы" Л. Толстого суть новые смыслы рассудочных смыслов; до осаяния Манаса в ясных, мужицких словах Соловьев не возвысился; и стал "философом" только; Толстой стал учителем.

Лев Толстой заключает Сократа в себе; заключает в себе и Силена (грохочущий хаос таинственной, диконисовой жизни); но "Силен", обитающий в мире Толстого, вступает в борьбу с вступающим "Сократом"; в себе натывается тот, кого читт уже мир, как художника, на другого, который "и подл, и тщеславен"; "Стал думать о себе, о своих обидах... И опомнился... И хорошо стало... стало быть есть тот, которому мешает подлый, глупый, тщеславный, чувственный Лев Николаевич."

Подлинно мощным Сократом в Толстом пребывает Декантово "Cogito": "Разум... орудие для познания, поверка, критика."²

Мы "знаем нечто, таким какое оно есть." "Что же?"—"То, что познаем. Оно именно такое, каким мы его знаем."³ Но познанию выдвигает Толстой цель познания; познание без цели—безумие, как бы не было логично оно. "Разумная деятельность отличается от безумной только тем, что разумная деятельность распределяет свои суждения по порядку их важности."⁴ Рассуждение, не связанное с общей целью... безумно, как бы не было оно логично."⁵ Отсутствие цели в распределении понятий и создает все безумие абстрактных выводов наших о том, что есть жизнь. "Не то, что мы называем наукой определит жизнь, а наше понятие о жизни определит то, что следует признать наукой."⁶ "Должен быть прежде решен вопрос о том, что есть наука."⁷ "Говорят: наука изучает жизнь со всех сторон. Да в том то и дело, что у всякого предмета столько же сторон, сколько радиусов в шаре, т.е. без числа—и что нельзя изучать со всех сторон, а надо звать, с какой стороны... нужнее."⁸ "Истинное знание состоит в том, чтобы знать, что мы знаем то, что знаем, и не знаем того, чего не знаем"—этот тезис Конфуция выдвигает Толстой неустанно.

Чудесно вскрывает Толстой в своей книге "О жизни" весь ряд совершаемых нами смелений в определении жизни при помощи разных служебных и жизни же подчиненных

абстраций; вскрывает, что жизнь начинается там, где—сознание; жизнь и сознание есть то же; родимся мы в жизнь лишь тогда, когда мы осознаем в себе центр сознания, а не когда биологически мы появимся на свет; появление наше на свет не есть жизнь (жизнь—сознание); "брызнь" это. Уразумение голоса собственной жизни уразумение "Манаса". "У меня были времена, когда чувствовал, что становился проводником воли Божьей. Истина проходила через меня... Дай Бог, чтобы прохождение их (истин) через меня не осквернило этих истин."

Кришну учит: "Я — Манас; из всех существ Я—сознание." Сознание собственно в нас это—Манас. Толстой утверждает, что жизнь есть. Сознание; этим становится он выразителем в новом обликом учения Кришну. В нем появляется снова стремление к конкретной, практической мудрости; эту науку практической мудрости он называет духовной наукою, ищет следов ее в истинах мудрости у всех веков и народов "Суеверий тысяча, а не вер; учений же вер. нет и десяти и все они сводятся к одной и той же вере, только иначе высказываемой."⁹ "Религия есть сознание тех истин, которые... понятны... и несомненны как 2х2=4. Дело религии... выражение этих истин."¹⁰ Путь выражения—делание: нога: "Когда истина... выражена, она... меняет жизнь."¹¹ Манас в нас прорезается в праксе мира сознания; всякая философия—Праксис; индусская нога глядит точно так же; познание наше логично. Толстой говорит: "Материалисты... не знают, что сделали в критике познания индусы."¹²

Июга — ученые для избранных и немногих, Толстой открывает преддверия юги для всех, отныне, с Толстого, югизм—есть всемирное дело, "мужичье" дело. Он—везние Манаса, бывшего лишь созаньем немногих когда то; но ныне настала эпоха иная, вошло человечество в возраст, когда ему Манас открывается так же, как ныне открыты законы рассудка для каждого, кто изучает науку: она—всем доступна.

Толстой—выразитель доступной всем Мудрости, он—откровение грядущей культуры. Восставши, пошел Лев Толстой перед всею Россией в огромные шири вселенского света; уход Льва Толстого сперва из уже обветшавшей культуры, потом и из дому, связь смерть в жизнь бессмертия есть величайший доступнейший символ

Бессмертие приблизилось.

И голос Толстого есть Голос иного сходящего мира. Связь все испытания встретим достойно Его.

¹'Дневник'

²Idem.

³Idem.

⁴'О жизни'.

⁵Idem.

⁶Idem.

⁷Idem.

⁸'Дневник', I, стр. 231.

⁹Сочинение, XV том, "О верах," 330.

¹⁰XV том "О религии."

¹¹Idem.

¹²'Дневник', I, 53.

David M. Bethea. *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. 305 pp.

In *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*, David M. Bethea undertakes the ambitious project of delineating the apocalyptic as sub-genre of modernist prose. As Bethea states in his preface, the project takes its impetus in general from the discomfitting fit between Western cultural paradigms and the record of Russian experience, and more specifically from the absence in Russian scholarship of a machinery able to rival the readiness of the Anglo-American literary academy to elucidate the consequences of apocalyptic thinking on aesthetic form. In order to redress these imbalances, Bethea mobilizes his prodigious knowledge about the history of Russian apocalyptic philosophy and literary practice as he examines five major works of modern Russian fiction: *The Idiot*, *Petersburg*, *Chevergur*, *The Master and Margarita*, and *Dr. Zhivago*.

Bethea's strategy is to present a historical, biographical and cultural background upon which to base close readings of his chosen texts, and from which to draw those formal and thematic features by which the sub-genre of modern Russian fictional apocalypticism might be recognized. His approach, in his own words, is "fundamentally contextualist": Bethea insists that the material is ordered by the "facts" under study, and that the accompanying "theory" (i.e., the typology he presents) emerges only in consequence of these facts (xiv-xv). Indeed, the five chapters dealing one each with the selected novels, are replete with both lesser and better known facts, skillfully ordered so as to describe the aesthetic and

philosophical traditions out of which each novel grew, the particular texts to which each author responded, the variations each one made upon this theme and most urgently, the formal innovations he achieved. These richly textured histories are interwoven with Bethea's commentaries upon a variety of past and present critical appreciations of each work under discussion. What ensues from Bethea's scrutiny of the works and their critics is a lively and productive dialogue.

Interestingly enough for the readers of this publication, Belyj's *Petersburg* is the novel that takes the lead in determining the shape of apocalyptic fiction, a classification designed to differentiate the narrative structures of modern fictional apocalypticism from the horizontal planes of Socialist Realism as well as from the closed circles of psychological realism. "Nowhere in Russian literature has the idea of apocalypse entered so fully into its own artistic presentation as in this novel [*Petersburg*]," says Bethea, and the shaping feature of that outstanding artistic presentation is, in his visual rendering, its "verticality." (106) Bethea's views are deeply embedded in the structuralist idea that time in the modern novel is spatialized, and that into *Petersburg* time projects a fourth dimension. This "fourth dimension," evinced in those illogical, inconsistent or incomplete events that psychological realism fails fully to explain, is understood by Bethea to testify to Belyj's belief that "a divine intentionality" (115) orders the cosmos. This belief, in Bethea's reading, means relief from the anxious need for a "way out" of "the circle of history," or God's chronological "plot." (115, 129)

The emphasis Bethea places upon the half-hidden, almost secret sacred outlook of *Petersburg* serves to counter those critics who find in this novel only profanation, parody and play with the apocalyptic leanings of its time. Bethea rejects those interpretations of the novel that proclaim self-criticism to be the overriding motivation for its ironic design. Instead, he sees in irony the establishment of a narrative hierarchy which communicates transcendent knowledge to the untranscended. Bethea's "point is that, for the 'prophetic' consciousness, the formal expression of revelation is not the same as its source, which comes from another, higher order. Prophets (who literally 'speak before') do not control the voice from beyond but are controlled by it; they are pierced... by sights and sounds from above which they pass on to those below." (114) The point is well-taken, for it is supported by a scrupulous examination of the relative truth-values of the various narrative voices in *Petersburg*. Apollon's, Nikolaj's, The Bronze Horseman's, and that of the ambiguous author-narrator. Especially impressive is Bethea's elaboration upon the means by which absolute knowledge travels: not by the wings of song, but by the weapons of Belyj's language, the deafening sounds and words that reverberate through his "logosemantic echo chamber" (131), piercing whichever eardrums chance to receive their explosive message.

The discussion of the piercing and penetrating interplay of sound and sense is organized largely around Belyj's wondrously frequent use of words prefixed by the morpheme *pro-* and the changing nuances this prefix exhibits as it ascends the narrative hierarchy. Beginning with Apollon, Bethea notes:

He is *not* in control, as is soon made clear when the intellectually piercing *pro-* of his gaze encounters the anarchistically expanding *shir-* of Dudkin's eyes at, significantly, a crosswalk (perekrestok) on Nevsky Prospect. This is the lowest level of piercing in the novel. Bely seems to be saying that our attempts to control our inner and outer worlds through intellect alone do not lead to deeper understanding and resolution. Instead, they generate the antipodal image of expanding circles (i.e. the bomb) and of a world reeling out of control (the "provokacija" [provocation] of terrorist acts). (132)

I cite this at some length because here I find one of the more suggestive though less developed points in Bethea's argument as to the novel's positing of a transcendent realm. If even Apollon, who is "not in control" and numbered therefore among the most lowly of earth-bound beings—if even he can *generate* images of chaos, then is chaos the place to put our faith? Isn't chaos but an illusion, a reply to human limitation? And in its juxtaposition to the cosmos through which Apollon moves, isn't this cosmos what is real? If so, then the terms of the usual Romantic equation of chaos/cosmos with reality/illusion are reversed. Chaos is not that which lies absolutely beyond our intellect, but rather, it is that figment which our short-sighted intellect exudes when it fails to recognize the world of God-given creation into which it has been placed. In this case, then, the cosmos must be real, and so too must its coming, cosmic end. This extension of Bethea's argument

along the lines of the opposition of chaos to cosmos would support his main contention that Belyj's novel is an expression of belief -- a belief that those imagined apocalypses which fail to materialize are the stones that pave the road to a higher truth.

But rather than pursue this or other oppositions upon which, as he notes, apocalypse feeds, Bethea more fortunately and elegantly extends his exploration of the morpheme *pro-* into the semantic and visual associations that link its vocabulary to the images of the horse and rider (and most importantly, to their transformation into the unicorn appearing in the Abeuxov coat-of-arms). Bethea sees this image cluster as the most "basic and widespread" of the many structural keys the novel offers. (131) Indeed, he demonstrates the breadth of this vision not only in his work with *Petersburg* but also over the full course of his book. The image of the horse, with its multitudinous implications and manifestations (including its modern variant, the train) links together the five novels typifying the sub-genre of apocalyptic fiction. And in fact, it is in this regard that our understanding of *Petersburg* has the most to gain from Bethea's approach. For, while other close readings have argued for this or that interpretation of the novel's meaning, or have admired one or another of its stylistic jewels, the exquisite feature of Bethea's treatment is its cogent argument for the openness of *Petersburg's* meditation upon historical closure. As Bethea makes us see, herein lies Belyj's power to move a generation of writers and many generations of readers to come.

In its own way, in the enormity of its commitment to a thorough examination of the history and criticism

that has been written out of the need to confront apocalypticism in modern literature, Bethea's work too is moving. The dimension of his enterprise is measured in his exhaustive introduction to the "Myth, History, Plot, Steed" of apocalyptic texts, the lines along which Bethea carves the shape of his own thoughts into the existing block of scholarship. Reader be warned, this is a dense book: densely researched and densely written. But its solidity only attests to its durability; this book will stand for a long time.

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Michael Molnar. *Body of Words: A Reading of Belgi's Kotik Letsev*. Birmingham Slavonic Monographs, 17. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Dept. of Russian Language & Literature, 1987. viii + 58 pp 4.00 (paper).

Traditional reconstructions of childhood, whether autobiographical or fictional, presume a constant system of signification which the adult narrator asserts for mimetic purposes. While Michael Molnar acknowledges that a coherent literary language, "the domaine of adulthood and authority," inevitably imposes restrictions upon such constructions, he argues that *Kotik Letsev* eludes them, emphasizing the processes rather than the products of perception, and finding "movements and migrations of meaning" rather than fixed definitions. The adult narrator, no less than the infant child, lacks social identity and through the verbal re-experience of early childhood, seeks rebirth into the greater symbolical realm.

Not surprisingly, Molnar takes issue with the vast majority of extant exegeses, most specifically those which insist upon anthroposophical doctrine as the key to its interpretation. Imposition of that elaborate, external structure, more appropriate to nineteenth century novels, obscures rather than illuminates "the experience of a pre-reflectively perceived world being gradually brought to reflective consciousness." (50) Indeed, it is the totally uninitiated readers who can better appreciate the work's attempt to convey an infant's bewilderment: "They sense the universe they have entered is intricately structured but can glean no more than dark hints and ambiguous allusions as to the relation of its parts." (39)

As a "reading" of a text, this essay considers its subject in a manner somewhat reminiscent of John Ciardi's *How Does a Poem Mean?* Genre differences notwithstanding, it shares with that latter book a bias against "message hunters." As Ciardi has it, "the reader tends to 'interpret' the poem rather than to experience it, seeking only what he can make over from it into a prose statement... and forgetting in the process that it was originally a poem." (667) Belyj's preoccupation with the word in his experimental work is seen as "an attempt to evolve a theory of language and world by linking early perceptions with some version of linguistics as Belyj chose to interpret it." (33) Perhaps, but Molnar's discussion is admittedly "sketchy," making it difficult to assess the success of that endeavor. In the final analysis, he is caught between his avowedly anti-analytic stance and his own idiosyncratic mode of "reading." Although often suggestive, this brief essay lacks the sort of detail which might make it totally persuasive.

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Andrej Belyj: A Bibliography 1988-1989
 Compiled by Julian Grafky

(Some materials from 1988 were included in last year's bibliography. Some materials from before 1988 have only recently come to my notice and are included here. The most important entry this year is the collection *Andrej Belyj. Problemy tvorčestva* (see section IV). The abbreviation ABPT is used in referring to individual entries from this collection).

I. Primary Material: Recent Publications and Reprints

"Bašennyj žitel'" (extract from *Nadžalo veka* on Gumilev) in *Nikolaj Gumilev v vospominanijaz sovremennikov* (Paris-New York: Tret'ja volna, 1989), pp. 148-150.

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"Kak my pišem. O sebe kak pisatele," intro. and pub. V. Sažin, ABPT, pp. 8-24.

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"Vospominanija o L.N. Tolstom," intro. and publ. L. Ozerov, *ABPT*, pp. 638-644.

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II. Translations

"Teacher of Consciousness (Lev Tolstoy)," *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, trans. and intro. O.M. Cooke, Vol. 2, 1989, pp. 61-69. (See original above)

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"Pis'ma Andreja Belogo k E.Ju. Fexner," *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, 9, 1989, pp. 109-112 (seven letters of 1921-1923, intro. A.V. Lavrov, pp. 105-106).

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"Iz pisem Andreja Belogo k Ivanovu-Razumniku," intro. and publ. A.V. Lavrov and D.E. Maksimov,

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News from the Front

Here are some responses from Belyj Society members concerning their forthcoming publications and current research: **James West** (University of Washington) -- an article on Heinrich Rickert's influence on Belyj; **Marina Astman** (Barnard College) -- Russian women writers: the post-revolutionary period (1925-1990); **Milica Banjanin** (Washington University) -- the influence of the *Commedia dell'arte* on early twentieth century Russian literature; **Peter L. Barta** (Texas Tech University) -- a monograph on the theme of walking in the modernist urban novel, an article on the tradition of witchcraft and *Kotik Letacev*, and classical and Nietzschean moorings in *Petersburg*; **Evelyn Bristol** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) -- a book, *Modernism in Russian Literature, 1890-1990*, which will include a section on Belyj; **Michael Green** (UC-Irvine) -- an anthology of post-revolutionary Russian drama; **Robert P. Hughes** (UC-Berkeley) -- Volume V of Xodasevič's collected works (studies of Puškin and the poets of his time); **Gerald Janecek** (University of Kentucky) -- a book on *zaum'* and translations of contemporary Russian poetry; **D. Barton Johnson** (UC-Santa Barbara) -- a book on post-Stalin dissent and modernism; **John M. Kopper** (Dartmouth College) -- on the mania for Dante among members of Musset and whether it carried through into their own work; **Eleonora Magomedova** (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) -- Sologub's *Tvorimaja legenda*; **Louis Pedrotti** (UC-Riverside) -- on Baron Brambeus; **Greta Slobin** (UC-Santa Cruz) -- "History and Narrative in Belyj and Remizov" for the Harrogate conference; **Vladimir Alexandrov** (Yale University) -- a forthcoming book on Nabokov from Princeton University Press; **Elena Sokol**