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IVAN KONEVSKOY (1877-1901): A RECONSTRUCTION OF INTEGRAL IDENTITY

ANDREW JAMES FARRELL

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PH.D.

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UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM
DEPARTMENT OF RUSSIAN
SCHOOL OF MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

1996



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Andrew Farrell **University of Durham** **Ph.D. Thesis** **1996**

IVAN KONEVSKOY (1877-1901): A RECONSTRUCTION OF INTEGRAL IDENTITY

Abstract

This thesis builds upon renewed interest in I.I. Konevskoy (pseudonym of I.I. Oreus), in particular in the Soviet-Russian publication, *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo*. The thesis attempts, however, to break the comparative/associative mould of studies relating to Konevskoy heretofore. Indeed, it draws extensively upon unpublished materials, including reading lists compiled by Konevskoy from 1893-1901, to reconstruct his identity as an *individual poet-thinker* of *Solov'evian* disposition.

Part One analyzes response to Konevskoy in the contemporary literary context and finds that both important accounts by admirers (principally V.Ya. Bryusov) and detractors (Z.N.Gippius) were obscured by personal interests and the polarized politics of the aesthetic/religious Modernist debate. With the support of other views voiced by A. Blok, S. Makovsky and Konevskoy himself (in polemic with Z.N. Gippius and in an unpublished essay on early Modernism), Part One also begins to challenge these accounts and to distinguish Konevskoy's *individualistic* search for a *positive metaphysics* in answer to the contemporary crisis of faith.

Part Two scrutinizes the young Oreus' early endeavours to vindicate faith in the modern age and identifies their impetus in the mixture of spirituality and educational independence which typified his upbringing. It describes the early stages of the dialectical exploration of man's interrelationship with the universe which characterizes this vindicatory process. It examines his first attempt to combat contemporary scepticism through Kantian rational faith in *individual* moral consciousness (1893-5), his recognition of Dostoevsky's demand for *objective* faith in an integral universe in *Brat'ya Karamazovy* (1895), and his early, chequered exploration of Solov'evian "unitotality" as a possible basis for satisfying that demand (1896-7).

Part Three moves that Konevskoy's increasingly polyphonous poetry did not indicate metaphysical disaffection. It acknowledges Konevskoy's successive frustrations with the impersonalism of the unitotal "Absolute" (1898), with the moral ideals of Solov'evian philosophy, "Godmanhood" and "true sexual love" (1898-99), and with his own excessive claims for a lesser Solov'evian ideal, "true patriotism", as an alternative to love. It argues, however, that ultimately Konevskoy was approaching a positive answer to his doubts upon realizing that "true patriotism" was the basis for "true love", and that he died in 1901 as a Solov'evian (not a Nietzschean) "poet-prophet" of cultural enlightenment and a forerunner of the "second generation" of Russian Symbolists.

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university. The thesis conforms with the word limit set out in the Degree Regulations.

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FOR MY FAMILY

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I wish also to thank the many friends who ensured that my days in Durham were rarely dull, and Vassiliki Malandraki and Ellie Panagiotakou for hospitably accommodating me on my return visits when I was no longer resident there. Finally, I want to thank my family, in particular my parents, for their unfailing love and support.

PREFACE

I was guided by George Chapman's aim in translating Homer when I began my study of Konevskoy in October 1990: "with poesie to open poesie". It seemed that a bilingual, annotated edition of this neglected poet-thinker's verse was the best way both for me to explore his work myself, and also to revive his fortunes as an individual writer of merit among a wider readership. I pursued this aim for the next two years. During this time, prevented from doing research in Moscow by the situation in Russia and the abrupt discontinuation of the British Council exchange with the Soviet Union, I produced metrical translations of the bulk of Konevskoy's verse, and, with the limited sources available to me, a poem by poem commentary.

After much planning, a private arrangement eventually allowed me to go to Moscow at the beginning of my third year of research (October 1992). I quickly realized that, although the previous two years had been a thorough apprenticeship, the rich materials which I had discovered in Konevskoy's archive made a change of approach inevitable. Konevskoy's meticulously kept catalogue of reading (1894-1901) and notebooks offered a unique opportunity to trace with unprecedented specificity the influences and stimuli underlying his verse. I undertook to concentrate wholly upon the commentary, and conceived of a work in the style of Vl. Markov's study of K.D. Bal'mont: *Kommentar zu den Dichtungen von K.D. Bal'mont*. I followed up extensive sources and a significantly more detailed commentary took shape upon my return to Durham in April 1993.

In following in Konevskoy's footsteps, however, I found that certain patterns emerged in his reading and interests that became increasingly difficult to ignore. Names recurred: among others, I. Kant, I.A. Panaev, J.M. Guyau, F.M. Dostoevsky, A. Volynsky, Carl Du Prel, Plato, F. Nietzsche, and, most prominently, Vl.S. Solov'ev. These figures, primarily thinkers, stood out among Konevskoy's many literary interests, including Romanticism and Modernism, home-grown and foreign. I saw that his reading of these thinkers was often painstakingly systematic and interrelated; that his essays, many unpublished, testified to his sustained efforts to understand and assimilate their thought. Moreover, it became clear that these philosophical interests deeply informed his writings on literature, music and visual art.

My objective being a reconstruction of Konevskoy's integral identity, I recognized that it was better to paint this first attempt at a complete portrait of the poet with the broad brush strokes that a study of these *essential* philosophical pursuits invited. The commentary, by its very nature an impressionistic mosaic of specialist information, came to seem to be the natural *sequel* to such a work, and I left it to produce the thesis in its

present form. It is my hope, however, that with the growing interest in Konevskoy, which the present work will perhaps further encourage, I will indeed be able to return in time to the translations and commentary and to produce a separate edition to complement the material in this thesis.

It is, therefore, upon the *thought-centred* version of the thesis that I have been working since late 1993 to the present, when by force of circumstance I have completed it while undertaking a teaching qualification.

Where I consulted works read by Konevskoy in languages other than English and Russian, I endeavoured to use the poet's own translations of them or to compare English translations of them with his original sources.

ABBREVIATIONS

ed.khr.: edinitsa khraneniya.

Es: *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'*, St. Petersburg, Brokgaus i Efron, 1890-1907.

f.259: denotes I.I. Konevskoy's archive, housed at the Central (now Russian) State Archive of Literature and Art, Moscow.

GBL: Otdel Rukopisey Gosudarstvennoy (now Rossiyskoy Gosudarstvennoy) Biblioteki im. V.I. Lenina, Moscow.

L.: Leningrad.

Ln: *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*.

M.: Moscow.

Mi: *Mir iskusstva*.

Mid: Konevskoy, I.I., *Mechty i dumy Ivana Ivanovicha Konevskogo*, St. Petersburg, Tip. E. Evdokimova, 1900.

op.: opis'.

Russ. lit. XX v.: *Russkaya literatura XX veka*, (ed. Vengerov, S.A.), Moscow, Mir, 1914-18.

SELk: Solov'ev, Vl. S., *Vladimir Solov'ev. Stikhotvoreniya. Estetika. Literaturnaya Kritika*, Moscow, "Kniga", 1990.

Sip: Konevskoy, I.I., *Stikhi i proza*, Moscow, "Skorpion", 1904.

Sob. soch.: *Sobranie sochineniy*.

Soch.: *Sochineniya*.

SPb.: St. Petersburg.

Spkis: *Spiski prochitannykh knig i statey*: **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6**.

Sv: *Severnyy vestnik*.

TsGALI (now RGALI): Tsentral'nyy (now Rossiyskiy) Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva, Moscow.

Ve: *Vestnik evropy*.

Vfip: *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*.

Z.k.: *Zapisnaya knizhka*.

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The "British" system is used (where, of course, some variants of vowel sounds are possible. I have rendered the Russian 'e' as 'e'; 'ы' and 'й' as 'y'; 'ю' as 'yu'; and 'я' as 'ya'). Personal names ending -ый/-ий are given in simplified anglicized form (e.g. Dostoevsky, not Dostoevskiy) in the main text. The full form is used in transliterated titles, however.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Vyacheslav Ivanov's last word on Symbolism was a short entry in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* written in 1936. It was therefore not only the concluding statement by one who had been occupied by Symbolism as a poet and theoretician for some four decades, but also an objective attempt to reduce this complex literary-philosophical phenomenon to its *absolute essentials*. Notably, of the Russian branch of Symbolism, Ivanov was to observe:

> В России, с новою поэтическою вестью Блока и Белого и с первыми философскими исследованиями о началах символизма, наступает пора строжайшего осознания его духовных задач, явившееся расцветом школы, уже заявившей о себе плеядою значительных писателей, среди которых наибольшею славою пользовались Мережковский, Бальмонт, Анненский, Сологуб, Брюсов и *особое внимание* заслуживают *Коневский*, Гиппиус, Волошин, Балтрушайтис.[1]

The essential object of this thesis is to attempt to establish the true identity of one of the poets whom Ivanov retrospectively considered to merit "particular attention" for their pivotal role in the development of Russian Symbolism: Ivan Ivanovich Konevskoy (pseudonym of I.I. Oreus, 1877-1901).

I

Notably, Vyacheslav Ivanov himself felt intimidated by the complexity of Konevskoy's literary legacy on first encountering it in February 1904. On receiving the posthumous "Skorpion" edition of Konevskoy's work, *Stikhi i proza*, from its editor, Valery Bryusov, Ivanov responded:

> Сердечное спасибо за <...> дорогой томик Коневского. Меня влечет - но и пугает трудностью тонкой задачи - написать в свою очередь что-нибудь о нем. Его искания и постижения представляются мне полными глубокого значения, а его душевный облик стихийно-загадочным и прекрасным. C'est une révélation, этот томик: честь и слава «Скорпиону».[2]

Significantly, Ivanov's tentatively planned review was never to be written, a fact that perhaps bears further testimony to the difficulties that Konevskoy's poetry presents.

Ivanov's reticence certainly stands as a warning and an incentive to us as we embark upon our attempt to elucidate the *intrinsic* qualities of Konevskoy's poeticidentity. Indeed, it puts us on our guard as we turn to Soviet-Russian studies of

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[1]Ivanov, V.I., "Simbolismo. Simvolizm", *Sob. soch.*, Brussels, 1974, Vol. II, p. 667. Italics mine. Translated from the Italian by O. Deschartes (who inaccurately renders Ivanov's transliteration "Konevskoj" back into Russian as "Konevskiy").

[2]*Ln* 85, p. 447.

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Konevskoy and find the degree to which they have remained locked within the orbit of a contemporary debate which was less reluctant to pass judgement upon the poet than Ivanov.[3]

Konevskoy's star has perhaps most notably risen as a result of new studies on Valery Bryusov, who was the younger poet's friend and correspondent and championed his posthumous reputation in the contemporary literary arena. V. Dmitriev published five abridged letters from Bryusov to Konevskoy in 1979.[4] In 1983 Konevskoy's name was again associated with that of Bryusov in a short article regarding the latter's visit to his grave and the poem that the occasion inspired.[5] These were merely the prelude, however, to the most recent and comprehensive documentary publication relating to Konevskoy to date: the full correspondence with Bryusov. The correspondence, which comprises 62 letters, appeared in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* in 1991 with an introductory article by A.V. Lavrov and extensive annotations and appendices by Lavrov, V.Ya. Morderer and A.E. Parnis.[6]

Russian "*blokovedenie*" has also played an important role in advancing the rediscovery of Konevskoy.[7] Articles by V. Ya. Morderer ("Blok i Ivan Konevskoy") and N.L. Stepanov ("Ivan Konevskoy. Poet mysli") appeared in a volume of *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* devoted to Blok in 1987 and represented the most comprehensive introduction to the poet prior to the publication of the Bryusov correspondence.[8]

I.G. Yampolsky has made further contributions to the epistolary record. Indeed, in publishing two letters from Konevskoy to Vl.V. Gippius with introduction and

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[3]We focus primarily upon the Soviet-Russian response as *critical* interest in Konevskoy in the West has so far remained minimal. To my knowledge only three short articles specifically devoted to Konevskoy have been published: Pyman, A., "A forerunner of Russian Modernism: Ivan Konevskoy", *Scottish Slavonic Review*, No. 14, 1990 pp. 5-19; Grossman, J.D., "Ivan Konevskoi: *Bogatyr* of Russian Symbolism", *The Silver Age in Russian Literature. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990*, St. Martin's Press, 1992, pp. 1-10 and "Neo-Kantianism, Pantheism, and the Ego", *Studies in East European Thought*, 47, 1995, pp. 179-193. Moreover, the latter article, evidently the first of a projected series, came to my notice only after the completion of the present work.

[4]Dmitriev, V., "Ivanu Ivanovichu Oreusu (Konevskomu)", *V. Bryusov i literatura kontsa XIX-XX veka*, Stavropol', 1979, pp. 139-142.

[5]Parnis, A.E./Timenchik, R., "Epizod iz zhizni Valeriya Bryusova", *Daugava*, 1983, No. 5, pp. 113-16.

[6]Lavrov, A.V., Morderer, V. Ya., Parnis, A.E., "Perepiska s Iv. Konevskim (1898-1901)", *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 424-554.

[7]An interest possibly initiated by Z.N. Mints, who gave an unpublished paper on Konevskoy, "O zabytom poete, I. Konevskom", at the 1 All Union (III) Conference "Tvorchestvo A. Bloka i russkaya kul'tura XX veka" held in Tartu in 1975. See the report on the conference proceedings in *Voprosy literatury*, 1975, No. 9, p. 309.

[8]Morderer, V.Ya., "Blok i Ivan Konevskoy", *Ln* 92 (iv), pp. 151-78. Stepanov, N.L., "Ivan Konevskoy. Poet mysli", Ibid., pp. 179-202. Stepanov's article, which appears as a supplement to Morderer's, is in fact a posthumous publication prepared by A.E. Parnis. Originally it had been intended to serve as an introduction to an unrealized "Biblioteka poeta" edition of Konevskoy's work in preparation in the 1930's. For a brief history of this abortive edition, see Parnis' introduction to the article in *Ln* 92 (iv). Stepanov's work is now in a private collection and inaccessible to the author of the present work. Further fragments are, however, published in *Ln* 98 (i) (see p. 440).

annotations in 1979, he was a pioneer of the renewed interest in the poet.[9] More recently, in 1989, Yampol'sky published the letters of A.L. Miropol'sky-Lang, an associate and friend of Bryusov, to Konevskoy.[10]

In the opening pages of her article "Blok i Ivan Konevskoy", V.Ya. Morderer observes:

> Коневской известен только как поэт, имя которого приобрело стабильное место в определенном литературном ряду: в комментариях, а реже - в общих обзорах символистской поэзии конца XIX - начала XX в. (при незначительных вариациях основных имен - Брюсов, Бальмонт, Минский, З. Гиппиус, Мережковский, Ф. Сологуб и др.) неизменяемым остается устойчивое сочетание в ряду ранних «русских декадентов» - «А. Добролюбов, И. Коневской».[11]

Certainly the publications listed above have cumulatively contributed to ensuring that Konevskoy now enjoys a greater status in the study of *fin-de-siècle* Russian literature. He can no longer be conveniently bracketed (in an essentially erroneous association with that other early casualty of Russian Modernism and archetypal Decadent, Aleksandr Dobrolyubov) as a minor figure of unfulfilled promise to be automatically relegated to the footnotes.

However, it will have been noted that the majority of studies to the present have either been associative or comparative. Morderer's article, in addition to treating its main theme, is devoted to re-establishing Konevskoy's significance within the broader field of Russian literature. Her study is a valuable bibliographical source of response and references to Konevskoy both within the contemporary context and subsequently, which draws the following conclusion:

> ...творчество Коневского предстает как область схождения поэтических систем столь несхожих в своей различности авторов, признающих свою связь с ним, его подспудное влияние, историко-культурное воздействие его творческой личности.[12]

This observation, although in itself of interest and wholly justified, in a sense betrays the essential inadequacy of the new studies of Konevskoy. While they have undoubtedly stressed the importance of Konevskoy for an interesting variety of his contemporaries and near contemporaries, they have lost sight of the poet *himself*. He has been seen through the prism of contemporary response and association which has obscured his essential identity. Concentration on those qualities in Konevskoy's writings and personality which acted upon specific persons has promoted a perception and

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[9]Yampol'sky, I.G., "Ivan Konevskoy. Pis'ma k Vl.V. Gippiusu", *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo Doma na 1977 god*, 1979, pp. 79-98.
[10]Yampol'sky, I.G., "Pis'ma A. Miropol'skogo k I. Konevskomu", *Pamyatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiya. Ezhegodnik 1988*, 1989, pp. 19-32.
[11]*Ln* 92 (iv), p. 152.
[12]Ibid., p. 156.

interpretation of him at least indirectly coloured by their personal thought, values and priorities. In particular, the two *main* studies in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* which discuss Konevskoy in some detail necessarily examine him in comparative terms, with reference to Bryusov and Blok. For example, even though A.V. Lavrov's interesting and well-documented article on Bryusov and Konevskoy explores certain *distinctions* between the two poets which emerge in their correspondence, the context of his analysis demands that it remains locked in a purely comparative mould. The information which emerges about Konevskoy is used to set certain qualities in Bryusov in relief.

It cannot be denied that existing knowledge of Bryusov and Blok has been supplemented by this comparative method and V.Ya. Morderer's observation regarding the variety of poets whom Konevskoy influenced makes clear that the possibilities for further studies of this nature are far from exhausted. However, it is the view of the present work that a systematic reconstruction of Konevskoy's *true identity* is now imperative if further investigation into where he stood in relation to his contemporaries in the complex literary arena of the Russian "Silver Age" is to be as fruitful as it might.

II

Part One of our study shows why such a reconstruction is imperative. It is concerned with deconstructing the contemporary critical response to Konevskoy and elucidating his *own* view of where he stood in relation to Modernism. Firstly it attempts to excavate the various strata of received opinion of the poet in order to establish the way in which it actually projects his identity. Chapter One focuses exclusively upon Valery Bryusov, with whom Konevskoy's name is so closely associated, and whose canonical appraisal of the poet, "Mudroe ditya", has evaded systematic scrutiny. The analysis finds that although Bryusov's account undoubtedly offers valuable insights into Konevskoy, his overall definition of the poet reflects the priorities of his own artistic agenda. The chapter shows how Bryusov was at a crucial point in the genesis of his own poetic voice and aesthetic *Lebensphilosophie* in the late 1890's. In these conditions it was what he perceived as the spontaneity and authenticity of Konevskoy's *creative persona* that principally impressed itself upon him. He remained essentially *indifferent* to the *metaphysical* world-view of the poet and systematically minimized its presence in "Mudroe ditya".

Chapter Two considers the degree to which "Mudroe ditya" was a product of the burgeoning contemporary Symbolist debate, and it therefore scrutinizes opinion of Konevskoy in the broader literary context. It finds that as Z.N. Gippius crusaded against "Decadence" at the turn of the century in the name of the Merezhkovskys' "neo-Christianity", she numbered Konevskoy among the "Decadents" *by association* with

Brysuov and Aleksandr Dobrolyubov. The chapter proceeds to show how Bryusov used his obituary-tribute to Konevskoy ("Mudroe ditya") as a means to counterattack this offensive against the "new art" and thus encouraged the association of the dead poet with the "Decadent" pole of the movement. The analysis proposes that this explains Bryusov's highly selective references to metaphysics in "Mudroe ditya". These, it contends, were orchestrated to impart an impression of theoretical credibility to the aesthetic cause in the face of Gippius' attacks, while in no sense revealing the true nature of Konevskoy's complex metaphysics. The chapter concludes by showing how this distortional polarity of opinion regarding Konevskoy set the precedent for later critiques of his literary legacy.

Chapter Three constructs the case for the reassessment of the poet with the support of voices that dissented against the categorizations of the contemporary debate. It notes Aleksandr Blok's defence of Konevskoy's general poetic integrity in the immediate conditions of the debate, and Sergey Makovsky's later thesis that it was precisely Konevskoy's *thought* which that debate neglected and obscured. The chapter finds corroboration for this thesis in Konevskoy's *own* brief contribution to the debate, "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii" (1901), a polemic with Z.N. Gippius which notably *also* sets Konevskoy apart from the "Decadents" he idiosyncratically defends. Finally, the chapter rests its case by identifying certain modifications in the views of those *actually* responsible for the polarized opinion on Konevskoy in the contemporary debate which belie its categorizations and admit his individuality as a poet and thinker.

Chapter Four expands upon the findings of Chapter Three by exploring Konevskoy's stance in relation to early Modernism in his unpublished essay *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* (1897). The analysis not only shows that the essay further confounds contemporary opinion of the poet, but that it also offers a basis for the reconstruction of identity in the remainder of the thesis. The chapter reveals one who, while he appreciated the *spiritual needs* of many new writers, *did not* share what he perceived as the spiritual and metaphysical impotency of their assault upon materialist hegemony. *I.I. Oreus*, the personality behind "Ivan Konevskoy" worked systematically towards his own *positive* goal of *vindicating faith metaphysically*, and he identified *principally* with the *Russian* school of metaphysical poet-thinkers represented by such figures as F.I. Tyutchev, F.M. Dostoevsky and Vl.S. Solov'ev.

Part Two of the thesis attempts to reconstruct the specific processes contributing to Oreus' interest in and endeavours to formulate a vindicatory metaphysics. This section of the thesis begins, in Chapter Five, by reconsidering the possibility that the profound faith and conservative values of Oreus' father, Lt-General I.I. Oreus, may have had a more seminal influence upon him than that admitted by V. Bryusov. The chapter contends that the Lt-General's intense belief in the spirituality and immortality of the individual personality on the one hand, and positive Orthodox cosmology on the other, set an ideal

standard for Oreus in his bid to construct a positive "metaphysical faith" for the modern age. Indeed, it was the need to reconcile both the individual and the whole, the spiritual and the temporal life, in the face of scepticism that set Oreus upon a dialectical path to formulating his later metaphysics of integral universality.

Chapter Six examines Oreus' unpublished poem of winter 1893-4, *Latyn' i algebra, vsya istoriya v datakh*. The analysis shows how this critique of contemporary education, influenced by V.V. Rozanov's tract *Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, bears testimony to the marriage of *strong cultural identity* and *individual initiative* that Oreus' own upbringing instilled in his metaphysical pursuits, fostering a spirit of *continuity* yet also of *progress*. The chapter also finds the poem to be indicative of the *ethical idealism* that was the first fruit of those pursuits.

Chapter Seven identifies I.A. Panaev, a family friend, as the principal source of Oreus' growing sense of the need to vindicate faith in the modern age and his interest in *Kantian* philosophy as a means to do so. The chapter reveals how Panaev generally shared the cultural and social ethos of his friend, Lt-General Oreus, but that he had also worked for his cousin I.I. Panaev's radical journal, *Sovremennik*, and was acutely aware of progressive Russian thought. Panaev's attempt to answer it in his book on German idealism, *Raziskateli istiny* (which was well-known to Oreus), used the postulates of Kantian ethics as a basis for steadying the shaken pillars of his faith in God, free will and immortality. The chapter demonstrates how the morality of *individual self-perfection* which Panaev's subscription to Kantian idealism yielded was pivotal to Oreus' early essay and *profession de foi*, *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi* (1893-4).

Chapter Eight reveals how, far from being definitive, this idealist position was in fact but the beginning of Oreus' *dialectical* development. The chapter retraces the impact that Dostoevsky's *Brat'ya Karamazovy* had upon Oreus in 1895. It proposes that the maximalism of Ivan Karamazov's demand for an *objective* proof of personal immortality, and his "rebellion" against the seeming meaninglessness and injustice of temporal being, precipitated a metaphysical crisis in the Kantian Oreus. Dostoevsky had no need for Kantian postulates in his answer to Ivan - the starets Zosima's mystical vision of universal integrity and love. The analysis suggests that Oreus now aspired to find an *objective* metaphysics that was equally positive - admitting the positive synthesis of the individual *and* the objective universe.

Chapter Nine identifies Vl. Solov'ev's article "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" and critiques on A.K. Tolstoy and F.I. Tyutchev as exercising a pivotal influence upon Oreus in late 1895-96, leading to a new direction in his development. The chapter attempts to read these articles from Oreus' perspective and to capture the sense of reassurance and growing confidence that one in his position might have experienced as he

assimilated their arguments for an aesthetically intuited *universality* or "*unitotality*" (*vseedinstvo*).

Conversely, Chapters Nine and Ten address problems occasioned by Oreus' premature acceptance that these aesthetic articles were the *definitive* solution to his metaphysical doubts rather than the *promise* of a solution. Chapter Ten examines Solov'ev's articles "Krasota v prirode" and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" and Oreus' reaction to them in order to demonstrate the limitations of his essentially *Dostoevskian* understanding of the philosopher's position. The chapter finds that Oreus focussed disproportionately upon the intuition of an all-embracing, harmonious First Principle in nature and failed to appreciate the true complexities of the Solov'evian metaphysics of the Absolute, complexities which were crucial to understanding the philosopher's call for a new form of "art". The analysis shows how Oreus did not understand and address Solov'ev's seemingly paradoxical insistence that the unitotal "Idea" involved *processes* and that in nature it had a *chaotic* ground. The Chapter concludes by noting how the metaphysically *unqualified* aesthetic articles themselves helped to obscure this issue, as did Oreus' indiscriminate reading of *seemingly* confirmatory Modernist poetry at this time.

Chapter Eleven identifies the critical force that provoked Oreus to question this unqualified subscription to the aesthetic of mystical intuition, Akim Volynsky, resident critic of the journal *Severnyy vestnik*. The chapter traces the growing impact of Volynsky's "philosophical criticism" of the early Modernists upon Oreus' attitude to his own metaphysically limited aestheticism. More particularly, it proposes that it was Volynsky's critique of Vladimir Solov'ev's metaphysics of the Absolute that compelled Oreus to seek the clarification that would give new impetus to his dialectical development.

Chapter Twelve, the first of Part Three of this thesis, describes how Oreus found metaphysical definition in Solov'ev's tract *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*, which contained a systematic exposition of the metaphysics of the Absolute. This was to be the basis for a new, essentially Solov'evian dialectic in Oreus' development which is the subject of Part Three. It undertakes to retrace the stages of this dialectic in a series of chapters (Thirteen to Seventeen) which alternately state the case for and against continued Solov'evian influence. In doing so these chapters reveal how the self-questioning, perplexed side of Oreus' increasingly polyphonous poetry, upon which contemporary criticism tended to focus, was in fact counteracted by a body of previously neglected work that indicates positive continuity and development.

The logic of Solov'ev's "Critique" - that the Absolute, to be such, must not only exist in itself in a state of eternal perfection, but also in a state of "becoming" - facilitated a new understanding of "chaos" and "process" in Solov'evian aesthetics and cosmology that Oreus celebrated in his nature poetry of 1897-98. Chapter Thirteen proposes, however, that in itself the dialectical logic of the Absolute could not satisfy Oreus indefinitely and

that it was ultimately incidental to his further development. The chapter finds support for this contemporary critical interpretation of Oreus' poetic odyssey in his own philosophical writings of 1898. The analysis finds that these indicate a growing sense that the passive contemplation of the macrocosmic processes of Absolute "becoming" could not accommodate the needs of the *individual personality*.

Chapter Fourteen focusses upon Oreus' largely untreated "love poetry" of 1898-99 in which it discerns the influence of Vladimir Solov'ev's *aesthetic of love* as expounded in his articles "Zhiznennaya drama Platona" and "Smysl lyubvi". The chapter argues the case for Oreus' ongoing, positive development in its discussion of his subscription to the Solov'evian ideal of "true sexual love", which identified the *individual personality* as the pivotal *creative* force in the realization of the Absolute Idea.

Chapter Fifteen resumes the argument against the sustained, positive influence of Solov'evian metaphysics. The chapter draws attention to the vein of uncertainty running throughout Oreus' "love poetry" and argues that as a celebration of a remote ideal it was bound to lose its momentum and end in failure. The analysis finds that a polemic with sympathizers of the student unrest at Petersburg University in early 1899, which Oreus initially disdained, in time forced him to acknowledge the remoteness of his own ideals. The chapter reconstructs the sense of despondency and frustration that emerged in Oreus' poetry of 1899 as a consequence of this acknowledgement. It identifies a militant *solipsism* as the issue of this process of disillusionment and argues that the *poetic* theorization to which Oreus devoted himself almost exclusively in 1900-1901 was indicative of the ultimate primacy of this maximalist aesthetic.

Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen undertake to dispute this conclusion by identifying another *unrecognized* Solov'evian theme in Oreus' poetry which vouches for the positive continuity of his development: the poet as instigator of "true patriotism" - the cultural integration of individual and society. Chapter Sixteen traces Oreus' growing interest in this ideal and the power invested in the poet - as a visionary exponent of the Absolute - to bring about its realization. The chapter turns firstly to Oreus' depiction of a Varangian poet-warrior in "S Konevtsa" and evocation of the Russian epos in "V rody i rody", both poems of 1898. It argues that these "atavistic" works evoked an idealized past in order to inspire change in the present and future in the style of the historical poetry of A.K. Tolstoy, who exemplified the Solov'evian "poet-patriot". The analysis continues to find that although Oreus' interest in this genre was quickly muted in 1898 by his metaphysical entanglements and preoccupation with the love ideal, it re-emerged strongly in "atavistic" poems of 1899. The chapter argues that this renewed interest in the form in fact represented a reactionary attempt to champion one Solov'evian ideal - the power of poetry to transform cultural reality, as an *alternative* to another - the theurgic love ideal. The analysis establishes that Oreus' solipsism of 1899 was in fact a final bid to sustain his

disproportionate claims for the transfigurative power of poetry - a call for the poeticization of reality in defiance of the unrealizable love ideal.

Chapter Seventeen reconstructs the processes of Oreus' realization in 1900-1901 that the Solov'evian love ideal was the *ultimate objective* of "true patriotism" and that it was the proper task of the poet-prophet of cultural change to serve that ideal. The chapter shows how the intensified poetic theorization of Oreus' final year was not in fact indicative of his abandonment of the love ideal but his increased interest in the poet's role as its exponent. The analysis reveals that his insistence upon the poet's "sovereignty" in this late theorization was consonant with Solov'ev's definition of the poet-prophet's task in his article "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" and not an assertion of solipsism. The chapter concludes with a systematic evaluation of the poems of Oreus' last year which were almost entirely neglected by contemporary criticism. It finds the re-emergence of the cultural and historical ideal in these works indicative of Oreus' final acceptance of his "task" as a Solov'evian "poet-prophet".

The objective of Chapter Eighteen, the concluding chapter of this thesis, is to subject its findings to one final, definitive test. The chapter considers Valery Bryusov's claim that *Nietzsche* exerted an increasingly dominant influence upon Oreus. The chapter certainly acknowledges Nietzsche's importance for Oreus and finds Nietzschean ideas in a series of his poems. However, it also draws upon Oreus' *unpublished* writings on Nietzschean philosophy to show that he interpreted the German philosopher's doctrines of the will to power and eternal recurrence from a positive *Solov'evian* perspective.

The primary objective of this thesis is, of course, to re-establish who *I.I. Oreus* was, and it scrupulously avoids entangling itself in comparative or associative study. However, on the basis of the *overall* findings of its reconstruction of integral identity, the concluding chapter also allows itself briefly to suggest Oreus' proper place in the Russian literary context. It argues that as one who fused past ideals and modern concerns in a broadly Solov'evian metaphysical credo Oreus is a vital *link* between the tradition of Russian poet-thinkers of the nineteenth century and the "second" generation of Modernists to come, in particular Aleksandr Blok, Andrey Bely and Vyacheslav Ivanov. It is to be hoped that the reconstruction of Oreus' identity attempted in this thesis will now provide a valuable basis for studying "Ivan Konevskoy" in relation to these precursors, contemporaries and successors in the Russian literary arena and thus contribute to a greater understanding of the overall complexity of the Russian "Silver Age".

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Valery Bryusov and Ivan Konevskoy. 'Mudroe ditya': epitome of Bryusov's personal artistic ideal.

Пусть художник готовится к подвигу жизни, как пророк. Пусть станет он раньше мудрым.

V.Ya. Bryusov. *O iskusstve.*

N.I. Petrovskaya, in reminiscences that bear testimony to the complex variety of perspectives which confront the scholar of the Russian "Silver Age", suggests where our search for Ivan Konevskoy's identity in that vibrant cultural context must begin:

> Офицеры, адвокаты, разжиревшие спекулянты, модные актеры и т.л. - вся эта нечисть, питавшаяся гноем эпохи перед 1905 годом <...> была уверена, что Брюсов ест засахаренные фиалки, по ночам рыскает по кладбищенским склепам, а днем, как фавн, играет с козами на несуществующих московских пастбищах!... Слово «Метрополь» вызывало немедленно приятнейшую ассоциацию пышного раззолоченного кабака, и едва ли кто-нибудь из них знал, что на заднем дворе этого сладостного «Метрополя» в двух маленьких комнатках ютится настоящий русский литературный Олимп, где куется самая утонченная наша культура. Кто знал тогда имена *Ив. Коневского*, Добролюбова, Балтрушайтиса, тех самых верных соработников Брюсова <...> Кто их знал?[1]

As Petrovskaya intimates, Valery Bryusov orchestrated the publication of the posthumous "Skorpion" edition of Konevskoy's work, *Stikhi i proza* (M., 1904), which effectively guaranteed this poet's right to a place in the Russian Modernist constellation. Bryusov, moreover, not only conceived of the edition and edited it, but further set his personal stamp on the book by contributing his seminal interpretative article "Mudroe ditya" to its foreword.[2] Indeed, Bryusov was not simply the executor of Konevskoy's artistic legacy; he had also cultivated relatively close relations with the younger poet in the last two years of his life. *Stikhi i proza* was more than a literary memorial, it was a personal tribute on Bryusov's part.[3]

It is primarily in view of his artistic and personal relations with Konevskoy that Bryusov has been considered the most qualified judge of this poet's vision. "Mudroe

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[1] *Ln* 85, pp. 775-6. My italics.

[2] This work first appeared as an obituary in *Mi* in 1901 and was subsequently republished under the title "Mudroe ditya", with some minor, but interesting, textual variations, on three future occasions. For a list of the article's various manifestations see Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 608 or *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 172. Also see below, note 46.

[3] Notably, both N.I. Petrovskaya and Bryusov's sister, N. Ya. Bryusova, recalled that after Konevskoy's death he did not have any genuine friends. See *Ln* 85, p. 779 and *Ln* 98 (i), p. 553 respectively.

ditya" quickly assumed an almost canonical status that has not lost its validity in intervening years.

Indeed, three years after the appearance of *Stikhi i proza*, the critic, N. Poyarkov, conceded:

> Мне кажется, что хорошо разобраться в дневнике-книге Коневского может только то лицо, которое близко знало так рано угасшего поэта. Важно, чтобы оно слышало его замыслы, понимало его цели. Поэтому более удобным я считаю привести некоторые места из статьи «Мудрое дитя» Валерия Брюсова.[4]

Poyarkov's confidence in Bryusov as one best placed to appreciate the subtleties and complexities of Konevskoy's writing has been perpetuated to the present. A.V. Lavrov, judging "Mudroe ditya" in comparison with later evaluations of Konevskoy, states:

> Все позднейшие литераторы обращали внимание большей частью на отдельные аспекты творчества Коневского и были мало восприимчивы к его поэтической личности во всей ее сложной совокупности. В этом отношении Брюсов остался единственным писателем, осознавшим место и значение Коневского в истории русской поэзии, сумевшим постигнуть его неповторимый целостный образ.[5]

There is no doubt that Bryusov is a pivotal figure for any study of Konevskoy. However, in a work concerned specifically with that poet's *integral* identity, it is necessary to ask whether we can actually share such unequivocal confidence in "Mudroe ditya". Perhaps it is the most comprehensive analysis of Konevskoy in contemporary criticism, but in itself this does not, of course, vouch for unquestionable accuracy. "Mudroe ditya" is indisputably closer to the truth about Konevskoy than the popular vision of Bryusov that so infuriated Petrovskaya, for example. However, does not the greater subtlety of possible deviations from the truth in the essay make it all the more imperative now to subject it to fresh scrutiny? Indeed, a re-examination of the precise nature and extent of Bryusov's personal and literary relations with Konevskoy catalogued in his diaries and recently published correspondence with the poet and his father suggests that the underlying criteria and objectives of the analysis in "Mudroe ditya" were highly conditional.

Konevskoy's father, Lt-General I.I. Oreus (1830-1909), always bemused by the 'new art' which had so engrossed his son, ceded pre-eminence to Bryusov in judging the poet's *literary* persona on receiving "Mudroe ditya" in September 1901.[6] However, in an earlier letter he had wondered:

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[4]Poyarkov, Nik., "Ivan Konevskoy", *Poety nashikh dney. Kriticheskie etyudy*. M., 1907, p. 17.
[5]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 439.
[6]See *Ln* 98 (i), p. 536.

Вы имели с сыном моим сношения преимущественно на литературной почве. Не знаю, знаком ли вам был внутренний строй его личности.[7]

Bryusov significantly responded in a letter which makes clear that he doubted his personal authority to compile *Stikhi i proza* as originally conceived:

Мне представляется, что, кроме тщательно собранных его стихов (конечно *всех*) и кроме его статей (тоже, думаю, всех), туда должны войти: его портрет, сведения хоть беглые о его жизни. очерки его души и его поэзии, сделанные теми, кто лично его знал <...> Конечно, нужно ли это - решать именно Вам, но мне кажется, что необходимо хоть такой прозой договорить за него им недосказанное. *Я сужу уже по себе. Я не знаю его жизни, Я даже не знаю, сколько было ему точно лет. И во мне есть жадное желание, необходимость узнать это.*[8]

Indeed, in his next letter to Lt-General Oreus, evidently exercised by the implications of his confession of limited insight in the preceding one, Bryusov was to exclaim:

Боже мой! как упрекаешь теперь себя, что не искал, не добивался даже с излишней назойливостью встреч и бесед с Вашим сыном. Их было так мало! Но ведь думалось, что впереди жизнь![9]

Bryusov, *who had already written "Mudroe ditya"*, regretted just how imperfect his knowledge of Konevskoy actually was. The present chapter will explore how Bryusov's attitude to, and preoccupation with, Konevskoy was indeed limited, being primarily determined by the relevance of that poet to his *own* artistic genesis. Chapter two will proceed to show how, as a corollary of this deeply personalized perspective on Konevskoy, "Mudroe ditya" was a defence of *Bryusov's* artistic principles and interests in the wider contemporary literary debate, the principles of one who considered himself to be the undisputed 'leader' of the Decadent 'movement', not necessarily those of the poet in question.

I

On the publication in December 1899 of *Mechty i dumy*, Konevskoy's first and only individual collection of verse published in his lifetime, Bryusov noted in his diary:

Ореус напечатал «Мечты и Думы» <...> *Поэзию Ореуса считаю одной из замечательнейших на рубеже двух столетий.*[10]

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[7]Ibid., p. 534.
[8]Ibid., p. 537. Italics concluding citation are mine.
[9]Ibid., p. 538.
[10]Bryusov, V.Ya., *Dnevniki*, p. 78. Italics mine.

This is an entry as pregnant with implication as it is laconic, and to evaluate "Mudroe ditya" as a study of Konevskoy's integral identity it is clearly essential in the first instance to establish precisely what quality in his poetry served to imprint itself so profoundly on Bryusov.

In the latter half of the 1890's Bryusov's artistic principles were still at a formative stage in their development. After the artistic crisis which followed the publication of his second book, *Me eum esse* (1897),[11] three years elapsed before his third collection, *Tertia Vigilia*, appeared. However, during this period of silence Bryusov was far from inactive, devoting himself to a conscientious refinement of his philosophy of poetry. This need for definition finds expression in his first exclusively theoretical work, the tract *O iskusstve* (1899).[12] Initially prompted by L.N. Tolstoy's *Chto takoe iskusstvo?* (1897-98), *O iskusstve* quickly became a pretext for defining his own creative principles and poetic voice. Indeed, in its final form Bryusov evidently considered it a long overdue and *definitive* profession of his artistic credo:

> Много общих настроений, много взглядов на мир и на жизнь сменились в душе моей; быстро становились для меня прошлым, и осужденным прошлым, сборники моих стихов. Но думаю, что мне не придется отказываться от тех суждений, которые я изложу здесь. *Все это уже решено для меня.*[13]

In the article Bryusov developed his belief in the primacy of the individual personality. The soul, he maintained, is a monadic microcosm of the universe. In order to explore that universe authentically it is imperative that the individual artist understands firstly that it is *his* representation and reality with which he converses; in other words, he must assert his *integrity* and free himself from the dictates of externality:

> Кто дерзает быть художником, должен найти себя, стать самим собою. Не многие могут сказать не лживо: «Это - Я» <...> Художнику необходимо осмелиться и снять с себя <...> личину. Необходимо освободиться от всего чужого, хотя бы то были заветы великих учителей.[14]

This entails a preparatory process of isolation, meditation and purgation which, once achieved, must be sustained in perpetuity:

> Пусть художник готовится к подвигу жизни, как пророк. Пусть станет он *раньше мудрым.*[15]

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[11]See, for example, Bryusov's letter to Vladimir Gippius of 29 January 1897: Litvin, E., "Pyat' pisem Bryusova k Vladimiru Gippiusu" in *V. Bryusov i literatura kontsa XIX-XX veka*, p. 126.
[12]Although published in 1899, Bryusov completed work on the pamphlet on August 13, 1898. See *Dnevniki*, p. 47.
[13]Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 43. Italics mine.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid. Italics mine.

Bryusov proceeded to explain, however, that art is not only the instrument of an endless process of soul-elucidation. In the latter part of his tract he turned his attention to the probem of the monadic soul's yearning to *communicate* with others:

> В человеческой жизни ясно проявляются два закона: стремление к совершенствованию и жажда общения <...> Мир есть мое представление <...> Из этого одиночества душа страстно порывается к общению. В единении с другою для нее блаженство. И единение возможно.[16]

In its true form, Bryusov contended, art could be the miraculous medium through which such unity becomes possible. Indeed, summing up his views on art in its present state he concluded:

> Искусство залечатлевает для земли душу художника, оно удовлетворяет двойной жажде общения: вступить в единение с другими и открыть перед другими тайну своей личности; самого художника искусство ведет к самопознанию.[17]

This view of art as a means of communication, which Bryusov perceived himself to share with Tolstoy, was in fact the original impetus for writing *O iskusstve*. However, there was clearly a tension present in this formulation of the artist's communicative activity in the context of the finished essay. Bryusov insisted on the free nature of true art; he consistently exhorted the reader and spectator to judge it as an active principle divorced from all external influence. His statement that equally the artist uses his art as an instrument of communication was contradictory, presupposing an 'audience', an external recipient, consciousness of which would inevitably influence both the artistic process and the finished work. Indeed what Bryusov had formulated in *O iskusstve* was not the definitive statement of his artistic principles that he wanted it to be. In fact, he had identified the essential problem he would have to address if he was to establish his own voice as a poet in accordance with his vision of the authentic artist - the necessity to resolve the innate tension existing between the two incompatible impulses that had shaped his career thus far. For while Bryusov had always advocated that art was an expression of individuality, at the inception of his artistic life he had courted recognition as a poet *by reaction*. Bryusov was acutely aware that he had adopted a 'mask' which, while being wholly contrary to his principle of individuality in and through art, obliged him to perform for an audience as it had become crucial to his identity as a poet. It was this need to affirm an inauthentic sense of being through external reaction that prompted Bryusov's continuing concern with the power of art to communicate, to make an impression. His predicament is reflected in a letter to Ivan Bunin of 1899:

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[16]Ibid., p. 52.
[17]Ibid., p. 53.

Очень много значит, с какой маской на лице вышли мы в первый раз к людям. Мы много лжем, не потому чтобы хотели обмануть, а лишь потому, что надо сохранять однажды принятую маску. Надо! Люди не любят, чтобы ее нарушали, и не легко это. И я стиснут той колеей, в которой стою, иду вперед, как лошадь с наглазниками. Но есть во мне по крайней мере сознание позорности этого. А мыслей и сочувствий своих не будет мне стыдно ни перед кем.[18]

The ideal of the 'autonomous' artist Bryusov had formulated in his tract, while a possibility for the future, was unrealizable for him personally in the present. His dismissal there of his early collections, while partly reflecting his philosophy that the artist must incessantly advance to sustain the authenticity of the artistic process, also suggests a need to escape the preconceived notions of the premeditated identity which he had paraded at the inception of his career to attain recognition. But Bryusov had not experienced the 'initiation process' of isolation, meditation and purgation, that early, preparatory acquisition of 'wisdom' that he prescribed in theory to be essential to the self-becoming of the artist. The need to impress himself upon externality still had a precedence which he could not expunge from his creative philosophy.

However, if *O iskusstve* was flawed, Bryusov was soon to encounter one whose poetry he perceived as affirming the possible realization of his ideal of artistic integrity. Four months after completing the tract, during a brief visit to Petersburg in December 1898, Bryusov commented in his diary upon a poetry reading held at Fyodor Sologub's flat:

Самым замечательным было чтение Ореуса, ибо он прекрасный поэт.[19]

Within three years Bryusov's perspective on the nature of art was clarified. In what was to be his next theoretical tract, "Istiny" (1901), in dismissing the need for the artist to consider the communicative power of art in the process of creativity, he resolved the dichotomy in himself that had constricted the freedom and full formation of his poetic voice:

Когда-то я написал книгу «О искусстве». Теперь я вполне признаю ее дух, но не разделяю многих ее мыслей. Я пришел ко взгляду, что цель творчества не общение, а только самоудовлетворение <...> *поэт творит, чтобы самому себе уяснить свои думы и волнения, возвести их к определенности* <...> Что будет после создания стихотворения, это другое дело. Оно может послужить и для общения. Из этого еще и еще раз следует, что все истинные создания искусства равноценны.[20]

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[18]*Ln* 84 (i), p. 446.
[19]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 57.
[20]Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 60. Italics mine. The article, the full title of which is "Istiny. (Nachala i nameki)", was first published in the "Skorpion" almanac *Severnye tsvety* in 1901.

Konevskoy's poetry was a factor in determining this significant shift of emphasis in Bryusov's artistic credo.

When sending a copy of *O iskusstve* requested by P.P. Pertsov in 1902, Bryusov forewarned him that he no longer considered the views it contained representative of his position. He restated his dismissal of the artist's obligation to employ art as an active medium for communication, referring Pertsov to the more recent "Istiny". Significantly, on writing this letter, he also felt prompted to transcribe it in part on the concluding pages of his personal copy of *O iskusstve*. Moreover, on concluding this transcription, he appended a note for his own reference:

См. еще *статью о Ив. Коневском* и о Ненужной правде в Мир Иск. 1901 и 1902 г.[21]

Bryusov directed himself to his obituary for Konevskoy published in *Mir iskusstva* in 1901. Evidently, in it he had 'enshrined' the quality in Konevskoy's poetry that had played a role in convincing him to redefine his own poetic philosophy. There, in terms that indeed echo the arguments voiced in "Istiny", we read:

Коневской вовсе не был литератором в душе, он создан был для уединения, для отшельничества. Кажется, в таком отшельничестве он провел всю свою раннюю юность <...> Для него поэзия была тем самым, чем и должна быть по своей сущности: *уяснением для самого поэта его дум и чувствований* <...> Его поэзия - дневник; у него совсем нет поэм или баллад, *он не умел писать ни о ком, кроме как о себе, да и ни для кого, как только для себя* <...> *Коневской заботился не о том, чтобы его поняли, а чтобы понять самого себя.*[22]

Thus it was the authenticity of Konevskoy's poetic voice in itself, the voice of the artist who truly had attained 'wisdom in youth' through the rigorous process of self-becoming, that Bryusov found to be exemplary in him. Konevskoy's poetry was the actualization of that very quality in art that Bryusov himself aspired to attain.

The exact nature of the example that Bryusov believed Konevskoy to set and the degree to which it played a role in moulding his attitude to his *own* creativity is reflected in greater detail in his correspondence with the younger poet and references to him in his diary.

The correspondence certainly yielded Bryusov many deep insights into the exacting demands that Konevskoy made on himself as a poet.[23] But that Bryusov was especially attentive to the conscientious exactitude of Konevskoy's understanding and treatment of the poetic voice is perhaps most apparent in his attitude to the younger

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[21]Ibid., p. 580. Italics mine.

[22]Bryusov, "Mudroe ditya. (Pamyati Iv. Konevskogo)", *Mi*, 1901, No. 8-9, p.137. Italics mine.

[23]See, for example, Konevskoy's letter of January 1900, which, indicative of his acute consciousness of the dynamics of his creativity and the tone of his poetic voice, Bryusov evidently considered of particular note, subsequently citing it in the annotations to *Stikhi i proza*: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 478/*Sip*, p. 243.

poet's criticisms of *his* work. His exchange with Konevskoy regarding *Tertia Vigilia* (1900), is particularly revealing in this respect. Bryusov's personal conviction that this collection marked a 'perfecting' of his craft finds assertion in a letter to M.V. Samygin of July 1900:

> Теперь я воистину достиг того, о чем твердил с детства. *Мне - до глубины души искренно - не нужны никакие приветствия, не нужны читатели. Мне все равно. Понимаете Вы всю свободу, даруемую этим сознанием.* Нетрудно быть выше насмешек, но надо стать выше всех восторгов и выше всех убеждений - своих и чужих. Только тогда можно быть творцом. *Я нашел свою высоту.*[24]

Clearly Bryusov considered himself to have realized something of the artistic authenticity that he had idealized in *O iskusstve*. That he associated this process of self-realization and 'authentication' with Konevskoy is evident in a letter inviting the younger poet to complete a critical assessment of *Tertia Vigilia* left unfinished after their meeting in Petersburg in early November 1900:

> Если будет у Вас свободные полчаса, не откажитесь написать мне о моих стихах то, что не пришлось мне услышать: это, конечно, упреки и осуждения, *т.е. наиболее любопытное, чего я могу искать.* А еще лучше: <...> приезжайте в Москву; здесь осталось еще много, чего Вы не «осмотрели» и не оценили.[25]

In the critical response that Konevskoy sent Bryusov his personal preferences were clearly those works in which he discerned a treatment of themes consistent with his world-view. But the general thrust of his analysis was in no sense determined by this criterion; it was less an examination of content than the *authenticity of poetic expression* and, more particularly, *identity*. With a directness of language that suggests attempted impartiality, he prescribed what he understood to be the *limits* of Bryusov's *poetic persona*. He commended poems that he judged to be consistent with Bryusov's personal poetic palette - the broad sweep of the heroic, the inner passion of the erotic and intensely introspective meditation. Experimentation in all other genres was summarily judged derivative and forced.[26]

This letter elicited a response from Bryusov that is fraught with tension, a confusion of counterattack and veiled submission of 'defeat' which clearly indicates that it was the observations regarding poetic identity in Konevskoy's critique that interested him principally. It opens with a defence of his right to an unprescribed diversity of experience, authentic whether or not cast in the Bal'montian mould that Konevskoy discerned in one of his works:

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[24]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 405. Italics mine.
[25]Ibid., p. 517. Italics mine.
[26]See letter to Bryusov of 20 November 1900: *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 517-19.

Ночь, странное бессилие при сознании возможности, вернее - именно благодаря сознанию возможности. Хорошо качаться на каких-то крыльях, которые поддерживают на воде. Только качаться и смотреть на облака. Вы скажете, что это Бальмонтовщина.[27]

Indeed, it appears that Bryusov judges Konevskoy's assessment of *Tertia Vigilia* to be flawed due to a failure on his part to locate the genuine identity of the poet, being the assessment of an autonomous reader, who, external to the writer, is of no consequence to him:

Да ведь теперь в самом деле ночь, час ночи, начало тишины. Вы не правы о моих стихах. То есть Вы очень хорошо написали, прекрасная статья и *кого-то* характеризует необыкновенно метко и глубоко. Кого-то - не меня, или лишь меня, как Вы себе представили. Может быть, я такой и лучше, да это не я.[28]

However, in view of Bryusov's above-cited letter to Samygin,[29] what follows is paradoxical, marking a sudden 'reversion to type'. The letter makes clear that the incorrectness of Konevskoy's attempt to define Bryusov's integral identity is in fact due to the deliberate *absence* of integral identity in the collection. Bryusov informs Konevskoy that externality compels him to adopt a myriad of the very disingenuous masks that he had told Samygin he had now escaped:

Вы слишком моим словам верите. А я ведь не про Бальмонта писал, что весь он ложь, - про себя. *Как только пытался говорить правду, никто никогда мне не верил: когда лгал - верили. В этом мучительность всей жизни - моей.*[30]

In rejecting Konevskoy's critique of his poetic identity, in this letter Bryusov indirectly indicates its efficacy. His explanation of the impetus underlying his creativity, the centrality of the 'mask', while in part defiant, is more an appeal for 'clemency' as the ambiguous language in which it is couched suggests. It was not a defence of conviction. Bryusov is in dispute with *himself* here, feeling that in *Tertia Vigilia* he had not in fact succeeded in meeting the ideal standard of artistic authenticity that he believed Konevskoy's poetry and criticism to embody, as intimated in the concluding line of the letter:

Часто о Вас мечтаю. Вы мой самый любимый поэт в мире. Обыкновенно таких писем не посылаю.[31]

II

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[27]Ibid., p. 522.
[28]Ibid.
[29]See above, p. 18.
[30]Ibid. Italics mine.
[31]Ibid.

The degree to which Konevskoy was intertwined with the processes of Bryusov's own poetic self-definition, a gauge by which authenticity was 'quantifiable', is apparent in his *immediate* response to the younger poet's death in a letter to A. Shesterkina of 15 August 1901:

> Умер Ив. Коневской-Ореус... Утонул, купаясь в р. Аа, в Лифляндии. Меня давно ничего так не поражало. Это хуже всех моих семейных бедствий, это жесточе всего, что я пережил за лето. Умер Ив. Коневской, на которого я надеялся больше, чем на всех других поэтов вместе. Пусть бы умер Бальмонт, Балтрушайтис, не говоря уже о Минском и Мережковском... но не он! не он! *Пока он был жив, было можно писать, зная, что он прочтет, поймет и оценит. Теперь такого нет. Теперь в своем творчестве я вполне одинок*. Будут восторги и будет брань, но нет критики, которой я верил бы, никого, кто понимал бы мои стихи до конца. *Я без Ореуса уже половина меня самого. Вдруг все стало ненужным, не решаюсь ни за что приняться.*[32]

Significantly, it is only having lamented the loss of Konevskoy in relation to *himself*, making explicit the pivotal role he foresaw for this poet in *his* continued artistic development, that Bryusov exclaims:

> А ему было 22 года! Он только начинал, намечал пути, закладывал фундамент (о! по грандиозному плану). И вот храма не будет - одни камни, одни чертежи, пустыня мертвая и небеса над ней.[33]

The emphasis in this letter to Shesterkina intimates a further factor which must be considered in approaching "Mudroe ditya": Bryusov clearly considered the specific philosophical preoccupations of Konevskoy's poetry to be of less consequence than the general creative ethos that so attracted him. Although he allowed that Konevskoy's thematic interests were symptomatic of a "grand plan", with his bias towards the creative process in itself he always refused to countenance the possibility that for the other poet himself this plan was absolutely *definitive*, not merely an embryonic vision.

An exchange in the initial stage of the correspondence illustrates clearly that the two poets subscribed to essentially different perspectives on life. In his third letter to Konevskoy dated 15 March 1899 Bryusov observed:

> Вы любите осуждать, а я прежде всего ищу желанного. Во всем и в каждом миге есть, перед чем должно преклониться. Единственный храм, достойный молитвы, - пантеон, храм всем богам, дню и ночи, и Христу, и Адонису, и демонам. Я люблю и старика Гомера, и утонченного Вергилия, реторику Виктора Гюго и намеренные намеки Маллармэ. Есть высшее, где все различия меркнут, все пределы примиряются. Разве осуждать не страшно, зная, что отвергнутое уже вне нас. Ведь любил же *он*, создавший, почему же не могу любить я. Хочу, чтобы мне не было чуждым - ничего <...> Верю, что только такое «я» - достойно своего поклонения. И еще верую, что к нему придут все.[34]

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[32] *Ln* 85, pp. 546-7. Italics mine.
[33] Ibid. Bryusov was incorrect. Konevskoy was 23 when he died.
[34] *Ln* 98 (i), p.454.

Three days later Konevskoy responded:

Глубоко сочувствую тому «пантеону», на который вы указываете, но не могу все, что вы упоминаете, любить как божественное согласие между стремлением и осуществлением, как красоту. Любить всех для меня непрекрасных могу разве только проникая их своим, чуждым их назначению, смыслом, внутренним устроением. Я могу их простроять как образцы несовершенства, внутренних разногласий, - что и выполняю в судяшей их критике - так хоть в некоторой мере сообщаю им образ и подобие, позволяющий мне смотреть и на них не как на вполне «внешнее» - чуждое, извергнутое из мировой жизни. Не знаю, должно ли приходить к Вашему образу зрения, и не уничтожает ли он великой силы оттенка и различения.[35]

It is not appropriate to analyze the specifics of these letters in depth here, but simply to draw attention in juxtaposing them to their thinly veiled general implication.

Bryusov's pluralistic pantheon was constructed upon a supposition that everything is ultimately one and thus of equal value. This view, however, was less the fruit of a categorical metaphysical system in the terms of which the processes of creativity and thought could be explained, than a simple pretext to celebrate them indiscriminately.

Konevskoy, while sympathetic, clearly judges Bryusov's pluralistic principle from the perspective of one who subscribes to an integral philosophical system which advocates the objective reality of a higher order of Truth and Beauty in the terms of which not all works of art enjoy equal validity. Konevskoy was engaged by the content of art and thought in addition to the processes of creativity.

This divergence of vision did not immediately serve to impede or influence the development of the correspondence. It did not subsequently become a forum for philosophical disputation. A systematic exposition of philosophical credos is absent as the correspondence finds its primary impetus in a mutually voracious and eclectic interest in literature in general, and the 'new art' in particular. It is principally an exchange of poets rather than thinkers. Yet while the above-cited letters did not set a precedent and the generality of discussion cloaked the distinctions in the poets' positions, it was inevitable that their philosophical differences found indirect expression in a muted subtext.

Although theme was not the primary factor to be considered in judging the authenticity of a work of art, a corollary of Bryusov's principle of artistic freedom and dynamism was the demand that the genuine artist continually strive to enrich his range of vision and diversity of experience. While Konevskoy's poetry met Bryusov's expectations fully in terms of the authenticity of poetic voice, he was increasingly disturbed by a growing awareness of thematic repetition. On 7 June 1899, having surveyed two exercise books of Konevskoy's poetry, he felt prompted to write of the new materials they contained:

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[35]Ibid., p. 455-6.

Менее нравится мне вторая тетрадь, где *многое повторительно*, иное не выступает четко.[36]

In a letter written on 19 November of that year, the growing duality in Bryusov's appreciation of Konevskoy's work finds fuller expression:

...вообще все эти стихи Ваши, очень Ваши. Это хорошо, ибо я Вашу поэзию люблю, но мне хотелось бы, чтобы и Вы и другие писали именно то, что я никак не мог бы ждать, для меня вечно неожиданное и потому вечно близкое.[37]

Despite Bryusov's repeated exhortations to diversify, as the correspondence developed Konevskoy's increasingly discursive letters not only confirmed the force of his personality, but an equivalent confidence in the constructs of his integral world-view. The exclusivity of poetic identity that Bryusov perceived in Konevskoy and that impressed him so profoundly was inseparably harnessed to, and, in his view, progressively tramelled by, the dictates of a delimiting metaphysics.

The growing dichotomy in Bryusov's perception of Konevskoy is further reflected in his accounts of meetings with him in person and the fact that ultimately his relations with him cooled. Significantly, while not necessarily unsympathetic to separate ideas in themselves, Bryusov considered the integrity of Konevskoy's world-view indicative not of maturity, but the *opposite* - of unrealized potential for growth, a need for *experience*. Bryusov was deeply conscious of Konevskoy's relative youth, as almost all references to him in his diary testify. Perhaps most revealing in this respect is an entry of 21 September 1899:

Две недели был в Москве Ореус. Первые дни мы проводили с ним напролет, что было и томительно <...> Неприятнейшая его черта - излишняя докторальность, учительность речи - *но это от юности*. Он уверенно говорит и решительно даже о том, что, знает поверхностно.[38]

In his own formative experience Bryusov had previously been attracted by specific philosophical systems. The influence of Liebnitz informed *O iskusstve*, for example. However, he had, of course, come to view the subscription to any one given monistic conception as incompatible with art, a position reflected in the pluralistic *Lebensphilosophie* he developed, designed to maximize individual artistic freedom.[39] In the light of his own personal development as an artist and conviction that pluralism is the only credible perspective on life, Bryusov viewed Konevskoy's present doctrinaire formulation of his principles symptomatic of a phase that he was passing through to be disassociated from his potential as a *poet*.

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[36]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 463. Italics mine.
[37]Ibid., p. 475. See also *Dnevniki*, p. 63.
[38]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 76. See also p. 63 and p. 70.
[39]See, for example, Bryusov's views on philosophy in relation to art in a diary entry of 29 January 1898: *Dnevniki*, p. 33.

Bryusov's personal relations with Konevskoy can be described as a process of magnetic attraction and repulsion. It is significant that although Bryusov earnestly requested Konevskoy's views on his new collection, during his visit to Petersburg he had confided in his diary:

На второй день был у Ореуса. Он находится в дурном периоде жизни и не интересен.[40]

The exchange over *Tertia Vigilia* which followed marked what was fated to be a permanent watershed in their relations. It is possible that Bryusov considered that for the present he had successfully assimilated the qualities in Konevskoy that he found exemplary, reinforcing the new views which he voiced in "Istiny". Yet this had proven a painful and exacting exercise. Although Bryusov's deep involvement in the compilation of *Severnye tsvety* at this time possibly explains his retraction from Konevskoy to an extent, during the last six months of the younger poet's life he was to curtail his correspondence with him dramatically. He wrote to him on only three further occasions. The two extant letters of that period are concerned with the almanac and business-like in tone. Moreover, on 12 June 1901, contemplating the prospect of a visit by Konevskoy to Moscow that was in fact never to be made, Bryusov remarked to A. Shesterkina that among other prosaic events in his currently uninspiring life:

Едет в Москву Ореус-Коневской; этот меня разыщет.[41]

Ironically Shesterkina was the very correspondent in whom he would confide his desperation on hearing of Konevskoy's death two months later.

III

Bryusov always championed the following aspiration, expressed aphoristically in a work of 1907 that is itself addressed to the poet:

Быть может, все в жизни лишь средство
Для ярко-певучих стихов,
И ты с беспечального детства
Ищи сочетания слов.[42]

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[40]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 95.
[41]*Ln* 85, p. 636.
[42]"Poetu" in Bryusov's collection *Vse napevy* (1909), *Sob. soch.*, I, p. 447.

It is arguable as to whether Bryusov personally ever attained this ideal, but, as we have seen, he certainly regarded Konevskoy as one embodying it, one who from childhood had sought those combinations of words which poeticize life.

Consonant with this emphasis upon creative dynamism in itself, in the foreword to *Tertia Vigilia*, Bryusov advised any potential critic of the 'new art' that:

> Попытки установить в новой поэзии незыблемые идеалы и найти общие мерки для оценки - должны погубить ее смысл. То было бы лишь сменой одних уз на новые. Кумир Красоты столь же бездушен, как кумир Пользы.[43]

While "Mudroe ditya" necessarily examined the thematic concerns of Konevskoy's poetry to an extent, we have established that in approaching Bryusov's analysis there it is imperative to suppose that it is informed by the dynamics of his philosophy of poetry and consequently subject to possible limitation and particularity of emphasis. Bryusov's analysis of theme in "Mudroe ditya" is in no sense deliberately inaccurate, many of his insights are valuable in themselves; but we can suppose that he orchestrated those insights in the essay as a whole in a fashion designed to avoid categorizations which *he* perceived to be potentially damaging to Konevskoy's profile as an *artist*.

"Mudroe ditya" states that *all* Konevskoy's poetry constitutes juvenilia. This is consistent with Bryusov's opinion that the doctrinaire maximalism of his world-view was indicative of its incomplete nature. It marks Bryusov's intention to minimize the importance of Konevskoy's integral philosophical system. He chose a quotation that would attest that this poetry was not written with reference to a particular understanding of the world, but a series of unanswered questions:

> Вся его первая поэзия, его juvenilia, которой суждено было остаться единственным образом его творчества, - есть ожидание, предвкушение, вопрос:
>
> Куда ж несусь, дрожащий, обнаженный,
> Кружась как лист над омутом мирским?[44]

In proceeding to establish the motivation for posing these questions, Bryusov finds that Konevskoy, although significantly more philosophical in his treatment of the problem that he shares with his Modernist contemporaries, is, like them, primarily driven by the need to attain 'freedom and power':

> Подобно всем своим сверстникам, деятелям нового искусства, Коневской искал двух вещей: свободы и силы.[45]

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[43]Ibid., p. 589.
[44]*Sip*, p. xii.
[45]*Sip*, p. xiii.

It is in the *active* quest for these qualities - in themselves unqualified states of being alone - that "Mudroe ditya" identifies a thematic unity in Konevskoy's poetry, the principle that explains his otherwise paradoxical attraction to and repulsion from his genealogy, the natural world and the body. These phenomena, the article suggests, simply constitute the backdrop to a discussion in which the *existential* dynamics of individual empowerment and emancipation set the agenda. In "Mudroe ditya" Bryusov thus maximizes the sense of *motion* and *fluidity* prized by him in art and diminishes the presence of systematic thought in Konevskoy's poetry. He does not address the possibility that Konevskoy's aesthetic quest to transcend the present bounds of perception had a distinct metaphysical basis and objective. Careful to disassociate himself from what he terms Konevskoy's 'extremely idealist' views, he only intimates that Konevskoy understood life in terms of a higher cosmological order by examining the poet's assertion that 'spirit' is essence and consequently discussing his views on the corporeal life, the potential transmigration of souls and immortality. The *system* of which these thematic strands in Konevskoy's poetry were evidently a part remains essentially untreated, sketched, phantasmal. In Bryusov's opinion they were incidental to the process of creativity, the real force in Konevskoy's poetry. Truth, Bryusov intimates, might have been Oreus' aspiration, but art was his *reality*.

Equally indicative of Bryusov's intention to safeguard what he saw as the dynamism of Konevskoy's poetry from categorical definition is his apparent reluctance to contextualize the poet by identifying his influences, artistic or otherwise. He refers directly to an epigraph drawn from Schopenhauer alone.

A final, much later article Bryusov devoted to Konevskoy, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", indicates why he *personally* considered it desirable to deflect interest from the integral thematic content and influences underlying the poetry in "Mudroe ditya" in the way that we have suggested. Written for S.A. Vengerov's *Russkaya literatura XX Veka* in 1917, its almost encyclopaedic context obliged Bryusov to expand his analysis of theme and to address the question of influence more directly than in "Mudroe ditya". Bryusov's previous thesis that Konevskoy's creativity found its impetus in 'freedom and power' is notably absent. It is substituted by a new formulation of the analysis of theme in "Mudroe ditya" with its centre of gravity now firmly fixed in the domain of *philosophy* and *gnosiology*:

> В <...> поэтическом миросозерцании Коневского очень определенно сказывается влияние его чтений, - особенно его занятий немецкой философией, с ее постоянным влечением к вопросам гносеологическим. Кант, Шопенгауэр и Ницше подсказали многие из тех раздумий, *которые казались Коневскому его собственными заветными думами.*[46]

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[46]Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 160. Italics mine.

Though this essay incorporates only select and radically reworked elements of "Mudroe ditya" it has been included in lists of the article's variants (see Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 608 & Morderer. *Ln* 92

In "Mudroe ditya" Bryusov had not wanted to compromise his abiding vision of Konevskoy's creative dynamism by addressing the complex question of his metaphysical influences. Indeed, even in the later essay for Venegerov he notably found it impossible to refrain from reaffirming the exclusivity of Konevskoy's mind and the profoundly original quality it imparted to the processes of his *creativity*:

> Сильный, замкнутый в себе характер, порывы которого Коневской старался подчинить своим теоретическим убеждениям, - придавал такое же единство его «мечтам». Эта выдержанность взглядов, подходов к вопросам, и дает главное своеобразие поэзии Коневского. В ней не повторяются готовые «клише» из стихов других поэтов, так как Коневской на все имел свой ответ, каждое явление, каждое чувство мог определить с своей точки зрения <...> К Музе Коневского вполне подходят слова Баратынского, что у ее лица - «не общее выражение».[47]

In this chapter we have established that Valery Bryusov viewed Ivan Konevskoy's poetry from a highly personalized perspective which maximized the importance of certain features of the younger poet's work to the detriment of other, clearly pivotal qualities. In the next chapter we will examine how Bryusov's interpretation was further influenced by his involvement in the wider literary debate of the time.

(iv), p. 172). However, it should be noted that it neither bears the title of the original work, nor resembles it in tone, form or, indeed, intent. Significantly, in addition to discussing specific influences, it also includes a section devoted to the poet's biography, the implications of both of which will be examined in subsequent chapters of the present work.

[47]Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 162.

CHAPTER TWO

'Mudroe ditya': 'scion' of polarized contemporary debate.

Это - нездоровые дети, которые даже играть не любят и не ищут игрушек <...> И все им скучно, бедным, недолговечным детям, все им противно, все не по ним. В те редкие минуты, когда они вдруг взглянут на себя и развеселятся безмысленно собою, - надо относиться к ним без злобы, а со снисходительной радостью, как к улыбке больного ребенка: ведь недолго ему...

Z.N. Gippius. "Torzhestvo v chest' smerti. 'Al'ma.' Tragediya Minskogo".

Он был дитя, он был наивен, как милый ребенок <...> и при всем том он был мудрец.

V.Ya. Bryusov. "Mudroe ditya. (Pamyati Iv. Konevskogo)".

The reserve, concision and logicality which typify Bryusov's critical method and exposition, distinguishing it from the aestheticized, impressionistic style that was commonly employed in Modernist circles, are present in "Mudroe ditya".[1] Though there are elements of the article which clearly reflect the sentiments of one who knew Konevskoy personally, emotive declamations, overt subjectivism and tendentiousness are kept to a minimum, particularly in its definitive variant for *Stikhi i proza*.[2]

Yet, as Bryusov made clear in the foreword to his anthology of criticism *Dalekie i blizkie* (1912),[3] he himself judged the very quality conferring unity and value on this diverse body of critical analysis to be its *contemporaneity*. It was a unique record of *immediate* response:

Мои оценки - это оценки нашего времени <...>, и хотя бы будущая критика <...> имела возможность быть более осведомленной и более объективной, нашла нужным во многом изменить их или вовсе их отвергнуть, - все же за этими суждениями останется их значение: голоса современника о поэтах его дней.[4]

As "Mudroe ditya" was the product of the conditions in which it was written, it is necessary to ask whether it does not also reflect something of the 'politics' and preoccupations of the contemporary literary milieu at large. This chapter will show that, indeed, while the objectives of Bryusov the *littérateur* were less overt in his maturer criticism, the foreword to *Stikhi i proza* does bear the imprint of topicality. The

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[1]See D. Maksimov's discussion of Bryusov's critical method: Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 8.
[2]It is possible that Bryusov also felt constrained by Konevskoy's father who exhorted him to maintain impartiality: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 538.
[3]"Mudroe ditya" was included in this compendium. It appeared there with a postscript of 1910 regarding the difficulties of the poet's prosody and minor omissions and additions in the text itself. See Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, pp. 242-249.
[4]Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 192.

chapter traces carefully orchestrated subtextual motifs in "Mudroe ditya" which had broad implications and resonance within the arena of contemporary literary debate, a debate in which Bryusov occupied and defended a particular position - *de facto* steersman at the helm of "Skorpion".

I

An examination of "Mudroe ditya" as a reflection of the contemporary context necessarily draws us out into that literary arena to establish the body of opinion which it was designed to address.

In fact, it was only on its republication in *Stikhi i proza*, which elicited a small body of mixed reviews, that "Mudroe ditya" was heeded in its own right *in print*. Indeed, for reviewers of the mainstream press, the fact that *Stikhi i proza* was published by "Skorpion" under Bryusov's personal stewardship was the principal object of interest, notably allowing immediate and unconditional inferences to be made regarding the actual content of the book.

N.Mat. Sokolov, writing for *Russkiy vestnik*, sought immediately to detract interest from the book's authorship, focusing attention upon those responsible for its posthumous publication:

> Автор Коневской за эту книгу не ответчик. Его уже нет в живых. Это друзья и поклонники собрали его стихи и якобы философские статьи, отметили варианты и снабдили книгу так называемым ученым аппарансом.
>
> Это их дело, - они и в ответе.[5]

In *Obrazovanie*, N.P. Asheshov observed:

> В храм творчества И. Коневского вводит нас не кто иной, как сам Валерий Брюсов, написавший предисловие, посвященное «мудрому дитяти», как называет автор покойного поэта.[6]

While Sokolov's review, pandering to popular preconceptions, merely continued to expound what he considered self-evident - namely that the book typified the previously unencountered form of 'stupidity' deliberately promulgated by the "Skorpion" publishing house,[7] Asheshov's article is of interest to us here. Although equally

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[5]Sokolov, N.Mat., "Ivan Konevskoy. Stikhi i proza", *Russkiy vestnik*, 1904, No. 6, p. 739.

[6]Asheshov, Nik., "Ivan Konevskoy. Stikhi i proza", *Obrazovanie*, 1904, No. 3, sect.III, p. 135.

[7]Sokolov had a personal interest in writing this wholly unsympathetic review. One of those acknowledged for his services in preparing the posthumous edition was the reviewer's namesake, N.Mik. Sokolov, a personal friend of the deceased. Concluding his article, the reviewer sought to forestall any potential confusion of identity.

It should be noted that in recent years I.G. Yampol'sky confused the Sokolovs in the introduction to his publication of Konevskoy's letters to Vl. Gippius (*Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo Doma. 1977.*, p. 86).

unsympathetic and, ultimately, disparaging, this refutation was a considered response, not an immediate reflex dismissal. The critic deconstructs "Mudroe ditya", isolating and citing those aspects of the analysis he considers signify the general tenets of the Modernist school that *Bryusov* was widely perceived to lead. This deconstruction, an interesting reflection of how the essay was read in the contemporary context, serves as a potential exposition of the topically contentious subtext of the original obituary.

Significantly, Asheshov immediately focuses on Bryusov's assertion that Konevskoy sought "freedom and power".[8] This kernel of contentiousness identified, he notably continues to observe that the manner in which Bryusov expanded upon this assertion was evidently not entirely accidental:

> Таким образом, задача новой поэзии И. Коневского состояло в том, между прочим, чтобы освободиться от «законов восприятия и мышления» и «зависимости духа от тела». Быть может, г. Брюсов что-либо насочинял тут? Нет! И сам покойный поэт ставил, например, в заслугу другому модернисту, Александру Добролюбову, то, что он «задумал отрешиться как от *телесных впечатлений, так и от умственных понятий*».[9]

In drawing attention to the fact that a latent pattern was discernible in the text of "Mudroe ditya" in which Bryusov echoed Konevskoy, attributing to him qualities that he had himself attributed to Aleksandr Dobrolyubov, Asheshov attempts to place the essay and its subject in a Decadent context seemingly absent in "Mudroe ditya" itself. Moreover, by detecting a link between Konevskoy and Aleksandr Dobrolyubov in the article, the nature of that context was instantly definable by association. Aleksandr Dobrolyubov's name alone had powerful connotations in the contemporary literary milieu. It was 'mythologized' in his lifetime, synonymous with the popular conception of the arch-decadent shrouded in the opium cloud of an aestheticism which excluded reality, was iconoclastic, wilfully obscurantist and neurasthenically morbid. The 'legend' was further complicated and enhanced after Dobrolyubov's abandonment of Petersburg society in 1898, reputedly for a wandering life of ascetic atonement among the *narod*.

As E.V. Ivanova observes, viewing Dobrolyubov from the objective perspective of one writing today:

> Добролюбов-поэт стал жертвой собственной биографии. Жертвой потому, что даже среди символистов мало кто, кроме В. Брюсова, И. Ореуса-Коневского и отчасти А. Белого, обнаружил действительное знакомство с его стихами. Точно по молчаливой договоренности ему было навсегда отказано в праве быть поэтом.[10]

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[8]An assertion which it is perhaps worth recalling here was *absent* in Bryusov's later essay for Vengerov of 1917.

[9]Asheshov, "Ivan Konevskoy. Stikhi i proza", *Obrazovanie*, 1904, No. 3, sect.III, p. 135.

[10]Ivanova, E.V., "Odin iz 'temnykh' viziterov", *Prometey*, 1980, No. 12, p. 303.

It was indeed Bryusov and Konevskoy who meticulously orchestrated the "Skorpion" edition of Dobrolyubov's verse in 1900. Konevskoy (*who never met Dobrolyubov*) contributed the foreword to it that Asheshov now cited from *Stikhi i proza* where it had been republished.[11] Significantly, in the wake of the edition of 1900, Dobrolyubov's reputation not only compromised appreciation of his literary merits but also the identity and credentials of his sympathizers. His Decadent reputation was a powerful weapon in the hands of detractors, among whom the overtly anti-Modernist elements of the popular press were not alone. As Ivanova's observations suggest, certain factions *within* Modernism were deeply critical of Dobrolyubov, a disapprobation which would extend to Konevskoy *by association*. Indeed, the emphasis on "freedom and power" and the possible subtextual connection with Dobrolyubov in "Mudroe ditya" were not directed at the readership of *Obrazovanie* in 1904 but intended for the benefit of an audience more sensitive to the interplay of ideas in the article than Asheshov. Three years on Asheshov had inadvertently stumbled across echoes of the article's earlier function when it appeared as an obituary. Indeed, it was not entirely inappropriate that he concluded his assessment of Konevskoy's poetry with the remark:

> Одним словом, чепуха, в которой разобраться может только модернист, освободившийся от законов восприятия, мышления, умственных понятий и т. д.[12]

Other members of the Modernist fraternity *had* in fact felt themselves qualified to unravel the meaning and implication of Konevskoy's poetry within his lifetime; yet, coupling it, as Asheshov was now doing, with that of Bryusov's other *protegé*, Dobrolyubov, they had anathematized it. The contentious terminology and subtextual element of "Mudroe ditya" was originally aimed precisely at these 'enemies within'. Bryusov had used Konevskoy's writings on Dobrolyubov, not necessarily accurately, to identify these poets as *credible* kindred fighters for the brand of artistic freedom that *he* sought to defend in the Modernist debate as the true ideal of the 'new art'.

II

To understand the objectives of Bryusov's subtext in "Mudroe ditya" it is therefore necessary to turn to the period preceding the essay's first appearance as an obituary in the *Modernist* journal *Mir iskusstva*.

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[11]Konevskoy, I., "K issledovaniyu lichnosti Aleksandra Dobrolyubova", *Aleksandr Dobrolyubov; Sobranie stikhov; Predisloviya Iv. Konevskogo i Valeriya Bryusova.* M., Skorpion, 1900, pp. 3-7. See also *Sip*, pp. 196-98.

[12]Asheshov, "Ivan Konevskoy. Stikhi i proza", *Obrazovanie*, 1904, No. 3, sect.III, p. 137.

Ivan Konevskoy's description of Jules Laforgue's brief appearance in the French literary arena was one which, as Bryusov was to note, ironically became appropriate to himself:

...он промелькнул в самый роковой час, когда первый отряд искателей сменялся новыми.[13]

Konevskoy's own premature death on 8 July 1901 certainly occurred at a 'fateful' hour in the development of Russian Modernism. He drowned as the previously underdeveloped Modernist school of criticism burgeoned in journals established by and for Modernists and directed its gaze *inwards*.

Indeed, in terms of the *perceived* image of Modernism, it is possible to assert that, paradoxically, the very arbitrariness of its development in the 1890's engendered a greater semblance of cohesion than it would ever enjoy following its 'consolidation' as a credible cultural entity. Initially Modernism gained momentum and attention in the public domain through a process of *reaction* and misrepresentation by external forces. The barometer of literary and cultural event, the established organs of the press and *tolstye zhurnaly*, even of persuasions customarily at variance, reacted in concert to the essentially disparate manifestations of this new phenomenon. They were considered symptomatic of one and same recently imported social ailment - 'Decadence'. This indiscriminate diagnosis, applicable to all early Modernists despite their profound differences, focused upon their common negation of the established intellectual order, their apparently collective 'no'. Moreover, the categorization, typical in the Russian literary landscape which was traditionally divided into distinct ideological camps, was either actively espoused or allowed to pass publicly unchallenged by the actual proponents of Modernist positions and compounded an impression of unity.

The fact that *Severnyy vestnik* was the only prominent journal that sympathized with Modernism in its nascent state compelled writers of essentially different persuasion to appear together in its covers. Apparent unity was further pronounced by the juxtaposition of their uniformly 'nonconformist' work and the blander, more conventional fare that the journal published in order to sustain its readership. Moreover, while the 'neo-idealism' of Akim Volynsky, the journal's resident critic-ideologue, allowed him to identify with and publish certain Modernists, he ensured that his critical monopoly was absolute and confined them principally to the sphere of poetry and fictional prose, their own and translated.

In this context opportunities and resources for independent critical expression in maximalist Decadent circles were limited to often privately published pamphlet-manifestos. Less controversial figures did secure the sporadic publication of more

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[13]*Sip*, p. 177. Bryusov noted the parallel in the postscript of 1910 appended to "Mudroe ditya" in *Dalekie i blizkie*. See Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 248.

general and accessible works of criticism in the wider press. However, in the critical sphere all elements were unified in the face of a common opposition and internalized debate was not an immediately relevant priority.

However, with the establishment of its 'own' journals and, by extension, critical apparatus, certain elements within the loose Modernist fraternity embraced the possibility this offered to disrobe themselves of the indiscriminate mantle of Decadence that had obscured their distinct positions throughout the 1890's. As Modernism came increasingly to be positively assimilated on its own terms rather than through the distortional, negative image imposed on it from without, these positions became the object of a correspondingly intensified scrutiny. Attention shifted from collective negation to the *variety* of affirmation propagated within Modernist circles. Disparate groupings sought to assert the pre-eminence of their respective credos.

The Modernist debate that ensued, now conducted publicly, generated a new, ever more complex terminology of definition and categorization. The constituent elements of a movement that had derived impetus through image and reaction at its inception, now manipulated image and reaction in this process of redefinition.

A prominent instigator of this process was Z.N. Gippius. Bryusov, whose particular sensitivity to the twists and turns of the Merezhkovskys' conversation was symptomatic of the undercurrents of tension in his relations with them, confided in his diary in December 1901:

> Проповедь против декадентов особенно всех поражает у Зиночки. Она сама говорит, что в Петербургском Университете (на лекции Д.С.) один студент сказал ей: «Как больно это слышать именно из ваших уст». Но они против декадентства, они за религиозность.[14]

As this entry suggests, while Z.N. Gippius was still perceived as 'Decadence personified' in the wider public arena, in a series of calculated and public gestures, together with her spouse, D.S. Merezhkovsky, she now proceded to crusade against 'Decadence', using it as a vehicle to accentuate and propagandize the relative merits of their position - the call for a renewed religious consciousness.

Gippius' contribution to this systematic publicity campaign first found expression in print in what was effectively her debut as a critic: her critique in *Mir iskusstva* of N.M. Minsky's drama, *Al'ma. Tragediya iz sovremennoy zhizni* (SPb., 1900).[15]

The evaluation of this work in particular presented Gippius with a pretext to examine the state of contemporary Russian literature in general. In a clear allusion at the beginning of her article to the rise and predominance of Western materialism in

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[14]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 109.

[15]Gippius, Z.N., "Torzhestvo v chest' smerti. 'Al'ma.' Tragediya Minskogo", *Mi*, 1900, No.No. 17-18, sect. II, pp. 85-94.

contemporary culture, Gippius insinuates that man, transfixed by life's baubles, by inventions and exhibitions, has become blind to the fundamental purpose and meaning of life itself, that which she terms "daily bread". Literature, ideally its vehicle, has consequently diminished in stature. While liberalism occupies the high ground of this contemporary "pseudo-literature", being at least concerned with the ephemeral "questions" of the day, Decadence, too, is a corollary of the degeneration of materialist man.

On the one hand playfully stopping to wonder whether 'Decadence' actually exists, its reputation being wholly incommensurate with its negligible literary output, but on the other referring specifically to Bryusov, Dobrolyubov and Bal'mont, Gippius proceeds to opine:

...вообще у декадентов, индивидуалистов и эстетов, не только нет нового, но даже полное забвение старого, старой, бессознательной мудрости. Они убили мысль совершенно откровенно, без стыда, но не заменили ее «вопросами», как либералы, а остались так, ни с чем.[16]

The implication here is that Decadence is the direct issue and most finite manifestation of materialism. While the liberals' minds remain exercised at least by its shadow, the Decadents have blatantly and shamelessly killed 'thought'. Decadence, Gippius insinuates, is the apotheosis of nihilistic sensualism. Championed by those who have accepted the absolute authority of materialist epistemology, it is a desperate abandonment to the inauthentic 'freedom' of an exclusively subjective aesthetics of *immediate* irrational perception. Consequently there is, can be, no belief or value system for the Decadent - only the individual consciousness subsisting within a world which exists exclusively through and for poignancy of sensation. Continuing, Gippius argues that the Decadent is inevitably confronted in this subjective sphere of aestheticized life by an intrinsic contradiction which results in sterility and stasis:

Это - нездоровые дети, которые даже играть не любят и не ищут игрушек. Их наслаждения, их эстетика не дает им никакой отрады, ибо они не знают ни прошлого, ни будущего, а только более чем краткий - несуществующий - настоящий момент. И все им скучно, бедным, недолговечным детям, все им противно, все не по ним. В те редкие минуты, когда они вдруг взглянут на себя и развеселятся безмысленно собою, - надо относиться к ним без злобы, а со снисходительной радостью, как к улыбке больного ребенка: ведь недолго ему...[17]

In its ultimate form, Gippius intimates, Decadent freedom is affirmed through uncritical *negation* of a distinct, autonomous objective sphere, which, discriminated as such, is delimiting. Yet by the very fact of his existence the living individual confirms *a* reality. If he negates the empirical and the rational and all that is contingent on them as delimiting, at least unconsciously he *must* assert the presence of *some 'other'*

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[16]Ibid., p. 87.
[17]Ibid.

domain of being. However, Decadent self-affirmation is, of course, totally dependent on *sensual* subjectivism, which the Decadent becomes subconsciously aware is insensible to this non-phenomenal 'other'. Thus, while negating the spatial and temporal world as a reality, the Decadent yearns to experience this 'other' which must be, but is not present to the perception, the 'unknowable'. Tormented by this paradox, suspended in a state of ennui and melancholy presentiment in the phenomenal world, the Decadent's desire for a tyrannous freedom with effaces all except self ultimately manifests itself in an escapist cult of death.[18]

A response to the "Skorpion" edition of Aleksandr Dobrolyubov's poetry, *Sobranie stikhov* (1900), which *Konevskoy* introduced, Gippius' next critical article, "Kritika lyubvi",[19] proceeded to focus exclusively upon Decadence. Here, refining the idiosyncratic critical techniques that would soon become synonymous with the pseudonym Anton Krainiy, Gippius literally extricates Decadence from the literary context and examines it in relation to the common condition of modern man: the isolation of the individual.

Gippius considers the negative reaction of contemporary society to Decadence symptomatic of the collective 'deafness' that she identifies at the heart of the modern malaise. Languishing in their own isolation, people are insensible to what Decadence trully signifies, unable to confront the possibility that it might ironically merely be an extension of their own condition:

Может быть, это просто покинутый ребенок, которого не слышат?[20]

Indeed, according to Gippius, there are no Decadents, Decadent poetry is not literature. Referring to Dobrolyubov's verse, she observes:

Стихи его, конечно, - не стихи, не литература, они и отношения к литературе, к искусству, никакого не имеют. Было бы смешно критиковать их, судить, - хвалить или бранить. *Это просто крики человеческой души, которой больно так-же, как и нашей бывает больно.*[21]

Gippius strips Decadence of its literary credentials altogether in this essay, exceeding her critique of it in her earlier article. While she had intimated in "Torzhestvo v chest' smerti" what she states openly here, she had been coerced by the context of her first critique to discuss Decadence as a literary phenomenon, projecting itself as a

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[18]See Gippius' concluding thoughts on Decadence in "Torzhestvo v chest' smerti. 'Al'ma.' Tragediya Minskogo", also p. 87.

[19]Gippius, Z.N., "Kritika lyubvi. Dekadenty-poety", *MI*, 1901, No. 1, pp. 28-34. I Quote the reprint of the article in Gippius' *Literaturniy dnevnik (1899-1907)* published under the pseudonym Anton Krainiy, SPb., 1908/ Munich, 1970, pp. 45-63.

[20]Ibid., p. 52.

[21]Ibid., p. 56. Italics mine.

distinct genre with an equivalent aesthetic programme. In "Kritika lyubvi" there is no allusion to a consciously conceived dogma specific to Decadence. Viewed from the non-literary perspective, exclusively as an extension of humanity's common dilemma, Gippius indirectly refutes the contention that the Decadent's formulation of and subscription to the credo of absolute freedom is a free and conscious choice to celebrate individuality through aesthetic subjectivism. This is a confusion of cause and effect. The Decadent's aesthetic posture is simply an incidental expression, the adjunct of a pre-existent individualism; he is, to begin with, unconscious of anything above or beyond his isolation. Correspondingly, his poetry does not serve any credible aesthetic 'need', being in reality simply the increasingly raucous, attention-seeking 'cockerel cry' of one desperate but clearly unable to transcend this isolation *consciously*, not a celebraton of it.

It is from this angle that Gippius treats the "Skorpion" edition of Dobrolyubov's work. Gippius intimates that the rise of individualism in humanity is attributable to historical conditions that have blinkered it, yielding a metaphysical impasse. In the materialist epoch with its attendant scepticism, contemporary man has lost God; but he cannot live without God, he is not an irreligious creature. However, historical Christianity, exclusively *spiritual*, with its foundation in a life-denying asceticism alone, can no longer satisfy man in the post-materialist world. He needs a religion that is life-affirming and consequently unifies the many, the 'spirit' and the 'flesh', in the name of the One. Yet locked in a vicious circle of the animalistic or ascetic isolation that is necessarily engendered by these antithetical historical positions, the possibility of such a metaphysics remains merely a dim presentiment to individual men, incapable of conceiving of it consciously and collectively. This is the predicament of the so-called 'Decadent' Dobrolyubov which is actually relevant to modern man in general:

> В Добролюбове, несомненно, как в многих и многих теперь, жила смутная жажда этой новой, неизвестной и необходимой религии не отречения от жизни, а освящения и принятия ее, жажда свободного оправдания и плоти и духа равно - потому что всякий из нас - плоть и дух равно. Добролюбов не хотел свободы для одного духа или для одной плоти, как и мы не хотим. Ведь не хотим мы ни свободы духа - смерти, ни свободы плоти - животности.[22]

Indeed, Dobrolyubov, who progressively looked to the freedom of the spirit alone, was, Gippius maintains, dimly aware that there is something other that spiritual freedom excludes:

> Но не свободна наша свобода
> И мы умираем, что-то безумно любя.[23]

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[22]Ibid., pp. 58-9.

[23]Ibid., p. 59. It should be noted that Gippius seriously misquotes the final lines of the first poem in Dobrolyubov's cycle "Tri stikhotvoreniya", which actually run:

However, Gippius continues, Dobrolyubov could not project his *consciousness* beyond the confines of the isolation he sought to overcome, he could not objectify what it was he loved senselessly, and accordingly could not choose. He had to appeal to others:

> Кто может иль знает другое - скажи, облегчи![24]

Others did not hear his cry, however, confined within their own solitary cells. It went unanswered, and he abandoned literature and society. Such a blind and lonely struggle is inevitably resolved either in sensual animality or in the 'divine death' of asceticism and Dobrolyubov ultimately surrendered to the latter. Having found God alone, for himself alone, he stands before the face of God in a contemplative stasis that negates life in all its permutations. This, in Gippius' opinion, is the ultimate issue of Dobrolyubov's Decadent freedom.

Significantly, earlier in her article Gippius had felt prompted briefly to associate Ivan Konevskoy with Dobrolyubov and, by extension, the Decadent predicament she outlined in the two articles we have examined:

> По <...> предисловию, мучительному, уродливому - но и детски жалкому, совершенно непонятному, - узнаю в Коневском *духовного брата* Добролюбова, такого-же бедного человека наших дней, который хочет и не может высказать себя, человека в отчаяньи, погибающего, одного из тех, кого не слышат.[25]

It was from this image of the Decadent that Bryusov attempted to defend his dynamic vision of the 'new art' in "Mudroe ditya".

III

Z.N. Gippius was acutely aware of the power that the projected image, the ethos surrounding a writer or literary coterie had in determining the *level* of public interest in that writer or group in the contemporary public consciousness. The nature of the reaction, positive or otherwise, was initially secondary to the reaction in itself. Gippius herself was no stranger to courting 'controversy' through the manipulation of image. Indeed, the degree to which the simplicity and sincerity of Gippius' own highly spiritual verse has been clouded and compromised by the image of her famous lorgnette and

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> Пусть несвобода наша свобода,
> Но мы умираем, - что-то безумно любя.

(Dobrolyubov, *Soch.*, p. 27).

[24]Gippius, Z.N., *Literaturniy dnevnik (1899-1907)*, p. 60. The quotation is from the second poem of Dobrolyubov's cycle "Tri stikhotvoreniya".

[25]Ibid., pp. 55-6. Italics mine.

the delicacy of a skin that could tolerate no other colour than virginal white bears testimony to the power and resonance of the aura in which she enswathed herself at the turn of the century.

Gippius' heightened awareness of the importance of public reaction is manifest in the carefully orchestrated attack on Decadence contained in the articles discussed above. Gippius mocked at the blustering defamation and censure of the Decadents in the established press, knowing that the terms in which it defined them afforded them a sense of importance, impetus and a potentially sympathetic audience through controversy. In her 'vilification' of Decadence she subverted the mechanics of conventional critical response, her attack implicit beneath a ironic veneer of pity which was intended to minimize the power of the antagonistic Decadent 'image' to elicit potential reaction.

Gippius' message and the manner in which she conveyed it evidently did not pass unnoticed in the wider public domain. It certainly left an impression on the reviewer of the "Skorpion" edition of Dobrolyubov's verse for the journal *Literaturnyy vestnik*, A.M. Lovyagin. He not only cited biographical details from the portrayal of Dobrolyubov contained in Gippius' "Kritika lyubvi", but was additionally moved to note:

...Автор [Dobrolyubov] сам дал оружие в руки своим критикам, которым, чтобы высмеять его, стоит лишь выбрать несколько удачных выдержек <...> Но мы попробуем отнестись к нему серьезно. Мы верим г-же Гиппиус («Критика любви», «Мир исскуства», 1901, No. 1), что Ал. Добролюбов - просто несчастный, ищущий и одинокий в своих исканиях человек, что в стихотворениях его выражается искренняя мука, хотя бы от «надрыва бессилия».[26]

More importantly, the style and indisputable power of Gippius' proselytism had already found converts within the immediate sphere of Russian Decadence itself, which possibly presaged further losses to its cause if her views were widely publicized. In early 1900, Vl. Gippius (1876-1941), Z.N. Gippius' second cousin, had perturbed and disappointed the Decadent circles in which he had been unequivocally accepted as a member with his negative reviews for *Mir iskusstva* of the anthology *Kniga razdumiy* (in which he had categorically refused to participate, furthermore) and Konevskoy's *Mechty i dumy*.[27]

That these short reviews were more than they appeared to be at first glance, in reality being an initiation into the Merezhkovskys' school of thought, and as such a

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[26]Lovyagin, A.M., "Aleksandr Dobrolyubov. Sobranie stikhov", *Literaturnyy vestnik*, 1901, Vol. 1, bk. III, p. 451.

[27]*Kniga razdumiy* (SPb., 1899) was conceived by K.D. Bal'mont. In addition to his own, it included works by Bryusov, Konevskoy and the artist-poet Modest Durnov. Gippius' reviews, signed 'V', appeared in tandem in *Mi*, 1900, No. 5-6, sect. II, pp. 107-8. For a general synopsis of Vl. Gippius' relations with Oreus, to be examined more specifically in the course of this thesis, see: Yampol'sky, I.G., "Ivan Konevskoy. Pis'ma k Vl.V. Gippiusu", *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo Doma. 1977*, L., 1979, pp. 79-98.

prelude to Z.N. Gippius' own sorties against Decadence with their play on images of the pitiful feebleness of abandoned children and raw schoolboys, is perhaps apparent in the language in which the review of *Mechty i Dumy* concludes:

> Доброжелательная критика в лучшем случае может признать за «Мечтами и Думами» и всеми подобными сборниками значение ученических работ, выполненных неудовлетворительно.[28]

Certainly, reflecting later on his public rejection of the Decadent coterie in an unpublished autobiographical piece for S.A. Vengerov, *O samom sebe*, Vl. Gippius noted the substantial role the Merezhkovskys' influence played in prompting it:

> Добролюбова отвергли, а меня сначала бурно крестили, а потом тоже отвергли в своей вечной борьбе с литературой, пока я не начал «отрекаться от декадентства» <...> грубо разошелся с Ореусом (Коневским), который меня так нежно любил. (Один из моих смертных грехов. Все из-за того же «отречения»).[29]

Zinaida Gippius' attack on Decadence clearly had implications that Valery Bryusov could not ignore. In his view the Merezhkovskys' advocation of a new religious consciousness constituted the reimposition of a yoke on art, a perverse irony considering all that they had done to release it from the tyranny of the Realist constructs of Russian Populism. Having breathed life into the 'new art', they now stifled it, denied its existence. Notably, it was in the wake of Gippius' articles that Bryusov felt compelled to publish "Istiny", the first full statement of his position since *O iskusstve*, in which he vigorously pleaded the validity of *all* truths in art and the primacy of his *Lebensphilosophie*.

That Bryusov was at least in part stimulated to make this open statement of his position by Gippius' proselytism is strongly suggested by his forceful treatment and pithy expression of the content of "Istiny" in a poem addressed to her, dated December 1901.[30] This poem was the direct fruit of personal conversations with Gippius during the Merezhkovskys' visit to Moscow in that month with the express purpose of propounding their new credo and recruiting new converts. From diary entries at this time it is evident that one potential disciple they had targeted was Bryusov himself, a bastion of the 'new art' in Moscow, whose submission to their cause would have constituted a crucial triumph.[31]

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[28]*Mi*, 1900, No. 5-6, sect. II, p. 107.

[29]Yampol'sky, I.G., "Ivan Konevskoy. Pis'ma k Vl.V. Gippiusu", p. 85. See this publication for the letter that Konevskoy wrote to Gippius in response to his review, effectively ending their relationship (pp. 94-98).

[30]Bryusov, "Z.N. Gippius", *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 354. First published in *Urbi et Orbi* (1903).

[31]See Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, pp. 108-113. On Friday 7 December 1901, parting company, Merezhkovsky clapped Bryusov on the shoulder and remarked to a sceptical Yu.P. Bartenev:

> Вот он еще коснеет, но он перейдет к нам. (p.111).

Notably, in the intervening period between "Istiny" and the poem "Z.N. Gippius", Bryusov wrote his obituary to Ivan Konevskoy, the prototype of "Mudroe ditya".

In this obituary Bryusov intended to reaffirm the credibility, restate the vision and voice his confidence in the future of the 'new art', in the name of which the double 'sacrifice' of Dobrolyubov and Konevskoy had not been in vain. That the article had a greater relevance than its specific function as an obituary is particulary evident in the language in which Bryusov couched its conclusion, exclusive to this original version. There he appears indirectly to condemn Gippius' patronizing attitude towards the less senior members of the Modernist fraternity, in whom she perceived the petulant callowness of schoolboys:

На самых первых днях своего развития, молодая русская поэзия потеряла двух таких деятелей, как А. Добролюбов и Ив. Коневской. Впрочем, судьба нового искусства уже не зависит от отдельных лиц. Оно пойдет своим путем, кто-бы ни работал на него. Те малыши, которые в серых куртках робко входят теперь в первые классы переделанных гимназий, уже поколение, которое увидит его торжество.[32]

Viewed from this perspective, the title chosen for the obituary also assumes additional weight. Bryusov had termed Konevskoy "mudroe ditya" in his lifetime.[33] As has been shown, for Bryusov personally this definition of Konevskoy signified his preparedness for creativity as one who had nurtured the exclusivity and originality of his individual personality and attained a premature wisdom. Yet here, in the wake of Z.N. Gippius' portrayal of A.M. Dobrolyubov as an abandoned infant and description of Konevskoy's writing as childishly pitiful, the term 'mudroe ditya' assumed a new significance and deeper resonance. Indeed, in the opening paragraph of the obituary, Bryusov maintains:

Быть может, среди современных поэтов можно указать более даровитых, т.е. более одаренных стихийной мощью творчества, но нет ни одного, обладающего такой подготовкой к своему делу, таким всеобъемлющим знанием литературы, таким пониманием задач нового искусства.[34]

Notably, Bryusov recorded that during a conversation over breakfast on the same day, asked whether a non Christian salvation was possible, Merezhkovsky responded:

- Можно, быть может, но трудно. А уж против Христа - невозможно. Посмотрите, какой мор на декадентов: Добролюбов, Коневской, Эрлих! Это знамение. (ibid., p. 110).

[32]Bryusov, "Mudroe ditya. (Pamyati Iv. Konevskogo)", *Mi*, 1901, No.No. 8-9, p. 139. Notably, Konevskoy himself had also privately reacted against the 'school boy' label in a letter to Bryusov of 20 November 1900 and the accompanying "answer to Z.N. Gippius": *Rokovoy sonet novykh dush*: see *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 520-21.

[33]See, for example, Lt-General Oreus' letter of gratitude for the obituary (*Ln* 98 (i), p. 536) and Bryusov's sketch *O Oreuse*, written on the reverse of a draft of his *second* letter to Konevskoy of 26 January 1899, where he states:

Мудрое дитя, вот его лучшее определение. (ibid., pp. 550-1).

[34]Bryusov, "Mudroe ditya. (Pamyati Iv. Konevskogo)", *Mi*, 1901, No.No. 8-9, p. 137.

In this first version of "Mudroe ditya" the terms in which Bryusov elected to phrase his contention that the guiding principle in Konevskoy's poetry was the quest to attain freedom is also indicative of the broader implication of the obituary:

Подобно всем своим сверстникам, деятелям нового искусства, Коневской стремился к свободе *творчества и чувствований.*[35]

This more explicit and specific definition of freedom in terms of the creative experience reinforces the view that in his treatment of theme in "Mudroe ditya" Bryusov was primarily concerned with the processes of free creativity which he considered exemplified in Konevskoy's verse. It was of paramount importance to demonstrate the *dynamism* of this process in the face of Gippius' allegations that the 'new art' was paralyzed by the sterile finality of its principles.

Bryusov's selective treatment of Konevskoy's philosophical system in the obituray is also consistent with the view that this was a response to the Merezhkovskys. In addition to fostering a sense of unified purpose, in echoing Konevskoy on Dobrolyubov's interest in expanding the threshold of sensibility Bryusov was able to give the impression of a conscious attitude to art which belied Gippius' claim that Decadence was intellectually bankrupt. The only other place in which he disturbed the fluidity of his account of Konevskoy's flight to creative freedom, allowing the implied complexities of the poet's thought to surface, was significantly in connection with his attitude to the "Flesh", the rights of which Gippius had defended against Decadent 'asceticism':

Чтобы была жизнь, необходимо, чтобы плоть, как змея, колола в пяту личность; образы и звуки, вся толща вещественного бытия - прекрасны; без них мы свободны, но безжизненны, безрадостны; ими создается красота.[36]

Bryusov ensured that he presented the 'new art' embodied in Konevskoy's poetry as a dynamic, life-affirming creative force. In the attainment of freedom, it did not substitute any abstract realm of eternal non-being for life. It actively embraced life, which was pivotal to Decadent creativity.

Although Bryusov excluded more overtly topical references to the 'new art' and Konevskoy's position in relation to it and its proponents from "Mudroe ditya" in subsequent versions of the article, in essence the text remained unaltered. It was thus that three years later Nik. Asheshov perceived the potential subtextual association with Aleksandr Dobrolyubov that had a deeper resonance in the context in which the essay was conceived.

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[35]Ibid., p. 138. Italics mine.
[36]Ibid., p. 139.

Konevskoy's poetry had served as crucial evidence for Bryusov in his defence of an artistic system charged with ultimately being a celebration of blind enslavement and death. In the immediate context in which it was written as an obituary, "Mudroe ditya" helped give credence to Bryusov's plea of 'not guilty'. As such it was an appropriate, but not necessarily truly representative, tribute to one of those accused.

IV

During the Merezhkovskys' stay in Moscow in December 1901, Bryusov noted in his diary:

> Зиночка стыдила меня.
> - Мне кажется, что вы успокоились. В вас есть самое худшее - самодовольство. Для вас все решено и уяснено.
> С больной головы да на здоровую![37]

The ideological inflexibility of which both sides in this contemporary debate alleged the other to be guilty resulted in a polarized critical treatment of Decadence that in turn obscured the integral identity of Ivan Ivanovich Konevskoy. In the wake of the immediate exchange between Bryusov and Z.N. Gippius critical appreciations of Konevskoy of a Modernist persuasion reflected the extremes of opinion.

A review of *Stikhi i proza* in the journal *Sem'ya* signed S. Krymsky[38] paralleled "Mudroe ditya". The essential character of Konevskoy's poetry projected in the article proceeds from Bryusov's emphasis on its dynamism, engendered by the poet's acute sensitivity to life:

> Душа Коневского была открыта и доступна для всех трепетаний и волнений жизни, она жаждала ширины «полнообразья», она желала обнять весь мир, со всеми его чувствами, мыслями и ощущениями.[39]

Interestingly, the author of the review found what he perceived to be an attempt by Bryusov to describe the evolution of Konevskoy's system of thought in "Mudroe ditya" necessarily flawed:

> Переходя к философии поэзии Коневского, следует прежде всего примириться с тем, что вывести какие-нибудь прочные категорические данные для характеристики его взглядов на мир нельзя.[40]

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[37]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 110.
[38]Krymsky, S. (pseudonym of S.G. Kara-Murza (1878-1956), see *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 174 and *Ln* 98 (i), p. 549), "Neizvestnyy poet", *Sem'ya*, 1904, No. 6, pp. 10-12.
[39]Ibid., p. 10.
[40]Ibid., p. 11.

Bryusov, however, sent copies of the review both to Vyacheslav Ivanov and Konevskoy's father, General Oreus. There were specific reasons for his doing so. Krymsky had drawn parallels between the poetical styles of Bryusov, Ivanov and Konevskoy, extolling them as a refreshing presence in the stagnant realm of Russian prosody. In concluding his article he had quoted extensively from the biographical sketch of Konevskoy which appeared attributed to a near relation in *Stikhi i proza*, but was in fact written by his father.[41] Yet the fact that Bryusov sent them the review suggests also that he was evidently unperturbed by Krymsky's criticism of "Mudroe ditya". *Indeed, the nature of his reservations regarding Bryusov's critique in fact marked its success.* "Mudroe ditya" was, of course, not designed systematically to promote Konevskoy's world-view, but rather its dissolution in a discussion focused on creative dynamism. *Krymsky's reaction was the desired one*. He was, furthermore, to continue his analysis in a manner which echoed "Mudroe ditya" rather than questioned its validity:

В продолжение всех своих недолгих дней поэт был во власти раздумья; его вечно сторожила мысль, творческий порыв, созерцательные настроения.

И он отдавался во власть этих настроений с беззаветностью чистого, наивного дитяти, выразить же в стройной системе свое миросозерцание он, к несчастью, не успел.[42]

Other writers who developed Bryusov's basic premise were N. Poyarkov and N.O. Lerner. Poyarkov's above-mentioned short synopsis of Konevskoy's work in his book *Poety nashikh dney* (1907) had relied heavily on "Mudroe ditya" and concluded by citing it almost in its entirety.[43] It was Bryusov's unwavering opinion of Konevskoy's poetry that had converted Lerner, a Pushkinist and occasional contributor to *Vesy*, who had initially disparaged it. Bryusov also played an instrumental role in the publication of the article Lerner wrote which marked that conversion. It is interesting as a development of the ideas contained in "Mudroe ditya" to their logical conclusion. Like Krymsky, Lerner extols the active principle in Konevskoy's poetry. He perceives in it a love of life which ultimately effaces all sense of the poet's contemplative abstraction and solitude and is comparable with that of Pushkin:

После светлого, гармонического вечного юноши Пушкина, Коневской - самое радостное, самое бодрое явление в нашей литературе. Не слабея в своем могучем полете, он вил свои помыслы «так резво и безумно».[44]

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[41]Bryusov sent the article to Ivanov together with a letter of mid February 1904 (*Ln* 85, pp. 446-7 and *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 174). Oreus senior thanked Bryusov for sending him this sympathetic appreciation of his son's work in his last letter to him dated 11 February 1904 (*Ln* 98 (i), p. 549).

[42]Krymsky, "Neizvestnyy poet", *Sem'ya*, 1904, No. 6, p. 11.

[43]See above, p. 2.

[44]Lerner, N.O., "Ivan Konevskoy", *Kniga o russkikh poetakh poslednego desyatiletiya*. SPb., 1909, p. 123. The article appeared together with "Mudroe ditya" in a third, abridged variant. For Bryusov's exchange with Lerner over Konevskoy, see Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 105 and 107, *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 153 and 173, *Ln* 98 (i), p. 437 and 443.

On the other hand, A.A. Smirnov, in his review of *Stikhi i proza*, "Poet bezplotiya",[45] essentially develops Z.N. Gippius' view of Konevskoy as being irredeemably Decadent. At the beginning of his article Smirnov concurs with Bryusov's opinion that Konevskoy's verse is taut with a profound consciousness and sincerity which instill his poetry with unique authenticity and power. The critic continues to observe, however, that enclosed in this sphere of enhanced consciousness Konevskoy was necessarily isolated in his mystical enlightenment. To attain and sustain this level of consciousness he had developed specific innate intellectual faculties in himself that resulted in the diminution, if not total obsolescence, of other qualities, indispensable in the human domain. The cultivation of supersensory powers, which became almost intuitive, elemental in him, resulted in a negation of the "Flesh". In language redolent of Zinaida Gippius' analysis of the Decadent negation of reality, Smirnov states:

> Можно кратко и полно обозначить болезнь Коневского двумя словами: отрицание плоти. Отрицание плоти, а следовательно и всей вообще личной, реальной жизни - главный мотив его творчества.[46]

Konevskoy, Smirnov continues, was alienated from his own humanity and the realm of humanity in general. Paradoxically, in acquiring his acute insight into life, he denied himself the possibility of *living* life. Engendered by the untenability of his position, a sense of semi-conscious malaise was increasingly interwoven among the affirmations of life's beauty and joy in Konevskoy's verse.

Smirnov judges, moreover, that like the Dobrolyubov portrayed in "Kritika lyubvi", Konevskoy was so abstracted from the sphere of normal relations that he could not *consciously* conceive of the paradox afflicting him. He was incapable of resolving it, remaining locked within its delimiting parameters. Indeed, on concluding his analysis, Smirnov speculates on the possible future development of Konevskoy's creativity if he had lived:

> Если бы Коневской не погиб трагической смертью, что было бы с ним дальше? Нашел ли бы он иной, более радостный исход своим противоречиям? Можно с уверенностью сказать: нет <...> неожиданно ранняя смерть его не удивляет, не возмушает. Заметно, как творчество Коневского слабеет в последние два года его жизни. Он совершил свой малый круг, и совершить другой, более великий, ему не было дано.[47]

P.P. Pertsov, who witnessed the exchange of conflicting parties from the Merezhkovsky's perspective, recalled that, like Dobrolyubov:

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[45]Smirnov, A.A., "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*, 1904, No. 4.
[46]Ibid, p. 82.
[47]Ibid., p. 83.

Коневской вообще чуждался людей, жил одиночкой и, в своей самоупоенности, видимо, боялся всякого соприкосновения с внешними миром, который мог разбить или хотя бы надломить стекло его реторты, где он укрывался, подобно гётевскому Гомункулу.[48]

[48]Pertsov, P.P., *Literaturnye vospominaniya 1890-1902 gg.*, M./L., 1933, p. 244.

CHAPTER THREE

The case for reassessment.

Может быть, Коневской больше мыслитель, чем поэт?

S. Makovsky. *Na Parnase "Serebryanogo veka".*

A.A. Smirnov's article, "Poet bezplotiya", inadvertently identifies the *common* casualty of *both* poles in the contemporary critical treatment of Konevskoy. Having identified what he saw as the paradoxical gulf between Konevskoy's artistic sensitivity to life and life itself, Smirnov asked:

...как возможно согласовать такую любовь к жизни с отречением от плоти? *Что же составит для него содержание жизни?*[1]

He then continued:

То, что он называет «разумом» природы и жизни, то, что «все в ней тайной веселит». «ничто не дарует, но все сулит». Этот холодный, мертвенный разум, эта попытка диалектики разрешить живой разлад едва ли кого удовлетворит. Надо думать, что и Коневской как ни старался убедить себя, все же иногда ясно сознавал всю призрачность такого успокоения <...> Разум, мудрость природы не может утешить, не может ответить любовью.[2]

Smirnov's untroubled dismissal of the *dialectical metaphysics* that he identified as the linchpin of Konevskoy's understanding of art and life, although perhaps justified in the context of the contemporary debate, clearly defines the serious limitations of that debate in retrospect. Was the distinct world-view to which Smirnov alludes really of so little consequence to Konevskoy himself? This is the question which our attempt to reconstruct Konevskoy's integral identity must now address.

I

Although the dissenting voices are few, the case for such a reassessment that can be constructed with their support is not unconvincing.

Amid the conditions of the alpha-omega contemporary debate Aleksandr Blok was to look again at Konevskoy, focusing on qualities in his legacy that belied the polarized critical categorization of the poet. Indeed, it is probable that Blok's decision to review the second edition of A.I. Miropolsky's poem *Lestvitsa*, which was dedicated to Konevskoy, was in part prompted by the pretext it gave him to discuss the *cultural* and

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[1]Smirnov, A., "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*, 1904, p. 83.

[2]Ibid. Smirnov cites Konevskoy's poem of 1898 "Do i posle" (*Mid*, p. 80/*Sip*, p. 38).

historical vision he perceived in the latter's work as signifying the transition *from Decadence to Symbolism* in Russian poetry:

Как будто впервые добыватель руды ощутил на своей лопате родную глину, родные пески, и, подняв голову, заметил, в какой стране он работает, куда он опять возвратился, уйдя, казалось - безвозвратно, в глубь собственной души. Иван Коневской именно «на миг и тем - на век» вдохнул в себя запах родной глины и загляделся на размеры дальних растояний.[3]

Although Blok deemed the capacity for development in Konevskoy's poetry to be subconscious and he discussed it in the black and white terms of the Decadent-Symbolist divide, his sensitivity to its possibly revelatory *content* is clear here.

Furthermore, although Blok unfortunately never produced the systematic critique of Konevskoy's poetry that he had hoped to publish in *Novyy put'*,[4] he did intimate that he considered this poet to have been misrepresented by critical and ideological categorizations. In his article of the following year, "O sovremennoy kritike" (1907), he associated Konevskoy's name with what he perceived to be the natural flux and flexibility of a Symbolist collective of *indivduals* which defied critical labels:

Современные символисты ищут простоты, того ветра, который так любил покойный Коневской, здорового труда и вольных дум <...> Строить по этому поводу какие-нибудь теории и предложения, мне кажется бесплодно, потому что здоровый факт - налицо.[5]

However, Blok's remained a lone and unheeded voice within the context of the *immediate* Symbolist debate; he was scarcely able to defend his own artistic integrity from its categorizations, let alone to champion that of the deceased Konevskoy.[6]

Significantly, it was only some fifty years after that debate had concluded that Konevskoy's friend Sergey Makovsky could more objectively and specifically identify the essential flaw of its distorted portrayal of the poet.[7]

Makovsky vividly recalled attending Konevskoy's "Tuesdays", where the host transmitted the profundity of his appreciation of, and reverence for, poetry:

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[3]Blok, A.A., "A.L. Miropolskiy. Ved'ma. Lestvitsa", *Zolotoe runo*, 1906, No. 1, p. 149.
[4]See Blok's letter to P.P. Pertsov voicing this intention: *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 158.
[5]Blok, A.A., *Sob. soch.*, vol. 5, p. 207.
[6]However, it is necessary to note that in addition to examining the question of Blok and Konevskoy in broader terms, V.Ya. Morderer's "Blok i Ivan Konevskoy" (*Ln* 92 (iv), pp. 151-78) also catalogues a number of unpublished, fragmentary and anecdotal responses of later poets to Konevskoy which, while not pertinent to the immediate debate, could be construed as indirectly *reacting* against its terms, adding an extra dimension to our discussion of the case for reassessment.
[7]A student of the natural sciences at the University of St. Petersburg who, like Konevskoy, attended professor A.I. Vvedensky's lectures on philosophy in preference to those of his own discipline and whose extra-curricula pursuits included a fledgling career as poet and art critic, Sergey Konstantinovich Makovsky (1877-1962) subsequently became editor of the journal *Apollon* (1909-1917). His vivid reminiscences of Konevskoy, "Ivan Konevskoy (Oreus) (1877-1901)", were included in his memoirs, *Na Parnase "Serebryanogo veka"*, Munich, 1962, pp. 179-194.

Он восторженно любил стихи, свои и чужие, захлебываясь, говорил наизусть одну за другой запоминавшиеся ему строфы из русских модернистов <...> и иностранцев <...> Такая любовь к слову (не к своим стихотворным удачам, а к поэзии вообще) сама по себе великий дар.[8]

Yet he continued to observe:

Но *еще восторженнее* отдавался он умозрению, созерцательному раздумию, с детства тянулся в метафизические дебри. Ум у него был природно-спекулятивный; многих и русских и западноевропейских мыслителей, уже в восемнадцать лет, он знал отчетливо. Вскоре наметился и собственный его философский путь: к отвлеченной романтике, окрашенной мистическим всебожием.

Как я жалею, что не записал тогда же бесед с ним о «самом главном».[9]

Makovsky then raised the question that was evidently foremost in his mind after half a century:

Может быть, Коневской больше мыслитель, чем поэт?[10]

It is significant that Makovskoy could not answer the very question he felt compelled to pose. In proceeding to identify the unflagging force of Konevskoy's personality as his most memorable quality, Makovsky implied that this question was in fact ultimately irrelevant. Neither poetry nor thought could have total precedence in the creativity of a personality of such integrity. However, the fact that Makovsky asked this question perhaps suggests that he perceived an imbalance in the contemporary critical treatment of qualities that, inextricably bound, were *both* essential to Konevskoy's integral personality. Although Konevskoy's poetry was not intended to be a direct exposition of his philosophical system, being a mediation of thought and feeling, Makovsky evidently felt that to emphasize it alone was to compromise the integrity of his personality, his thought receding into the background. Indeed, if he recognized that the neglect of Konevskoy's thought was comprehensible in the atmosphere that reigned in the literary arena at the turn of the century, the inadequacy of Bryusov's creativity-centred appreciation of the poet evidently struck Makovsky forcibly from a retrospective vantage point of five decades:

Брюсов озаглавил свою статью о Коневском - «Мудрое дитя». Написана она сердечно и даже неожиданно чутко для Брюсова, но все же недостаточно сказал Брюсов (*в те годы, впрочем, могло ли быть иначе?*), насколько эта «мудрость» Коневского - удивительно зрелая и опередившая свое время мудрость, насколько он интуитивно остер, поистине вдохновенен в своих мыслях о литературе, эстетике и современном философском сознании (не говоря уж об общей его начитанности и тончайшем знании французской поэзии).[11]

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[8]Makovsky, "Ivan Konevskoy (Oreus) (1877-1901)", *Na Parnase "Serebryanogo veka"*, p. 179.
[9]Ibid., p. 180. Italics mine.
[10]Ibid.
[11]Ibid., p. 183. Italics mine.

II

With the benefit of hindsight Sergey Makovsky found:

О Коневском никакими словами не скажешь лучше, чем его собственными...[12]

Certainly the inclination of both Blok and Makovsky to question contemporary critical misrepresentation of Konevskoy's identity perhaps finds its most compelling justification in that poet's *own* fleeting contribution to the very debate which would define him after his death in the terms of its delimiting polarity of vision.

Not without evident satisfaction, the review for *Russkoe bogatsvo* of the "Skorpion" almanac *Severnye tsvety* for 1901 observed:

О том, что в недрах росийского декадентства идет какая-то глухая борьба и нелады, свидетельствует <...> статья г. Коневского «Об отпевании новой русской поэзии».[13]

Shortly after this review was published, his voice heard but briefly in the incipient internal dispute detected by N.K. Mikhailovsky's journal, Ivan Konevskoy was dead. This single article does not, therefore, constitute any systematic exposition of his philosophical system or attendant artistic credo in relation to the debate. Yet his general views on the creative impetus of the 'new art' there do permit us precisely to infer the distinct *metaphysical* nature of his position.

Notably, Konevskoy's polemical essay was, as the reviewer continued to explain with relish, a response to Z.N. Gippius' "Torzhestvo v chest' smerti" with its dismissal of contemporary Western European literature and, more particularly, Russian Decadence. In view of its theme it might perhaps seem that a defence of the 'new art' in the manner of Bryusov's arguments in "Mudroe ditya" could be expected. However, even before we turn to the article itself, the history of its publication is of interest in this respect.

Having sent Bryusov the article for consideration, in a letter of 30 January 1901, Konevskoy requested that he return it if he did not find it suitable for publication. Konevskoy intended personally to bring it, and an addendum in response to "Kritika lyubvi", to the notice of Z.N. Gippius.[14]

Bryusov's next letter to Konevskoy (18 February 1901) makes clear that he had both *rejected* and *returned* the article, but that a letter from P.P. Pertsov now made its publication desirable, if not imperative. Konevskoy had fulfilled his intention:

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[12]Ibid., p. 183.
[13]Unsigned review, "Severnye Tsvety na 1901 god", *Russkoe bogatsvo*, 1901, No. 5, sect. II, p. 82.
[14]See *Ln* 98 (i), p. 525.

Перцов пишет мне: «Прочел статью Ореуса «Отпевание»; он сам прислал ее с «добавлением» неистово-яростных «поносных слов» <...> Но статья замечательна. И Мережковские и я *равно ею пленены* (при всем несогласии). Язык косноязычен, мысль - безумна, но сила и меткость исключительна. Я всегда надеялся на Ореуса, не как поэта».

Не предпочтете ли Вы напечатать в «Сев<ерных> цвет<ах>» это «Отпевание» вместо статьи о Лафорге? так как статья о Лафорге может быть напечатана и поже, через год, а «Отпевание» имеет и значение для минуты, надо, чтобы ответ был сказан, когда не замолкла речь, на которую он отвечает. Не так ли?[15]

Clearly the criteria by which Bryusov judged the article publishable or not first and foremost reflected his sensitivity to the politics of the current debate. His new resolve to include it in *Severnye tsvety* was principally contingent on the *Merezhkovskys'* captivation with it.

Bryusov realized that it was now highly expedient to ensure the publication of a critique that had made a profound impression on the neo-Christian Merezhkovskys regardless of its content. Indeed, on receiving the article for the second time, Bryusov found that Konevskoy had not included the addendum which had evidently made an impact on the Merezhkovskys, but with which *he* was still *wholly unfamiliar*. He demanded it with an air of urgency which is evidently indicative of one on campaign, content to employ any tactic to score a hit against his opponents:

Мы получили «Отпевание». Но где же прибавленные «поносные слова»? где то, что прибавлено после статьи ее о А.М. Д<обролюбове>?[16]

In their study "Bryusov i Vesy", K.M. Azadovsky and D.E. Maksimov observe of the opening years of the century:

Московские «декаденты» редко прибегали в ту пору к отвлеченному теоретизированию, тем более что противопоставить «неохристианам» они могли главным образом лишь принципы своего художественного творчества и свою чисто литературную ориентацию.[17]

It was the fact that, while the Decadents' purely aesthetic arguments left the Merezhkovskys unmoved, Konevskoy's *theoretical* defence of the aesthetic position had arrested their attention that now qualified it in Bryusov's eyes to serve as a response on behalf of Decadence, not that he unequivocally agreed with it himself. Indeed, the idiosyncratic theory that had provoked the Merezhkovskys' interest in the article differentiated its author from those whose art it championed. This included Bryusov, a fact indicated not only by his original reluctance to publish the critique but to praise it

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[15]Ibid. See also: Pertsov, P.P., *Literaturnye vospominaniya (1890-1902 gg.)*, M./ L., 1933, pp. 245-6.
[16]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 527.
[17]*Ln* 85, p. 258.

himself. He was interested principally in creating an *impression* by publishing "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii".

On addressing Z.N. Gippius' allegation that thought is "dead" in Decadent creativity, Konevskoy acknowledges in his article that many contemporary poets are indeed neglectful of philosophical concepts in their art and shows the *creative processes* of their work to be a celebration of the intensity of instantaneous subjective experience. This assessment seems to be consistent with the essential thrust of Bryusov's essay "Istiny", which was also published in *Severnye tsvety* for 1901:

> Что во мне есть, то истинно. Не человек - мера вещей, а мгновение. Истинно то, что признаю я, признаю теперь, сегодня, в это мгновение.[18]

However, on continuing his analysis, Konevskoy does not defend this position *per se*, but proceeds to answer Gippius' demand for philosophical justification by examining the implications of this creative principle from a *philosophical* perspective. He defines creative processes in terms of a broadly sketched metaphysical system which he allows is not consciously conceived of by the artists in question. In this he departs radically from Bryusov's position and actually gravitates towards his opponent's.

Even as he discusses contemporary poets in their own terms the distinction is discernible. Although Konevskoy identifies the momentary instant of experience to be of paramount importance to their creativity, he notes that this does not preclude the emergence of a pattern, of constancy in their poetry:

> Нельзя не отметить - и самими поэтами это явственно сознается, - что если того запросит их нрав и личность, им есть полная возможность сосредоточиваться среди своих представлений и на тех из них, которые создаются самым частым, повторяющимся, значит, не изменяющимся образом, удерживать в себе все одни и те же мечты и восторги.[19]

This passage marks a point of departure for the respective notions of Bryusov and Konevskoy on the aesthetics of the instant. For Bryusov the individual personality in itself was of primary importance. Konevskoy's specific interest in the *will* of the individual artist in the above-cited passage is the prelude to his contention that that personality is an emanation in the temporal sphere of its *eternal* nature - and as such the instrument of *its* eternal will. For Bryusov this was tantamount to an abrogation of the free will of the individual personality.

In "Istiny", discussing the possible range of feeling accessible to man, Bryusov *does* perceive a duality between higher and lower orders of experience:

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[18]Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 61.

[19]Konevskoy, I.I., "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii", *Severnye tsvety na 1901 g.*, M., "Skorpion", p. 184. The article also appears as an appendix to the Berkeley Slavic Specialities reprint of *Mechty i dumy* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 215.

Есть два порядка чувств: более поверхностные и более глубокие, как бы внешность и глубь души.[20]

However, in positing the existence of such "deeper" feelings Bryusov scrupulously limits the discussion within the internalized bounds of what is known to the individual. He is not concerned with justifying or rationalizing his statement that they exist or with examining their implication.

Konevskoy's approach to this subject inverts Bryusov's. His perspective on the significance of the instant in creativity is that of the philosopher who seeks meaning. Konevskoy proceeds to explain that the artist's eternal or absolute nature can only 'be' through a process of its definition in a phenomenal, temporal and spatial sphere. It can only actualize itself *in relation* to that which, while *of* its absolute self, is not itself. If it does not it returns to its original state, its indifferent eternal essence. The act of creativity in the given instant is thus the heightened realization of the will of the artist's eternal nature in which the artist himself, the temporal self, is merely instrumental:

Всякий творец образов, делая свое временное дело, творит волю своей вечной монады, единицы.[21]

Thus, while the creativity of the contemporary poets is the expression of a *positive* process in perpetual motion which bears no relation to the sterility and tedium, the vapidness of Decadence as portrayed by Zinaida Gippius, this process is qualified in terms of metaphysical principles which, in Konevskoy's view, these artists themselves do not understand. Indeed, he concludes his analysis by stating:

Таков, во всяком случае, тот замысел, который *смутно чудится* многим современным поэтам, *тот инстинкт*, который им внушает любовь и возрощение настоящего мига.[22]

As we have noted, Konevskoy does not expand his ideas sufficiently in "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii" to permit us to infer the *precise* nature of his philosophical system. In what was primarily an analysis of the creative act, only a sketchy impression of that system emerges in which much is treated cursorily or by implication. Yet the article does clearly confirm that he had formulated and subscribed to an integral world-view which, profoundly informing his thought and creativity, existed in its own right, exclusive of the qualities imposed upon it in the conditions of the contemporary debate. Indeed, it is notable that in the article, defying the later critical disregard of that world-view, he defined the creativity of Z.N. Gippius and V. Bryusov in

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[20]Bryusov, *Sob. soch.*, VI, p. 59.
[21]Konevskoy, I., "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii", p. 185/216.
[22]Ibid. Italics mine.

its terms.[23] In the addendum to the piece, moreover, this poet-*thinker* made clear that his interest in Dobrolyubov's poetry, with which he has been so disproportionately associated, was highly conditional, intimating the degree to which it was incidental to a wider metaphysical agenda.[24]

Finally, in stating the case for reassessment it is worth noting that the testimony of Blok, Makovsky and "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii" is further corroborated by the fact that the sheer integrity of Konevskoy's vision evidently came to haunt those same critics who used his name in the contemporary debate for their purposes and caused cracks to emerge in their arguments in time. Having on the one hand perpetuated the image of Konevskoy's maximalist Decadence and associations with Dobrolyubov in his reminiscences, on the other P.P. Pertsov felt compelled to add:

...действительно, в нем было что-то, что не позволяет его забыть, — как это сказалось и у меня в сравнительно недавно написанном стихотворении (1926 г.):

Ты пробыл с нами лишь мгновение —
Тот краткий, предрассветный миг,
А все мне снится, как видение,
Твой яркий юношеский лик.

И все стоишь загадкой странною
Ты в дальнем сумраке годов,
Повит завесою туманною
Едва напечатленных слов.

Но верю: все судьбой отъятое
Вернешь ты нам сполна — когда
Свою раскроет глубь заклятую
Тебя унесшая вода...[25]

In his retrospective appreciation of 1917, Valery Bryusov also found himself compelled to loosen his grip on Konevskoy, acknowledging the fact that if the poet was *associated* with the "Skorpion" circle, he remained an anomalous presence in its midst and, indeed, generally:

Когда, в 1899 г., стал сорганизоваться «Скорпион», Коневской был единодушно принят в круг его участников, как естественный, неизбежный член группы. Так случилось, что Ив. Коневской, *в общем представлении*, вошел в состав кружка «московских символистов», сотрудников «Северных Цветов».

Между тем нельзя сказать, чтобы такая группировка вполне отвечала внутренним устремлениям самого Коневского <...> *Ив. Коневской многим и очень многим решительно отличался от нас.* Не примыкая к тому нео-христианскому движению в русском модернизме, вождем которого вскоре вступил Д. Мережковский <...> Ив. Коневской был в гораздо большей степени настроен мистично, нежели весь московский кружок <...> В каком бы то ни было

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[23]Ibid., p. 186/217.
[24]See *Ln* 98 (i), p. 529.
[25]Pertsov, P.P., *Literaturnye vospominaniya (1890-1902 gg.)*, pp. 247-8.

смысле, формула «искусство для искусства» была для Коневского неприемлема и даже нестерпима.[26]

It is to the *systematic* reconstruction of the distorted and fragmented identity of this *distinct* poet-*metaphysician* and *mystic* that the present work will now turn.

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[26]Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. Lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, pp. 150-1. Italics mine.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii: An individual perspective on the contemporary crisis of faith

Нельзя забыть, но и нельзя повторить.

Vl. S. Solov'ev. "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo".

We have established that Ivan Konevskoy's identity was obscured by his perceived associations within the contemporary context and we have constructed a case for approaching him as an *individual* in *relation* to early Modernism as a broad cultural force. It is to Ivan Ivanovich Oreus' essay *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*[1] that we now turn to establish the essential rubric determining that individual stance, the detailed analysis of which will comprise the remainder of this thesis.

In view of the centrality of the 'child' in contemporary criticism of Konevskoy, it seems appropropriate that our analysis of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* should focus firstly upon the child's-eye view of the *zeitgeist*, relating the purported childhood experiences of an acquaintance, which appears in the opening pages of the essay. Oreus introduces us to a typical child, fascinated, for example, by why it rains or snows, by thunder, where bread comes from, the flora and fauna of foreign climes. However, with a sense of inevitability the essay proceeds to chart the first ingenuous burgeonings of this child's consciousness of things that lie beyond that which is immediately explicable:

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[1] **f.259, op.3, ed.kh.5**. Dated 2 Dec. 1896 - 1897. The archive includes both an autographed Ms. and a transcription by N.Ya. Bryusova, Bryusov's sister. The opening pages of the essay, entitled "Na Rassvete", appear in *Sip* (pp. 125-136. See also "Ot izdateley", pp. v-vi and "Primechaniya. II. Proza", pp. 245-6).

In the first instance the essay (the principal subjects of which were N.M. Minsky, K.M. Fofanov, F. Sologub, A. Dobrolyubov, K.D. Bal'mont, D.S. Merezhkovsky and Vl. Solov'ev) was conceived as a paper to be read at the "Literaturno-Myslitel'nyy Kruzhok" which Oreus had joined on entering the Department of Classics of the Historical-Philological Faculty at the University of St. Petersburg in September 1896. He presented it on 17 February 1897 (see *Z.k. No. 4*: **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 17, l. 63 ob. - 64**, where Oreus lists it among other papers read to the circle. See also later lists in *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6**: **l.35** and **l. 48 ob.** For reminiscences of Oreus' participation in the circle, where his aesthetic interests were not always favourably received, see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 535 and *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 183).

It is possible that Oreus aspired to publish the work - a mock title-page for which appears in *Z.k. No.5* (**f.259, op.1, ed.kh. 18, l. 29ob.**) among descriptive travel notes of summer 1897 and is significantly attributed to "Ivan Konevetskiy" - an early variant of the pseudonym he would, of course, ultimately adopt, and the earliest indication that he intended to do so (although the Konevets had long excited his imagination). This discussion of the pseudonym is an appropriate place also to note what has perhaps already become apparent: that henceforth we will refer to the subject of our study by his real name. This seems only correct in a work concerned specifically with true identity, particularly in view of the brevity with which the pseudonym (which apparently did not entirely satisfy Oreus, see *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 177) was ultimately used.

Но вот случилось ему иногда глядеть ночью на небо, и тогда у него являлась охота спрашивать, сколько на небе звезд, и можно ли как-нибудь до них добраться.[2]

The child suddenly discovers, however, that his seemingly simple questions no longer find resolution in the answers that the adults, to whom he naturally turns, venture. Rather, he finds that he is suddenly and unwittingly faced by that clash between materialist-scientific realism and the Christian faith that typified the latter decades of the nineteenth century.

На это родители ему отвечали, что звезд этих сосчитать нельзя, что их числу конца нет, и что это все - огромные шары, такие же, как наша земля, а добраться до них тоже во век нельзя будет, потому что до них миллионы верст; - что существуют, правда, воздушные шары, только и на них никогда не удастся до звезд взлететь, потому что уже за 70 верст над землей дышать нечем, воздуху нет. А вот в книжках по «Закону Божию», которые тоже как-будто все брались объяснять, говорилось, что были святые, на небо живыми взятые, и что Іисус Христос на небо вознесся.[3]

Oreus continues to describe how ironically the child's initial perplexity in the face of this contradiction is temporarily dispelled on confronting the ultimate conundrum, death. Although the child is instinctively distressed at the funeral of a relative, adult indifference to his questions and the religious rites introduce him to the paradoxical certainty of an age of resignation:

На панихидах, которые ежедневно волновали, трогали и истомляли душу мальчика, все время возносились прошения к Богу, касающиеся участи покойника после смерти. Предлагать старшим вопросы о том, например, где теперь покойник ?- решительно сбивалось в представлении мальчика на что-то смешное, наивное <...> по отношению к этому живому событию смерти, уж окончательно сказалось душе ребенка, насколько затверживаемые понятия из книжек по «Закону Божию» к жизни являются чем-то посторонним, в счет не идущим. С этой стороны, одним словом, ему свету ожидать было несвойственно; от этих сфер отрешал его самый угрюмый холод отчуждения.[4]

However, Oreus proceeds to relate how this resolution of the problem proves notably short-lived. For if the simple, yet profound questions of the child were effectively quashed in his waking state, the sense of an abyssal 'beyond' came progressively to haunt him in a terrifying manner in the untramelled life of his subconsciousness:

И вот, когда он был уже в одном из младших классов гимназии, начали на него находить по ночам какие-то странные припадки. Он ложился в постель, его начинала одолевать дремота, члены млели - и внезапно, стряхнув с себя полусон, он вскакивал в оторопелом ужасе. В тот миг, когда сознание тает, немеет то в одном месте тела, то в другом, и мягко, неслышно скользишь в бездну, мельком почудился ему другой роковой обморок - обморок безысходный: темный наплыв завладывает навеки, навеки... и каждая жилка судорожно натянулась, все существо возопило.

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[2]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f.259, op.3, ed.kh.5, l. 11**.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., **l. 12-13.**

Жизни - ярче, звончее, горячее! И он пускался метаться по комнате с широко-раскрытыми глазами...[5]

Having quoted K.M. Fofanov[6] to illustrate the wider significance of this child's experience, Oreus proceeds to examine its underlying implications. He finds that it is symptomatic of the consequences of contemporary empirical and positivist thought for man's perspective on reality in general, but, more particularly, on the life of the individual personality:

Чем вышла жизнь из химического анализа точной науки, ее реторт и тиглей? Что сталось с образом ее и образом сознания человеческого после этого жестокого размозжения, размочаления? Все превратилось в немые, безформенные клубы явлений, рассеивающихся на теряющиеся в неуловимости молекулы и атомы.[7]

Indeed, in this atmosphere the perennial problem of psycho-physiological dualism is, Oreus intimates, popularly considered to have been resolved in favour of the physiological materialists:

Одно случайное сочетание этих мглистых клубов, одно сцепление каких-то неизвестных величин, называемых ощущениями и представлениями, на известном протяжении времени более или менее похожих друг на друга - вот марево связной и цельной личности, ее яко бы нераздельного состава.[8]

Oreus observes how the life of the 'personality' is considered to be terminated with absolute finality upon the secession of organic functions in 'death'. Consciousness, the by-product of sensible exchange between a given organism and its environment, ends with the dissolution and mergence of the former with the latter, the two being indistinguishable in the final analysis:

Уже в течение всей жизни крупницы из роя мысли ее [личности] и чувств, раз столкнувшись с воздухом окружающей среды, из которого огромное количество их вышло, снова приобщаются к нему, взамен улетучившихся ежеминутно пополняют ее новые наносы, пока наконец в момент, называемый смертью, не оборвется этот обмен и не приобщится к окружающей среде видимая среда его - пыль телесного аггрегата.[9]

Indeed, Oreus continues, the prevailing philosophy admits the possibility of an 'afterlife' in the impersonal domain of the genus alone. While certain externally conditioned aspects of individual personality defined as "character" and "temperament" do find continuity beyond death in children, these too are in time effaced:

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[5]Ibid., **l. 13.**
[6]Oreus parallels Fofanov's poem "Labirint" (1893) with the child's experience: Ibid, **l. 13-13ob.**
[7]Ibid.
[8]Ibid.
[9]Ibid.

...после смерти же ее этот «характер» где-нибудь в слабом подобии опять всплывает в потомстве личности. Но и подобие это может остаться подобием опять-таки лишь на самом ограниченном протяжении времени. Еще несколько поколений и оно уже окончательно тускнеет, неузнаваемо и неразличимо более в новых комбинациях душевных или телесных черт.[10]

However, Oreus makes clear that in his opinion the *ultimate* implication of modern thinking, of which the forerunning are in fact simply permutations, is its inability to determine positively the nature of the 'infinite'. It can only define the infinite negatively, abstractly, in a form which, taken to its logical conclusions, is tantamount to nothing. Oreus intimates that, despite the pretensions of positivism, modern thinking is concerned only with relative truth, not 'unconditional' truth. The given 'object' is but part of an immeasurable phenomenal flux or process for which the only possible definition is an abstract 'everything' or 'all'. This is an attempt to define the infinite in its crudest sense - merely as that which is *not* finite in quantitative terms. Naturally, Oreus opines, this abstract principle fails to mask the 'unknown' modern man has attempted to expunge from his understanding and definition of reality:

Ничего неизменно, все видоизменяется, и ничего частное не пребывает. Пребывает только какое-то мертвое отвлечение, какое-то «все»; но выставляется уже как наиболее вероятное предположение, что и это «все» лишь одна мечта: ничего не приходится мыслить под этим «все»: оно сводится просто к понятию «ничто».[11]

Oreus then concludes his reflections on the child's experience by noting that it is no wonder that the child is terrified by the abyssal 'night' which ultimately underlies the mechanistic world-view of his times:

Ночью точно особенно страшно ощущать себя в этом мире: сам ведь он представляет из себя вечную, пронизывающую холодом ночь, подобную той, которая должна наступить после истощения солнечного света и тепла. Взамен солнца освещена она лишь мертвенно белым газом механического миросозерцания. И как понятна смертельная боязнь того мальчика погружаться среди этой ночи в безсознательность, в обмороке сна! Тяжко предвкушать безвозвратное слияние с этим ледяным мраком...[12]

The objective of the present chapter is to ascertain in what way Oreus *himself* actually related to the predicament of this 'child of his time' which was so central to the emergence of Modernism and the diverse strategies that it devised to confront the "abyss".

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[10]Ibid., **l. 13ob. -14.**
[11]Ibid., **l. 14.**
[12]Ibid.

The general topicality of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* is exemplified in the terms in which Oreus subsequently describes the achievements of the poets Minsky, Fofanov, Sologub, Dobrolyubov and Bal'mont:

> Мы старались дать полную картину сказавшихся за последние 5 - 10 лет порывов русской поэзии к утолению самых заветных запросов человечества, к упразднению бездумного заклятия, наложенного наукой на область наших гаданий о вечных началах вселенной и о назначении нашего существа. Сводя в одно разбросанные в предыдущем изложении замечания, можно сказать, что в китайской стене, которою замкнула нас наука, много сделано пробоин: дерзко заглянули к нам новые обаятельные горизонты, хлынули какие-то дикие волны в распланированные территории нормальной научной жизни <...> Не успевают самые нормальные из наших просветителей - Чернышевский, Писарев, Н.К. Михайловский <...> отпраздновать праздник научной организации жизни, установить новые и трезвые начала общественного благополучия, как уже опять во всех концах Руси чувствуются какие-то безумные колыхания душ.[13]

Such views, redolent to some extent in image and tone of D.S. Merezhkovsky's *O prichinakh upadka i o novykh techeniyakh sovremennoy russkoy literatury* or the writings of Akim Volynsky, *were* typical of their time.[14] Indeed, it was in part because of this that Bryusov considered that much of this early self-initiation by the future Konevskoy into the Modernist fold was outmoded and he almost completely excluded it from *Stikhi i proza*.[15] Moreover, Bryusov was also aware that certain opinions stated in the essay regarding *specific* poets were no longer held by its author at the time of his death. Oreus praised Bal'mont's contribution to Russian prosody, for example, a view which in later marginalia he emphatically disclaimed.[16]

Yet, whatever the justification for omitting this essay from *Stikhi i proza* in the immediate context, a re-reading of it now proves that, in addition to the general, derivative and subsequently disclaimed material, it offers invaluable insights into Oreus' *individual* approach to the *zeitgeist* which engaged the whole array of early Russian Modernists. It transpires that the *overall* tendency of this forgotten work, the introductory and incidental passages that frame the bulk of its content, reveal that it was not in fact written specifically *about* its Modernist subjects. Although it is true that Oreus is highly sensitive to the implications of contemporary poetry and exhibits a definite affinity to, and empathy towards, its essential trends, he writes less in the manner of one seeking to voice unconditional esteem for its proponents, than that of one who drafts them into *his* service

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[13]Ibid., **l. 43.**

[14]Oreus read Merezhkovsky's seminal tract in early 1896: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 7 ob.** For Oreus in relation to Volynsky, see below, Chapter Eleven.

[15]See *Sip*, p. v.

[16]See *Ln* 98 (i), p. 483. There was also the fact that the essay, for reasons that we will address presently, had high hopes for D.S. Merezhkovsky's poetry. Bryusov was no doubt not only sensitive to Oreus' own later modification of this opinion, but also the confusing resonance that this could have had in the conditions of a contemporary debate in which he portrayed *himself* as Konevskoy's *confrère* and champion. There were numerous other pieces that Bryusov could select that would better serve the task of conveying Konevskoy's individual stance as *he* perceived it to have been and now wanted to project it without such complications.

to illustrate the *constructive* qualities of his *own* world-view. He advocates their worth to the extent that they exemplify a growing and healthy, but as yet *misapplied* realization of man's dilemma. Their individual explorations of the problem are essentially alien to his own. Indeed, the *definitive* idea of the essay is to judge and define them not only in terms of the present, but also the *past and future*. They are viewed from the perspective of one whose own ideas were informed by his consciousness of a much broader literary-philosophical '*tradition*', in relation to which he gauged their significance.

The kernel of the tradition with which Oreus in fact identifies himself in his essay is identified in the excerpt that Bryusov actually included in *Stikhi i proza*, "Na rassvete", the principal subject of which is F.M. Dostoevsky. There, concluding an appraisal of *Brat'ya Karamazovy*, Oreus observes:

> Мечтами этими Достоевский далеко оставил за собой исторический момент и подслушал то, что слышится сквозь сон лишь некоторым душам с самого недавнего времени в Европе. У нас зато он явился преемником забытых или нелюбимых в его время массой русского общества величайших наших поэтических душ - *Пушкина, Тютчева, отчасти - Алексея Толстого.*[17]

Thus Oreus equated Dostoevsky with the Russian school of poet-lyricists, with Pushkin, Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy. These names in turn, moreover, had a specific resonance for Oreus. For his understanding of Dostoevsky and heightened interest in Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy were both determined, as the present work will reveal in detail, by *Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev*. In the context of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* this association is perhaps most apparent from its *conclusion* where Oreus identifies Solov'ev as the 'herald' of the *future* of Russian poetry. Indeed, in an essay which was in fact far from *uncritical*, Oreus highest praise is reserved for the philosopher-poet:

> Если бы мы взялись обозреть все проявления этих знамений будущего в русской умственной и литературной жизни, то мы, прежде всего, указали бы, конечно, на всю мыслительную деятельность названного только что философа, безспорно величайшего из русских мыслителей, да и в общем составе современных европейских философов без сомнения занимающего одно из первых мест. Но рассмотрение такого явления, конечно, требовало бы самостоятельного очерка.[18]

Solov'ev was unquestionably one of those elect few in modern Europe whom Oreus perceived to be privy to the mystery comprehended by Dostoevsky and his predecessors.

Two questions immediately arise on establishing the identity of this 'tradition' to which Oreus defers in his discussion of Modernism. Firstly, how were these figures affiliated in his mind? Secondly, in what way did he consider them (and, by extension,

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[17]*Sip*, p.129.
[18]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 50.**

himself) to differ from the Modernists? We can establish the qualities which Oreus considered Dostoevsky to have in common with Pushkin, Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy by comparing his references to one and the other in his essay. Describing the group of Russian poet-lyricists to which Dostoevsky's 'predecessors' belong, Oreus observes:

Н.М. Минский - первый в России по возрасту сознательный провозвестник скорби нашего отлучения от заветной родины духа. Прежние лучшие русские лирики - Тютчев, А. Толстой, Фет, Полонский, Голенищев-Кутузов, конечно, знали ту же скорбь, *но для них это было временным затемнением душевного зеркала, она не обусловливалась пассивной околдованностью перед авторитетом науки; у них была самостоятельная, но твердая вера в сверхчувственный мир, и она-то сохраняла в них общий добрый строй духа.* Или свободные, стихийные пантеисты, как Тютчев и Фет, или изящные примирители пантеистических мечтаний с мечтами христианского индивидуализма, как А. Толстой - *почти все они обрели мир в несовершенной, но стройной и цельной гармонии с единым началом сущего.*[19]

This undiminished *faith* in the positive nature of the infinite 'unknown' which defies Materialist hegemony Oreus also finds typifies Dostoevsky's vision. *Brat'ya Karamazovy* is, he maintains, pregnant with Zosima's intuition of ultimate universal harmony not dissimilar to that beheld by such poet-mystics as Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy:

Мудрым проникновением в громаду мировых волн этот старец учит о непрерывной связи всех существ в ее лоне, о нераздельной зависимости их друг от друга <...> руководящий напев драмы о «Карамазовых», это - благовестие кровного союза между христиано-платоновским идеалом стремления к небесной родине или деятельной любви к людям и первобытной, детской жизнерадостью.[20]

Oreus also referred to Dostoevsky's story *Son smeshnogo cheloveka* with its acute sense of the importance of faith in a positive universality for modern man.[21]

That, in addition to the faith of the poets and Dostoevsky, Oreus had the Solov'evian definition of faith in mind as he wrote his essay is perhaps most succinctly illustrated by the terms he uses there to emphasize L.N. Tolstoy's purely moral understanding of it:

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[19]Ibid., **l. 14ob**. Italics mine. Oreus opens this brief description of earlier manifestations of the Russian lyrical tradition with a note regarding the exceptional, elevated position occupied by Pushkin, the qualities of which demand a more detailed expostion than is possible in the context of his essay. He continues by singling out Baratynsky and Lermontov as the negative pole of the tradition. Oreus thus effectively divides these Russian poets into three distinct sets. It is worth noting that this formula in itself well exemplifies Vl. Solov'ev's potential influence, inviting strong parallels with the structure and, in part, the substance of a discussion of Russian poetry in the opening chapters of his article "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo". There, he too distinguishes three groupings, of which Pushkin alone constitutes the first, Baratynsky and Lermontov the second, Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy the third. Cf. Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, pp. 298-301.

[20]*Sip*, p.128.

[21]For references to the story in *Stikhotvornaya lirika*, see *Sip*., p.127 &129. For passages from it transcribed by Oreus, see: *Kniga materialov. Vyderzhky iz sochineniy raznykh avtorov. Chast' II*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 5, L. 32-35 & 180**.

Так, наконец, могучим носителем энергии вновь была обретена «вера» - вера в дело, bien entendu, не вера - *«вещей об личение невидимых»* - мистическая чуткость, укрепляющаяся до незыблемой уверенности в сверхчувственном.[22]

It was with these exact Pauline words (Heb. 11:1) that Solov'ev characterized the 'faith' underlying the objective idealism of his most extensive epistemological work, *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*. Oreus was reading this exposition of the Solov'evian metaphysics of the Absolute, which was fated to play a seminal role in his development, precisely as he wrote *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*.[23]

II

The pattern that we have established in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* is that of an underlying appeal to an ideal *faith*. This has obvious implications if we now turn again to the question of where Oreus stood in relation to the child of the time whose experience set the tone of the essay's analysis of Modernism. Clearly Oreus *himself* did *not* directly identify with this experience. He was fascinated by the child's dilemma, but from a discreet distance. This, more particularly, was the same stance that he assumed in relation to the early Modernists who, in his opinion, in many respects shared the child's unresolved perplexity. Indeed, in his essay Oreus seeks to show how ultimately the "upsurge of the soul" in these writers is painfully suppressed by their own susceptibility to materialist claims to describe reality definitively. On concluding his appraisal of Minsky, Fofanov, Sologub, Dobrolyubov and Bal'mont, for example, he observes:

Везде - то же кровное постижение двойственной природы мира, борьбы стройности, закономерности, единства, с инстинками множественности - безчинством, произволом, хотя бы простой жизнерадостью, и бессилие согласить это противоречие между адом демонической неудовлетворенности и раем ангельской гармонии. Всюду в этой лирике - безысходная скорбь - частью от этого противоречия, частью просто от слишком смутного еще прозрения божественного Единства в мире явлений. Но, в конце концов, все представители той же лирики жертвуют жизнерадостью, жертвуют личной волей своему соединению с единым началом сущего.[24]

These writers, Oreus intimates, cannot surmount materialist dualism and they suppress any intuition of the possibility of *positive synthesis* within a reality they accept is irresolvably bifurcated. Their search for resolution is dictated by the 'choice' between the two negatives modern thought offers - between the sensual but ultimately meaningless life of the phenomenal sphere or the uniform nothingness of the 'unknown' infinite. The

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[22]*Sip*, p.131.
[23]See Solov'ev, Vl., "Kritika otvlechennykh nachal", *Soch.*, vol.1, chp.XLV, pp. 721-2. Oreus read this work between 17 January and 27 February 1897 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 29**).
[24]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 49**.

ultimate tendency towards the latter, the lesser of two evils, is not determined by any positive knowledge of its character, but a desperate compact with fate in a bid for freedom from determinism.

We have found that one implication of Oreus' essay of *1897* was that in the final analysis he deemed the early Modernists to be the spiritually deprived 'children' of their age - ironically a view not dissimilar to that voiced by Z.N. Gippius in her critique of the Decadents (and "Ivan Konevskoy") in 1900. Oreus did not perceive himself to be one of Gippius' "abandoned children", an orphan of his time, being richly endowed with the legacy of man's spiritual and metaphysical past. However, if Z.N. Gippius looked to the future for a new religious consciousness, have we not established that Oreus appeared to find his inspiration primarily in the uncompromised faith of the past? Indeed, we must ask ourselves was he not perhaps essentially a reactionary, allied with the early Modernists only by virtue of a common realization of the modern crisis of culture? *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* also helps us to illustrate that this was not the case.

As we have already seen, Oreus was acutely aware that the modern dilemma was the issue of the prevailing *epistemology*. Accordingly, while he took unqualified faith as an inspiring *basis* for a solution, as an ideal challenging atrophied consciousness, he did not regard it as an answer in itself. Indeed, the tension between faith and scepticism was essential to the creativity of the 'tradition' to which Oreus subscribed in his essay. There he addresses the fact that in *Brat'ya Karamazovy* Zosima's vision of harmony is clouded by the unresolved presence of Ivan Karamazov's "devil", the source of universal chaos. Furthermore, Oreus intimates that the inevitable corruption of the paradisical dream world of *Son smeshnogo cheloveka* is integral to understanding its study of faith.[25]

The need to confront and resolve the tension between faith and modern knowledge was also apparent in the other strands of the tradition to which Oreus alluded in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*. Vladimir Solov'ev, who was so instrumental in promoting the earlier poets whom Oreus admires in his essay for their integral vision, notably found that the scepticism of Baratynsky and Lermontov was absolutely essential to the growth of positive poetic consciousness in Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy. While profoundly inspired by Pushkin, these poets could not revert to his immediate creativity or faith:

> Будущность русской поэзии зависела от того, хватит ли у наших поэтов силы мысли, чтобы идти дальше субъективного отрицания. Дорога назад была заказана. Раз мысль возбудилась, вопросы возникли, нельзя уже было просто вернуться к прежней художественной непосредственности, к органическому творчеству Пушкина. Тютчев сказал про него: «Тебя, как первую любовь, России сердце не забудет». *Именно так: нельзя забыть, но и нельзя повторить!*[26]

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[25]See *Sip*, pp. 126-9.
[26]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 301. Italics mine.

That in Oreus' opinion the secret of Solov'ev's own success in confronting the modern dilemma was a synthesis of immediate faith and new thought is apparent in his analysis of the symbolism in the philosopher-poet's "Pesnya Ofitov":

Символ этот - настолько многообъемлющ, что, конечно, под эту формулу подходит множество сочетаний, произведенных самим Вл.С. Соловьевым - *сочетание гордого знания со смиренной верой*, безмятежной созерцательности с беспокойной деятельностью, мира видимого с его духовным смыслом.[27]

Oreus expressed his *own* awareness of the need to resolve the problems of modernity within the terms of faith perhaps most clearly in a later essay of 1897, "Pered zhivopis'yu Shvinda".[28] There, on the one hand, he delighted in the child-like ingenuousness of the German Romantics' world-view:

Дети любят все диковинное, сверкающее причудливым великолепием, вообще необычное, нарушающее ход повседневной жизни. Совершенно таковы же были и настроения романтиков. И потому-то во всех сказочных лесах, со всякими эльфами, феями, гномами, рыцарями и принцессами нам так, в сущности, безпечно, привольно, даже весело <...> Все это нам представляется милым, пленительным, грациозным, но уже в самой разве первообразной степени - таинственным и вещим <...> Глядя на картины Швинда, мы, рано состаревшиеся мистики конца века, с ноющим умилением как бы припоминаем детские сны.[29]

Yet, as the concluding sentence here intimates, he was also fully aware of the profound challenges and the responsibilities that had come to bear on modern man in less than a century. Indeed, comparing Romantic *Weltschmerz* with the modern *zeitgeist*, he continued:

Нельзя не сознавать, что тоска романтического юношества в начале столетия не может выдерживать и параллели со смертной мукой, выносимой на свете вместе с рождением многими детьми нашего времени.[30]

In sum, Oreus, like the other early Modernists, was undoubtedly 'progressive' by inclination. However, in contradistinction to many of his contemporaries he understood progress not as a sense of unfocused loss and yearning, iconoclastic denial and stormy defiance, but as a positive, constructive process - as a *justification* of faith. He was a 'reformer' for whom Solov'ev's insistence that the past must not be forgotten on the one hand, but not simply re-enacted on the other, was to become canonical. Oreus was

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[27]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 69**. See also *Ln* 98 (i), p. 514. Oreus also read Solov'ev on the Ophites in *Es*: see *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 50 ob.** The snake in his poem "Obetovanie" (*Mid*, p. 162/*Sip*, p. 48) evidently reflects the gnostic cult's belief that the animal embodied wisdom.

[28]"Pered zhivopis'yu Shvinda", *Mid*, pp. 94-98/*Sip*, pp. 137-142.

[29]Ibid., *Mid*, pp. 97-98/*Sip*, pp. 141-142.

[30]Ibid.

profoundly aware of his own immediate cultural and historical context and the need to address its problems, and in this sense we can not only question the aptness of Gippius' description of him as an "abandoned child", but also Bryusov's idealized portrayal of a self-contained, solitary child genius in "Mudroe ditya". Indeed, it is precisely the maturity, stature and broad vision of Oreus' own quest to find a solution to the modern dilemma that the present work will seek to reveal.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIVE

Paternal influence: foundations of a vision

...В тебе уловил я печать
отдаленного, лучшего века.
Apukhtin.[1]

In section one of this thesis we analysed contemporary criticism of Ivan Konevskóy and concluded that it obscured integral aspects of his identity - in particular the degree to which metaphysics informed his development as a poet. In the final chapter of section one we broadly identified Ivan Oreus' metaphysical position to be that of the 'reformer' with a distinct cultural ground. In the second section of this work we will begin to examine more specifically and systematically what the *foundations* of that position were. Indeed, the present chapter will take Valery Bryusov's oversimplified analysis of Oreus' attitude to his *father* and *childhood faith* as a basis for a process of reconstruction which will show how the failure to examine the poet's early experience with sufficient rigour has seriously compromised our understanding of "Ivan Konevskoy".

I

The introductory analysis of Konevskoy's literary development in *Stikhi i proza*, Bryusov's "Mudroe ditya", was accompanied by a brief biographical sketch which was attributed to a "near relation of the deceased", but in fact contributed by the poet's father, also Ivan Ivanovich Oreus (1830-1909).[2]

To an extent the Lt-General's values are inevitably reflected in this account, most particulary in the emphasis that it placed upon the importance and success of his son's *religious* upbringing in determining his nature:

> С особенным вниманием родители Коневского относились к тому, чтобы укоренить в отроке нравственные начала, основанные на религии. Эти семена пали на добрую почву.[3]

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[1]Used by M. Budagov as the epigraph to his obituary-tribute to Lt-General I.I. Oreus, *Pamyati Ivana Ivanovicha Oreusa (1830-1909)*, SPb., 1910.

[2]Henceforth, to avoid confusion, we will denote I.I. Oreus senior by his military rank, Lt-General. For details of his successful military career, appointment as head of the military-historical archive and numerous publications in *Es* and historical journals, see Budagov or, alternatively, *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 532-34.

[3]"Ivan Konevskoy. Svedeniya o ego zhizni", *Sip*, pp. vii-viii.

With gentle pride the Lt-General found clear testimony of this successful inculcation of belief in his son in the uncompromising probity and 'chasteness' of body and soul that characterized him to the *end* of his short life.

The old man explicitly expressed his conviction that his account was accurate on sending a draft to Bryusov, who had requested that he write it, on 13 October 1901:

Посылаю вам при сем, многоуважаемый В.Я., согласно желанию вашему, краткую биографию Ив. Коневского. Мне кажется, что она изложена достаточно сжато и объективно. А впрочем - со стороны виднее. *За одно ручаюсь: от правды ни одну йоту не отступлено.*[4]

The fact that the Lt-General sent back an almost entirely unaltered proof to Bryusov two years later, just prior to the publication of *Stikhi i proza* in December 1903, further suggests the soundness of this conviction. Bryusov, who had not only known Vanya Oreus, but also the 'Decadent' poet Ivan Konevskoy, did not, however, share the Lt-General's confidence in his account's complete veracity.

The nature of Bryusov's reservations was in fact only to emerge fully in his final reflections on Konevskoy written for S.A. Vengerov in 1917. For, with the exception of one or two passages in the account that he simply could not leave unaltered on publishing *Stikhi i proza*,[5] he respected the old man's sensibilities, leaving his version of events unchallenged in his lifetime. However, given the opportunity to turn to the subject of Ivan Konevskoy anew after the Lt-General's death in 1909, ever the *littérateur*, Bryusov felt it incumbent upon him to expose the 'gulf' of understanding which the father himself

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[4] *Ln* 98 (i), p. 539.

[5] Bryusov reveals in his essay for Vengerov that he had been obliged to make editorial changes to the account in 1904 in order to preserve its essential veracity from the Lt-General's own occasional unintentional tendentiousness, the fruit of his fundamental inability to appreciate the subtleties of his son's *artistic* life:

В этом очерке старик откровенно сознается, что, разбирая библиотеку сына, после его смерти, был «изумлен разносторонней начитанностью юноши», и добавляет: «великими мыслителями и великими художниками сложены были в его душу и в его ум великие богатства. Но этим семенам не суждено было возрасти в полной мере и дать свой плод» (*да и то, сколько помнится, слова «в полной мере» вставлены редактором издания*).
(Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 154. Italics mine.)

The publication of the Lt-General's correspondence with Bryusov further proves that he was not wholly uncritical of the biography at the time he received it. Bryusov made an essential alteration to the tone of supplementary information included at his request in the Lt-General's letter of 20 October 1901, from which he excluded the text italicized in the passage cited below:

С свойственной юности самонадеянностью он пытался разрешать трудно - или вовсе неразрешимые вопросы; *конечто, на первых же шагах осекался, становился в тупик* и, при цельности его природы, при отвращении к всяким компромиссам, терзался такою неопределенностью.
(*Ln* 98 (i), p. 541. Cf. *Sip*, p. viii).

had in fact acknowledged existed between him and his poet son.[6] Indeed, the essay for Vengerov was significantly extended to incorporate a biographical element which was evidently written in part to redress specific misconceptions informing the content of its predecessor.

This 'reassessment' was in no sense overtly 'hostile'. It was not Bryusov's intention to discredit the earlier biography (requested, of course, by himself) directly or in its totality. The fact that he recognized that it was rich in the kind of insight and detail that only the last remaining member of the poet's immediate family could impart is clear in the extent to which he himself referred to the information it contained. Moreover, he did not question the Lt-General's sincerity, commending the liberal attitude that he adopted to his son's unconventional ideas and gently patronizing him for his earnest, yet abortive, attempts to understand them. Yet Bryusov also employed specific aspects of the account to prove that the Lt-General's impression of his son was, if not factually inaccurate, then seriously compromised by his ignorance of the beliefs underlying Konevskoy's outward conduct. Obviously focusing upon precisely those passages concerning upbringing which were of paramount importance to the Lt-General, Bryusov unequivocally shattered any sense of continuity, divorcing father and son, dislocating the burgeoning poet from the beliefs inculcated in him in childhood. The Lt-General's sketch was written from the hopeful perspective of one who could not see that this *poet's* credo was the *antithesis* of his values:

> В последний гимназический или первый студенческий год Коневского - обнаруживалась, и как-то внезапно, выросшая пропасть между ним и отцом. Старик Ореус рассказывал об этом (уже по смерти сына) с большой кротостью и явно уменьшая значение события, но все же чувствовалось, что то было крайне тяжелое для отца открытие <...> Старик видел, что добрый, правдивый, влечатлительный мальчик превращался в скромного, застенчивого и целомудренного юношу, и думал, что сынь развивается вполне согласно с надеждами отца... Какая-то случайность, какой-то пустой разговор сразу открыл старику глаза на действительность. Перед ним был юноша, правда, застенчивый и целомудренный, но впитавший в себя и мрачную поэзию «Цветов Зла», и утонченный яд Данте Габриэля Россетти, и безнадежный скептицизм Жюля Лафорга, и остроту переживаний Кнута Гамсуна, - сотни вещей, старику совершенно чуждых и, во многом, непонятных.[7]

Bryusov continues to specify Oreus' trips abroad of 1897 and 1898 as the watershed of these two antithetical periods in his life, stressing the totality of the generational schism that ensued:

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[6]Most notably in his letter to Bryusov of 29 September 1901: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 536.
[7]Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 153.

Эти две поездки положили грань между прежним мальчиком-Ваней, жившим душа в душу со стариком отцом, и самостоятельным юношей Иваном Коневским, поэтом-«декадентом» <...> *подлинной внутренней близости между стариком и юношей уже не было.*[8]

Thus, in attempting to establish the degree to which Oreus' childhood influenced his subsequent development, we are confronted by two contradictory accounts, the authors of both convinced of their verity, one of which emphasizes constancy and continuity, the other - antithetical rift. Which is to be considered correct? How can this apparent contradiction be resolved?

II

In addressing these questions we find that Bryusov's case *does* seem to be more immediately credible. Bryusov could not only confidently refer to the Lt-General's own confession that he felt alienated from the literary side of his son's life, but also to extensive 'documentary evidence'. Indeed, the case for schism could be construed as finding incontrovertible expression in a letter written in 1897, for example, precisely the time Bryusov perceived as demarcating Oreus' 'conversion'. This letter to Oreus' friend and correspondent on philosophical matters, A.M.Veselov, was included among materials given to the researcher N.L. Stepanov by N.Ya. Bryusova, and we can thus safely assume that it was originally in her brother's possession.[9] In the letter Oreus explicitly announces a divergence from former interests and a new direction in his thought:

Мне кажется, что весь наш образ мыслей разошелся в двух довольно далеких друг от друга направлениях. Ты весь отдался проникновению в дух христианской любви, сосредоточился на усвоении личности Христа. Про себя же могу сказать, что в пору моего непосредственного общения с тобой я гораздо более тревожился нравственными задачами этого рода и думал о воспитании в себе духа самоотречения. Теперь же все более проникаюсь некоторым равнодушием к этим борьбам души.[10]

However, does even such a seemingly categorical statement necessarily completely invalidate the Lt-General's insistence on the continued relevance of early influences? Is it

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[8]Ibid., p. 154. My italics.

[9]These materials were deposited in turn by Stepanov in TsGALI in 1970 and now comprise **f.259, opis' 3** (see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 488 and "predislovie k opisi No. 3" in catalogue of **f.259**).

[10]Letter of 22 November 1897: *Pis'ma <...> Veselovu*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed. khr. 19, l. 1.** A.M. Veselov, to whom Oreus dedicated "Svyatoy knyaz' Boris" in the cycle "Obrazy Nesterova" (*Mid*, p. 16/*Sip*, p. 4), attended school with Oreus. He appears to have moved to Kiev in late 1896 occasioning a lively correspondence, the dates of which Oreus listed: *Z.k. No. 4*, **op. 1, ed.khr. 17, l. 60**. Sadly only two of these letters, rich in philosophical reflection, survive.

not conceivable that such a statement might not in fact confirm the case against childhood influence as emphatically as it appears to do when it is considered in terms of the *general* development of ideas of which it is *symptomatic*? Indeed, once the legitimate question of *context* is raised, the possible inadequacy of *both* views on the influence of Oreus' upbringing must be mooted. Might it not be that both contain an *element* of truth regarding Ivan Ivanovich Oreus' nature while neither defines the essential truth? Certainly both perspectives are problematic in their *specificity*.

The Lt-General, unable to appreciate the profundities of his son's literary-philosophical endeavours and thus to understand the metaphysical bases which underlay them, naturally stressed those readily identifiable qualities in his conduct which appeared to be consonant with his religious upbringing.[11]

Polemic occasions extremes, and in Bryusov's posthumous 'tug of war' with the *specific* impression of Oreus given by the Lt-General it certainly seems that he succumbed to the image of "Ivan Konevskoy" as an exclusively literary entity. Bryusov understood his principal task to lie in proving that Oreus had precipitately negated *Christian morality*. In attempting to rectify the Lt-General's account, he thus denied the influence of Oreus *religious* upbringing *altogether*. He failed to examine in any depth the implications of this 'conversion' in terms of the *overall* development of the poet's metaphysics, merely filling the 'vacuum' that it left in its wake with the names Baudelaire, Laforgue, Rossetti and Hamsun which were rich in 'Decadent' associations and supposedly sufficient explanation in themselves.

However, in the same article for Vengerov, as we know, Bryusov himself felt compelled to note the distinction between the Muscovites' credo of art for art's sake and Oreus' *mysticism*, regardless of certain common 'Decadent' influences. Ironically Bryusov himself therefore indirectly drew attention to the fact that *individual interpretation* of such influences is paramount in establishing identity. Moreover, in the concluding sections of the appraisal of 1917 Bryusov also attributed Konevskoy's development to the assimilation and adaptation of formal philosophical influences, not, of course, the direct absorption of a Laforgue, Baudelaire or Rossetti. This, in turn, would suggest that Oreus *interpreted* these poets analytically and critically, from a specific metaphysical perspective. Bryusov's *own* references to the metaphysical sources and mystical dimension underlying Oreus' poetry clearly do not entirely accord with the *exclusively* literary names that he elected to

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[11]It was thus that he derived both consolation and support for his view of his son from the letter of commiseration sent to him by N.M. Sokolov, much of which he in turn transcribed for Bryusov's benefit as testimony to that side of the deceased's character which he suspected would be unfamiliar to this essentially literary acquaintance. See *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 534-535.

cite for deliberate and maximum *effect* in his endeavour to stress what he perceived as the true depth of 'Vanya's' generational schism from his father's values.

That Bryusov used the *general associations* of such names and thus at this crucial moment in his essay for Vengerov we in fact lose sight of *Oreus* as an individual personality seems indicative of an overwhelming urge to respond to the father's ideal vision of his son, rather than to ascertain the actual influence of the father, perhaps reflected indirectly, on the son himself. For the fact that Oreus senior did not understand the full implications of his *own* influence on his son is not proof in itself that such influence did not exist. Indeed, the view that influence is not always directly apparent has an interesting precedent in Vl. Gippius' analysis of A.M. Dobrolyubov's development.

Significantly, despite his intimacy with Dobrolyubov, Gippius only discerned the seminal importance of the poet's father in shaping his personality and conduct retrospectively, this influence being manifested obliquely:

Теперь я понимаю, что первое, неотразимое на всю жизнь впечатление произвел на Добролюбова его отец.[12]

Dobrolyubov's father died prematurely exhausted by devotion to his work in government service, which he perceived as *'krest'yanskoe delo'* - a legitimate channel to express his radical emancipatory 60's ideals. It was Gippius' thesis that being only *embryonic*, this man's influence on his son - the ideals and maximalist dedication he engendered in him prior to an early and profoundly disturbing death - found *inverted* expression in Dobrolyubov's espousal of Decadence. The father's non-conformist vision of social liberty, denied any possibility of fruition in the contemporary context, was reflected in a distorted fashion in the son's own fascination with the ultimate 'emancipation', transcending all life's limitations - death. It is a central theme in Dobrolyubov's *Natura Naturans. Natura Naturata* (1895) which significantly opens with a dedication to his father. In Gippius' view the maximalism that Dobrolyubov inherited from his father also typified his subsequent conversion from aestheticism, emerging more overtly in his expiatory wanderings among the people:

Его лицо <...> стало, действительно, подобно «лику», как говорили о нем, но в то же время как стало оно похоже на лицо его отца! В его общем выражении появился покой не сознания, но той ясной воли, которой Добролюбову дано было достигнуть. Стихия отцовского влияния, стихия 60-х годов, глубочайший нравственный идеал, свойственный существу его и который он вывернул в эстетизм, вернулся к нему и победил. Декадент стал религиозным сектантом, ушел в народ проповедником божьим.[13]

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[12]Gippius V.V., "A. Dobrolyubov", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. 1, pp. 274-5. Italics mine.
[13]Ibid., pp. 286-7.

Gippius' examination of potential paternal influence on the dynamics of Dobrolyubov's Decadence and subsequent incarnations certainly throws valuable light on the evolution of this idiosyncratic figure.[14] Although the specific circumstances of Oreus' upbringing are wholly dissimilar, there are parallels with his assimilation of his father's essential religious ideals and values which, while he profoundly modified and reconstituted them, remained a constant factor and reference point in determining his development. Indeed, as this section of the thesis will show, *both* the Lt-General and Bryusov failed to appreciate that although a gulf did open between the views of father and son, even the distinctions that came to 'alienate' them had their origin in Oreus' attempts to justify in modernity the general *metaphysical* perspective on life which had been inculcated in him as a child. In fact, in many respects the seeds sown then did indeed fall upon highly receptive ground. The integrity of Oreus' deportment was neither simply the conscientious propriety of one instructed in Christian morality nor a fragile veneer beneath which Decadent 'poisons' worked a subtle spell. The *general* nature of Oreus' elastic, ever-evolving metaphysics had its foundations in the *faith* which distinguished his father in the modern context. It is to a brief examination of this faith that we must turn first in our exploration of its influence.

III

A number of commentators, including Bryusov, mistakenly identified the "son of the sun" in Oreus' sonnet, "Rost i otrada" (the first in the cycle "Syn solntsa"), with the poet himself:

> В полуязыческой он рос семье
> И с детства свято чтил устав природы.
> Не принял веры в ранние он годы:
> К нам выплыл он пытателем в ладье.[15]

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[14]As J.D. Grossman has also recognized. See her "Aleksandr Dobroljubov: The making of a Decadent" in *Aleksandr Dobrolyubov. Sochineniya*, p. 10.

[15]*Mid*, p. 36/*Sip*, p. 15. For an example of Bryusov's reference to this text, see *Sip*, p. xii. The elemental *syn solntsa* of the cycle was in fact its dedicatee, Aleksandr Bilibin, not Oreus (a fact that is corroborated by his brief discussion of the poems in *Stikhotvornaya lirika*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 55-56**. For Oreus' friendship with the Bilibin brothers in brief, see *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 183). Oreus actually juxtaposes himself with the *syn solntsa*, most particularly in the tellingly entitled "Starres Ich" (*Mid*, p. 39/*Sip*, p.17).

Oreus, by contrast, was actually open to the influence of his father's profound spirituality in his formative years, to a quality of which M.Budagov observes:

Такая высокая духовная красота, конечно, не могла оставаться без влияния на окружающих.[16]

Indeed, Budagov continues to cite the testimony of others who knew the deceased in order to illustrate the pervasiveness of this influence:

Вот что писал Ивану Ивановичу один из друзей - К.А.П., уже семидесятидвухлетний старик, по поводу писем, полученных от него еще в пятидесятых годах прошлого столетия: « <...> Вспомнилась мне невозвратная юность наша; вспомнил я, как глубоко врезались святые мысли твои в мою душу, какое спасительное, благотворное влияние имела твоя вера и твои нравственные воззрения на меня - пылкого, далеко не подготовленного к серьезным мыслям юношу. Я всегда сознавал и теперь, семидесятидвухлетним стариком, на склоне земной жизни, потверждаю, что ты, дорогой друг и брат мой, вложил в меня основы веры, добра и правды.[17]

Budagov then turns to the more impressionistic account of a younger acquaintance of the deceased which also conveys the depth of his spiritual feeling and the extent to which it transmitted itself to others:

С этими строками интересно сопоставить слова одного из младших современников покойного, <...> доктора В.А.Г.: «Погружаюсь в воспоминания об Иване Ивановиче, как будто, в знойный день, входишь в бор: отрадно обвевает тебя нежная прохлада, сладко убаюкивает глубокая тишина, полная невидимою, но ощутительною жизнью. Не наглядишься на окружающую красоту - в переливах красок под яркими лучами солнца и в таинственной тени. И мысли и чувства полны высокого, не передаваемого умиления...[18]

Details of the specific nature of the Lt-General's faith are more sketchy, but sufficient to build a picture of the way in which it would also inform his son's perspective on life and development as a poet of *positive* thought.

The most fundamental principle of the Lt-General's faith is succinctly expressed in the following excerpt from his letter to Bryusov of 29 August 1901, which immediately reminds us of the basic premise that we discerned in his son's *Stikhotvornaya lirika*:

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[16]Budagov, M., *Pamyati Ivana Ivanovicha Oreusa (1830-1909)*, p. 11.
[17]Ibid., pp. 11-12. K.A.P.: it is highly probable that these are the initials of Kronid Aleksandrovich Panaev (1830- ?) (see *Rodoslovnyy sbornik russkikh dvoryanskikh familiy*, SPb., 1887, izd. A.S. Suvorina, Vol. II, p. 244) to whom Oreus dedicated an initial variant of his poem "Zhertva vechernyaya" (as noted by N.M. Sokolov in his annotated *Mid*: **Gbl, f.386, kniga 858, l. 4 ob.**). The Oreus and Panaev families enjoyed almost familial relations. Indeed, the seminal role that Ippolit Aleksandrovich Panaev (1822-1901) would in turn play in determining the younger Oreus' interest in the dynamics of faith, echoing the Lt-General's influence on his brother, Kronid Aleksandrovich, will be examined in Chapter Seven of the present work.
[18]Budagov, *Pamyati Ivana Ivanovicha Oreusa (1830-1909)*, p. 12.

Блаженны те, которых Господь подкрепляет верою, и глубокого сожаления достойны те, которые лишены этого. *Весь смысл жизни утрачивается, и не остается ничего, кроме отчаяния.*[19]

In the Lt-General's Easter greeting to Bryusov of the following year he expanded upon this basic formulation of the human condition:

На радостное приветствие ваше, уважаемый Валерий Яковлевич, спешу ответить другим, столь же радостным: «Воистину воскрес!». В этих двух приветствиях должны заключаться для христианина и вера в личное бессмертие, и сладкая надежда на свидание с теми, которые, по неисповедимым путям Божиим, были отняты от нас.[20]

These simply expressed thoughts remind us of the degree to which Christianity, anthropocentric, focuses upon the life of the *individual personality*. It is central to modern thinking conditioned by Christian culture, whether confirmatory or critical, from Kant to Nietzsche. The Lt-General, moreover, indicates the natural corollary of such an emphasis upon the individual: the importance for Christian faith of the question of *individual immortality*. That he himself profoundly believed in the integrity of the personality after death is expressed in a personal poem-tribute inspired by the portrait of a dead friend which is written with the compelling simplicity of conviction that his son unquestionably absorbed:

Знакомые и милые черты
Передо мной предстали, как живые.
Да, женщина святая, это ты:
Твои уста и очи дорогие.
Как в зеркале прозрачном и немом,
Ее душа в них ясно отразилась,
И светлая мечта о времени былом
В моем уме зашевелилась...
Пред памятью твоей колени преклоня,
Еще носясь в житейских треволеньях,
Взываю я к тебе: о, помяни меня
В твоих ко Господу моленьях!
31 декабря 1892г.[21]

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[19]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 534. Italics mine.
[20]Ibid., p. 544.
[21]Budagov, *Pamyati Ivana Ivanovicha Oreusa (1830-1909)*, p. 9. The Lt-General's own composition of poetry complemented a general interest in art and literature which unquestionably informed his son's literary disposition. As Budagov notes:

Не менее живо интересовался Иван Иванович литературою и вообще искусством. Писателей он ценил, большею частью, прежних; обладая огромной начитанностью, знал наизусть много стихов и охотно читал своим проникновенным голосом лучшие произведения. Сам очень

Another poem which attests the Lt-General's belief in the life of the spirit of January 1903, written when the old man was solitary and bowed by bereavement, is also interesting in terms of its lexicon and motifs which are symptomatic of the influence he exercised on his deceased son's genesis as a *poet*:

Бобыль без племени и рода,
Дряхлея телом год от года,
Невольно мысль мою порой
Переношу я в мир иной -

В те горние, святые дали,
Где нет болезни ни печали,
Куда так много душ родных
Давно ушло от бед земных, -

И к ним душа моя стремится,
Пока есть жизнь в моей крови...
О, если б всем нам снова слиться
На лоне Божией Любви![22]

The deep faith in individual integrity and the immortality of the personality that the Lt-General embodied had obvious implications for his son, who was also acutely aware of the determinism and scepticism of modernity. However, Oreus' aspiration to vindicate these aspects of faith, indicated in his condemnatory analysis of the modern view of man in *Stikhotvornaya lirika*, arguably does not yet describe the *full* extent of the influence his father's example had upon him. Though it was deeply spiritual, it is evident that the Lt-General's faith was far from *life-denying*. It did not extol the 'life to come' to the detriment of the present life. Even in the second poem cited above, which Budagov informs us exemplifies the acute grief and loneliness experienced by the Lt-General after the loss of his son, he projects himself into a future existence amid celestial vistas *involuntarily*. He did not unconditionally deny the material element in man; he rejected and strove against its

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недурной поэт, он глубоко ценил русские народные песни, с большим вкусом и пониманием напевал и их и другие музыкальные произведения в тесном семейном кругу. (Ibid., p. 7)

That Oreus admired his father's poetry and was thus receptive to its content is clear from an anecdote which Budagov introduces to illustrate the Lt-General's sense of humour:

Было бы ошибочно думать, что покойный был чужд юмора <...> Сын, восхищаясь стихами отца, сравнил его однажды с Пушкиным. «Что ты!» ответил И.И.: «перед ним я - разве только *Пистолеткин*!» Это дало повод одному из близких друзей их семьи, М.С.Л., сказать юному Ване Ореусу, тогда еще гимназисту, следующий экспромт:

Читай, брат, Пушкина, читай!
А *Пистолеткина* всем сердцем почитай! (Ibid., p. 10)

[22]Budagov, *Pamyati Ivana Ivanovicha Oreusa (1830-1909)*, p. 14.

disproportionate *primacy*. Lived on these terms material life is a precious thing, wholly in accord with man's innate spirituality. Indeed, that the Lt-General conceived of a spiritual and material harmony is apparent in the otherwise paradoxical note that he appended to his son's notebook account of his exploits and impressions on visiting the All-Russian Exhibition in Nizhniy Novgorod in 1896. On noting the characteristically meticulous accounts drawn up at the conclusion of this excursion, Oreus senior gently chided his son, exhorting him not to have too solicitous a regard for money:

> Вспомни пиво, квас, фр. воды; Врубеля 2 раза; нищих и т.п. и тогда увидишь, что все тревоги твои напрасны и лишних денег не тратил. Вспомни Волгу, Оку, Нижний, кремль, откос и ты забудешь о тех презренных бумажках, истраченных на путешествие; вспомни величавую Москву с ее кремлем и бульварами и ты унесешься далеко от дохлого, серого Питера в центр России, в столь исторические места, где, поистине можно считать человечество жило и переживало, как грустные, так и высоко блаженные минуты. Стремись, сын мой, как можно дальше уходить от земли и стремиться к высшему, не земному, а наипаче никогда не жалей денег, хотя считай их рачительно.[23]

This untroubled paean to both heaven and earth, consonant with the positive cosmology which informs Russian Orthodoxy, set Oreus an ideal standard which he could not ignore. Indeed, his primary interest in the individual was in time to branch out dialectically, increasingly qualified by the need to establish a universal ground for man that would explain the seeming dichotomy of life and death and promise an ultimate synthesis of heaven and earth. It was thus that in *Stikhotvornaya lirika* he would attack what he perceived as the most fundamental flaw of the purportedly definitive materialist world-view - its resignation in the face of the 'infinite'.

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[23] *Z.k. No. 3*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed. khr. 16, l. 45 ob. -46**. It is worth noting that this passage also indicates the probable source of an antipathy to St. Petersburg life that would find reflection in Oreus' poetry. *Z.k. No. 3* gives a day by day account of the visit to the All-Russian Exhibition which Oreus attended with the Bilibin brothers and which yielded the poem "Snaryady" (*Mid*, p. 38/S*ip*, p. 16).

CHAPTER SIX

Education:
a cultural compass in the quest for individual identity

Мы забыли, что ни история не может продолжаться, ни человек жить без чего-нибудь *абсолютного.*
V.V. Rozanov. *Sumerki prosveshcheniya.*

An unpublished poem written by Oreus in the of winter 1893-4 offers a unique insight both into the degree to which he absorbed the values of his upbringing on the one hand, and the way in which these translated into *personal* metaphysical questings on the other. In the poem Oreus crystallized his deeply critical opinion of contemporary education and its effects upon his peers:

Латынь и алгебра, история вся в датах,
Над сердцем все бесследно пролетит,
Ум закует в стальных познания латах,
Но жизни путь ничем не осветит.

И выбросит питомца в путь тот школа,
Без завещаний, нерушимых в век,
А в голове его мертво и голо,
И в нем необразован человек.

Хаос мирских хлопот и отношений
Предстанет в пестрой пляске перед ним,
Чтоб, лавируя, не терпеть крушений -
Компас, Компас ему незаменим!

Компаса нет! - А в тех предметах знания,
Которые зубрил он восемь лет -
Он ни в одном не ищет указанья,
Как в этом море устоять сует.[1]

This poem-critique of grammar school culture and curriculum undoubtedly reflects the influence of V.V. Rozanov's tract on education, *Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, which

[1] *Z.k. No. 1*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 4. l. 11-13**. My italics. These are the four opening stanzas of this work which is sketched among various conscientiously recorded observations of school life headed "*Dostoprimechatel'nye zamechaniya tovarishchey*". After a domestic education over which his father carefully presided, Oreus' attendance at the First St. Petersburg Grammar School began only in 1890 when he joined the third year directly. His experience at the school, briefly described in the Lt-General's biographical account (*Sip*, pp. v-vi) and Bryusov's "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)" (*Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 153) are personally and more fully documented in *Z.k. No. 1* where a comment by F.A. Luther (Oreus' classics teacher and subsequent friend, see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 503) succinctly distinguishes the future poet's conscientiousness from his peers' adolescent preoccupation with sex and endeavours to dupe teachers:
29 октября. Ф.А. Лютер мне: Вы сознательнее остальных относитесь к своим поступкам.
(*Z.k. No. 1*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 4, l. 4ob.**).

Oreus read attentively, transcribing passages from it, as it appeared in *Russkiy vestnik* in early 1893.[2] A brief examination of this tract will help to elucidate the relevance of Oreus' poem to the dynamics of his own development.

Rozanov's central contention in *Sumerki prosveshcheniya* is that in its aspiration to create a 'model citizen' the modern State had assumed disproportionate authority in the educational sphere. Its encroachment upon educational methods had paradoxically resulted in the creation of a sceptical generation of Paracelsian homunculi through the imposition of a curriculum which, in its uncentred relativism and textbook eclecticism, had suppressed their *cultural* identity:

> Мы бессильны, безвольны, мы робки умом, чтобы понять, как вместе того, что возвысить человека путем искуственных манипуляций, в действительности уронили его; вместо того, чтобы поддержать культуру, историю, подсекли ее под главный корень. Мы забыли, что ни история не может продолжаться, ни человек жить без чего-нибудь *абсолютного*, что или сердцем своим, или сознанием он понял бы как единственно для себя ценное. И вот, имея сами в себе лишь остатки этой крепкой веры, мы у детей своих отняли ее совершенно и заменили ее созерцанием *относительностей*. Все есть в длинном ряду этих относительностей, всякая красота заключена в нем, кроме одного - ощущения абсолютности чего-нибудь.[3]

The state system, Rozanov contends in his tract, does not possess the apparatus to inculcate such primary values. It sees those it instructs as a *tabula rasa* upon which it indiscriminately inscribes diverse and essentially meaningless information. It is this system which Oreus attacks in his poem, by implication agreeing with Rozanov's view that the *family, church and individual mentors*, profoundly cultural entities which the state system has progressively peripheralized, are best qualified to deliver seminal instruction:

> Государство, по отсутствию в нем самом живых ключей образовательного характера, должно обратиться к их отысканию в других исторических силах. Семья, церковь, ученые, наконец, единичные личности с особым, ярким призванием к воспитанию - вот все, чем оно обладает, что более его сведуще в темном мире законов образования человеческой души, что *его собственных целей может достигнуть лучше*, нежели оно само <...> при самых напряженных усилиях достигнуть их.[4]

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[2]See *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 1, l. 98-103**. It is worth noting here that Rozanov's influence on Oreus is principally discernible in the early 1890's, *prior* to this thinker's 'association' with Modernism, which would emerge in the latter years of that decade. Indeed, it was apparently precisely as a result of Rozanov's later affiliation with the *Mir iskusstva* circle that Oreus felt compelled to express a less than unreservedly favourable opinion of him in 1901 (see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 529).

[3]Rozanov, V.V., *Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. XXI, p. 86. My italics. A note of 3 December 1893 in *Z.k. No. 1* is of interest in this connection:

В.А. Гильтебрант мне: «Все в мире познается сравнительно». (**f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 4, l. 10 ob.**)

[4]*Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. XII, p. 45. Oreus' transcription: *Kniga materialov, Chast' I*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 1, l. 101**. That Oreus was particulary engaged by Rozanov's thesis that family and church should be central to the primary inculcation of cultural identity is also evident in his extensive transcriptions from chp. VI of the tract which concerned the detrimental effect of the state system on the educational capacities of these two bodies (Ibid., **l. 98-99**).

The subjects of Oreus' poem are, however, not only shown to be devoid of primary values, but also as floundering in their *personal* journeys along the 'path of life' as a result of this. Here Oreus reflects the second aspect of Rozanov's thesis: that if a value system is to have genuine cultural depth then the educational process must maximize its engagement and development of the *individual personality*:

Тот мир отзвуков, которые каждая душа в меру даров своих дает в ответ на каждое ощущение, - мир, всегда неизмеримо превосходящий бедное в содержании своем ощущение, - был <...> при системе учащенных, через час чередующихся впечатлений стерт, сведен к небытию, погиб даже, не проросши из семени. И между тем именно в этих вздутиях души, только ожидающих извне прикосновения, чтобы дать трещину и обнаружить свое содержание, и скрываются до времени и невидимо ее крылья, освободить которые из сдерживающей оболочки, укрепить и научить ими управлять есть вся задача воспитания. Но здесь мы тотчас переходим к необходимости в нем *индивидуальности*: на одно и то же впечатление всякая отдельная душа ответит разно, и именно в меру того содержания, которое с ней послано в мир.[5]

Indeed, in another passage with which Oreus appears to have closely identified, Rozanov proceeds to prescribe the kind of intensive, yet highly personalized educational process which he saw as the bedrock of new, dynamic cultural enlightenment, essential to one setting out upon the "path of life":

Свобода, прихотливая изменчивость форм, теснота внутреннего общения, всегда личного, никогда общего; впечатления, тянущиеся, непрерываемые, ложащиеся друг возле друга, повинуясь родству своему, а не удобству совмещения во времени, наконец, «избранный учитель и свободно избравший его ученик» в непринужденной беседе, никуда не торопящейся, - не это ли рассвет просвещения, новая юность его, которая возможна, которая ожидает нас?[6]

I

Oreus' above-cited poem-critique, a commentary on the absence of identity and ideal in his peers, was therefore written from the perspective of one who closely related to Rozanov's thesis that other forces, lying outside the immediate sphere of formal education, are of paramount importance in the development of integral cultured personality. A note of 16 August 1896 in which Oreus carefully recorded his conversation with a new acquaintance, S.P. Semenov, certainly further corroborates this view:

Рассказывал о том, что он в своей жизни писал в гимназии - мало, больше, *подобно мне*, много собственных мыслей вкладывал в гимназические сочинения, потом *con amore* писал небольшие статьи по истории («О происхождении Руси» «Иоанн Грозный» «Главные факторы русской истории»).[7]

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[5]*Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. III, p. 13. My italics. Transcription: *Kniga materialov, Chast' I*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 1, l. 98**.

[6]*Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. IX, p. 27. Transcription: *Kniga materialov, Chast' I*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 1, l. 99**.

[7]*Z.k. No. 3*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 16, l. 9 ob. -10**. Italics mine. For details regarding S.P. Semenov, see *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 182 and *Ln* 98 (i), p. 535.

Oreus, like Semenov, wrote essays on historical themes for his own edification, for example, an incomplete work, *Kharakteristika istorika-khudozhnika* (1895).[8] This interest in history undoubtedly reflects the influence that his father's profession exerted on him. His encyclopaedic dictionary devoted to a fictional culture, 'Rosamuntiya', is probably further indicative of an inclination to emulate the Lt-General's extensive contributions to the Brokhaus and Efron *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'*.[9] Oreus' school testimonial, which stresses his initiative in the study of philology, is also symptomatic of the independent stance fostered in him by his upbringing.[10]

The Lt-General's own biographical account also attests, of course, that his son's education was informed by a personality with a profound interest in his personal upbringing and, in particular, the *religious* values instilled in him. However, it appears that the Lt-General not only inculcated fundamental ideals in his son, but also satisfied Rozanov's demand for an *individualized* education which would maximize the conscious, free and creative evolution of cultural identity *within* the individual. The Lt-General also indulged his son's personal freedom to negotiate the 'path of life' of his poem. It was a mixture of qualities in the relationship between father and son that is intimated in Bryusov's diary record of meeting the Lt-General in 1902:

> Еще после был у Ореуса. Там же был Дьяконов и С.П. Семенов. Показывали тетради юношеские Коневского. *О нем с детства заботились и дар его лелеяли. Говорили в общеконсервативном тоне <...> Отец многие из бумаг Вани переписывал сам (и прежде, при его жизни), при этом Ваня очень спорил против малейшей перемены.*[11]

Bryusov also mentions the freedom granted to Oreus in his article "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)".[12] In that account, however, although Bryusov does state that Oreus' development was encouraged by his father's liberal indulgence of his voracious reading, in arguing that its paradoxical result was a profound *deviation* from the Lt-

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[8]This work will be examined more closely in Chapter Seven.

[9]*Kratkie svedeniya o velikhikh lyudyakh <...> Rosamuntii XIX veka (v vide slovarya). 1893*: **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 3**. This incomplete work certainly indicates Oreus' encyclopaedic eye for detail, incorporating a directory for the fictional state's capital, "Vanchukovsk", a historical chronicle, musical and theatrical programmes, advertisements for the works of various fictitious scholars redolent of those in the *tolstye zhurnaly*. The index of prominent personages (statesmen, scientists, artists, etc.) which Oreus drew up suggests that he intended to use this 'dictionary' as a creative means to collect, collate and rationalize a complex variety of human knowledge and experience in order to become master of his own intellectual domain. Certainly the two entries he made stray beyond their fictional context, discussing real issues (for example, realist literature) and people (Zola, Swedenborg). For other details regarding the 'dictionary', including its scrupulously slavonicized lexicon and an early variant of the name Konevskoy in the index, see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 500.

[10]See *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 182.

[11]Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 116. Bryusov refers to N.G. D'yakonov, Oreus' uncle, who was particularly close to him (see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 547).

[12]See Bryusov, "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, Vol. III, bk. viii, p. 152-4.

General's ideals, he is inclined to stress the surprise and distress occasioned by the process that the old man himself sanctioned. However, Bryusov's own above-cited diary entry suggests that the Lt-General was perhaps better acquainted with the processes of that development than he allows in his later article for Vengerov. Certainly Oreus' apparent tendency to read to his father and uncle (and thus presumably to share and discuss his views with them), is exemplified in a note of 26 August 1896:

Вслух отцу читал вечером «Литературные заметки» А.Л. Волынского о «Философских течениях в русской поэзии» и о Тютчеве и критические заметки его на стихотворения Фофанова <...> Потом читал вслух дяде Коле и отцу рассказ О. Соловьевой «La Beata».[13]

Oreus' reading of A.L. Volynsky's critical writings, in particular his critique of Vl. Solov'ev's essay on F. Tyutchev in P.P. Pertsov's *Filosofskie techeniya v russkoy poezii*, was to play a pivotal role in his individual development. Indeed, although such evidence of an exchange of ideas between Oreus and his father does not necessarily discount the view that the Lt-General was disappointed by his son's pursuits, it does perhaps suggest that the *future poet* was less conscious of a 'rift' than Bryusov suggests, perceiving his interests to accord with the ideals initially instilled in him by his upbringing.

II

Certainly, then, Oreus' poem reveals that he considered himself to have a distinct cultural identity and yet also the same licence to 'search' that the Lt-General sanctioned in his letter to Bryusov of 28 October 1902 regarding A.L. Miropol'sky-Lang's *Lestvitsa*, which was dedicated to his son:

Конечно, книга эта не про меня писана,- что обусловливается самым заглавием ее предисловия «ко всем, кто ищет». Для меня, 72-летнего старца, уже миновал период всяких исканий и порывов; *но это отнюдь не значит, что я отношусь к ним отрицательно: они - в природе человека, еще не утомленного жизнью.* Результаты их - в руке Божией.[14]

However, the imagery of *Latyn' i algebra, istoriya vsya v datakh* not only gives us insights into the general dynamics of Oreus' development; it also indicates what he found in the early stages of his passage along the "path of life". In "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)" Bryusov identified Oreus' discovery and consumption of the writings of Rossetti, Baudelaire and Laforgue as typifying the nature of the rift developing between father and son. However, *Latyn' i algebra* shows that that process of divergence and the burgeoning of an individual perspective began significantly earlier, germinating

[13] *Z.k. No. 3*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 16, l. 23**.
[14] *Ln* 98 (i), p. 545.

from *within* Oreus' adherence to the Christian faith paternally fostered in him. Precisely by virtue of his 'free' education, Oreus had encountered *materialist* views in the early 1890's that challenged his father's faith far more radically and directly than the writers Bryusov identifies as precipitating 'schism' in 1896-7. It was reaction to this materialist credo within the terms of the Christian ideal that initiated the dialectical process which found expression in the poetry of the mature Konevskoy. Indeed, Oreus' later, sympathetic reading of the writers Bryusov lists was also only possible as a result of, and *incidental* to, this underlying process of metaphysical development that was the ultimate legacy of paternal influence.

That this was the case becomes clearer if we turn again to the influences of Oreus' poem. In *Sumerki prosveshcheniya* Rozanov emphasized *Christianity* as an educational force on account of its capacity to stimulate dynamic, individual *moral* development, in contrast to 'new culture' of empirical fact:

> Человеку, так заблуждавшемуся в путях истории, так затрудненному, христианство, как мудрая и молчаливая дева, дает только светильник, ничего не говоря об опасностях и трудностях пути, какие его ожидают. Тот иной мир, к которому мы переходим, - мир точного знания, новой культуры - похож на болтливого, но забывчивого человека, который на вопрос заблудившегося о предстоящем пути точно и обстоятельно описывает окрестности, говорит в каких направдениях и далеко ли лежат камни и рытвины, но затем оставляет его в темноте, полагаясь на его память.[15]

The contrast between Christianity and scientific enquiry here is clearly echoed in Oreus' poem-critique with its image of a "path" unilluminated by a grammar school education that thrusts its charges out upon it ill-prepared, armed with factual knowledge, yet ignorant of "ever inviolable testaments".

The "compass" which the travellers of Oreus' poem lacked indicates an influence other than that of Rozanov. On the page facing *Latyn' i algebra*, among reflections on the Christian ideal of moral self-perfection Oreus referred himself to the afterword of L.N. Tolstoy's novella, *Kreytserovaya sonata*.[16] Significantly, in that afterword the foremost Russian proponent of innate human morality in the determinist age had argued that as a traveller follows his *compass*, the true Christian pursues an eternally unattainable *moral ideal*.[17]

Both these allusions in Oreus' poem indicate that in his own individual journey along the cultural "path of life" he had moved beyond immediate faith and taken up the

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[15]Rozanov, V.V., *Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. XII, pp. 43-44.

[16]*Z.k. No.1*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.4, l.14.**

[17]SeeTolstoy, L.N., *Pol. sob. soch.*, Vol. 27, pp. 84-85. It should be noted that at this time, in addition to Tolstoy's *Kreytserovaya sonata*, Oreus attentively read and extensively transcribed two of his most philosophically oriented tracts in which he challenged scientific hegemony and professed his rational faith. *Tak chto zhe nam nado delat'?* and *O zhizni*. See *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l. 159-161, 181-184, 187-195** and *Kniga materialov. Chast' II*, **f.259,op.1, ed.khr.5, l. 110-111, 161.**

cause of *moral idealism* against materialist hegemony. It was a cause to which Oreus was personally introduced by the neo-Kantian, Ippolit Aleksandrovich Panaev.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Kantian influence: the primacy of individual self-perfection

Мысль человека, управляемая чистою любовью, вооруженная чистым долгом, повинующаяся нравственному закону, *побеждает чувственный мир.*

I.A. Panaev. *Raziskateli istiny.*

In early 1896 Oreus broadly catalogued his reading since 1893 under categories which suggest that the vindication of faith which we have identified as the basis for his development was well under way:

> Бог
> <...>
> Душа и ее бессмертие
> <...>
> Мысли, утвердившие во мне уверенность в силе молитвы
> <...>
> Мыслители, разрушившие для меня материализм и утвердившие во мне уверенность в бессмертии души.[1]

Significantly, under each of these headings the names 'Kant' or 'Panaev' (Ippolit Aleksandrovich Panaev, 1822-1901) appear first.

Relations between the Panaev and Oreus families were close. S.A. Panaeva, Ippolit Aleksandrovich's wife, was Oreus' godmother; together with his father he was a guest at the Panaev's Mikhailovskoe estate in Novgorod district during the summer months. That this was the case was undoubtedly determined to an extent by a social and cultural ethos common to both families. Panaev's writings reveal one who profoundly sympathized with the residual Christian faith that the Lt-General upheld. Confronting modern man with death, for example, in a tone not uncharacteristic of the Lt-General, Panaev exclaimed:

> О, как в эти тяжелые минуты должны вы завидовать вдохновенному концу тех великих мучеников, которые, пригвожденные на крестах, объятые пламенем зажженных под ними костров, с неизъяснимым блаженством устремляли свой светлый, доверчивый взор туда, куда их неотразимо тянуло, - туда, где они убеждены были, что их ждут... Покидая чувственный мир они жалели только о своих преследователях, об остающихся в этом мире...[2]

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[1]In exercise books containing miscellaneous materials: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 4, l. 13-14**. Oreus also credited I.A. Panaev as introducing him to Kant and Fichte in another list of 1897, in which he charted his growing knowledge of a variety of philosophies: *Z.k. No.4*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.17, l.59**.

[2]Panaev, I.A., "Posleslovie sostavitelya", *Raziskateli istiny*, Vol.II, p.12. Panaev wrote a number of books on philosophical themes (see *Es*, vol.22a, p.682). *Raziskateli istiny* was the work with which Oreus was undoubtedly acquainted and which exercised an appreciable influence upon him. He transcribed two passages from Panaev's book. The first was a translation from the Dutch philosopher Franz Hemsterhuis, in which all historical manifestations of atheism were invalidated, that Panaev chose to conclude the main text of his work (*Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l.27-28**). The

Panaev also exhorted his reader to escape the city, clearly sharing the Lt-General's disdain for the modern life of the capital:

Взойдите в пантеоны природы, в поля и луга, в леса и горы.

Какая разница с городами! Какое здесь неискуственное величие, какая таинственная и многоговорящая тишина, какая чистота! Здесь и в смерти мы видим жизнь; у вас же в городах и в жизни не - сама жизнь, а - театральное представление не то трагедии, не то водевиля, под названием: «Жизнь».[3]

Yet, as the context in which these views find expression would suggest, inspite of their underlying consonance with the lt-General's world-view, they were not unqualified. *Raziskateli istiny*, the book by Panaev which we have cited, was dedicated principally to the popularization of *German idealism*. Indeed, a chance acquaintance with idealism had in fact been crucial to resolving the profound personal *doubt* which the seemingly incontrovertible conclusions of materialism had engendered in Panaev.

I.A. Panaev's cousin was I.I. Panaev (1812-1860), who co-edited the journal *Sovremennik* together with N.A. Nekrasov. Ippolit Aleksandrovich was responsible for the journal's financial affairs from 1856 to its closure in 1866. Thus, paradoxically, he was closely acquainted with the literary-philosophical milieu surrounding *Sovremennik* precisely at the time it disassociated itself from its former liberal tendency and became progressively radicalized, its tone dictated by Chernyshevsky, Pisarev and N.A. Dobrolyubov. Significantly, while Ippolit Aleksandrovich was evidently content to preside over its accounts for his relative and Nekrasov, a personal friend, he discontinued contributing to the journal after its rupture with the liberal writers in its fold and he assiduously avoided attending the weekly meetings arranged by its radical fraternity. Yet, clearly it was impossible for Panaev not to absorb the ideology that the journal championed - in particular its promotion of materialist thought as the theoretical justification for social change.[4]

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second, which was drawn from the "posleslovie", was an excerpt from Fichte concerned with the importance of moral example (ibid, **I.119-20**). Panaev's identification with the Lt-General's faith seems to find further corroboration in the above-cited letter which we attributed to K.A. Panaev, Ippolit Aleksandrovich's brother. See, Chapter Five, p. 73.

It is worth noting here that Oreus was to explore the nature of martrydom in his early cycle "Obrazy Nesterova" (I. Svyatoy knyaz' Boris. II. Velikomuchenitsa Varvara: *Mid.*, pp. 16-19/*Sip.*, pp. 4-7).

[3]Ibid., p.22. Cf. the Lt-General's note to his son cited in Chapter Five, p. 76.

[4]For an impression of I.A. Panaev's role at *Sovremennik*, see his reminiscences of N.A. Nekrasov in *N.A. Nekrasov v vospominaniyakh sovremennikov*, M., 1971, pp. 191-203 (also published in *Ln* 49-50, pp.536-546) where it is noted that he personally contributed to the journal from 1849-54. For the formal nature of his relations with its more radical contributors, see N.A. Dobrolyubov's perfunctory correspondence with him in *Ln* 25-26, pp. 261-269. Further interesting information regarding I.A. Panaev's literary connections is given in the reminiscences of his younger brother, V.A. Panaev (1824-1899). These provide a vivid account of the Petersburg literary society to which the brothers were introduced by their cousin while students of engineering at the Institute of Communications in the late 1830's (*D.V. Grigorovich: Literaturnye vospominaniya. Prilozheniya iz "vospominaniy" V.A. Panaeva*, M.,

As a result of his immediate exposure to these ideas, unlike the Lt-General Panaev could confidently advocate faith only in the wake of his formulating an idiosyncratic *neo-Kantian* philosophical position. Indeed, it was in all probability with his former 'colleagues' at *Sovremennik* in mind that, describing his sense of rejuvenation on reading Kant and Fichte in the introduction to *Raziskateli istiny*, he wrote:

> ...я почувствовал себя нравственно преображенным (*вы улыбнетесь, может быть, читатель*), - да, я точно почувствовал себя нравственно преображенным. Значение прошедшего, настоящего и будущего окрасилось для меня другим цветом; оценка им сделана была уже другая. Я взглянул вокруг себя, взглянул с улыбкой уже не безотрадно старческой, а с улыбкой спокойного доверия <...> я взбирался на спекулятивные высоты... *И насмешливый читатель* вероятно уже готов сказать: «взбирался на эти высоты и потерялся в непроницаемых туманах спекуляции». - Нет, отвечу я: я не потерялся нисколько, а там только я и нашелся.[5]

I

In the first instance Panaev recognized in Kantian critical idealism a means to liberate modern man from the determinist yoke imposed upon the individual by materialism. He considered that Kant's essential contention that all knowledge of reality is contingent upon the mental constitution of the subject was fatal to the absolute authority popularly claimed for materialist doctrine. Indeed, it was thus that, in the personal message that he appended as an afterword to *Raziskateli istiny*, he addressed the teachers of his time in a manner which undoubtedly gives us further insights into Oreus' readiness to identify with V.V. Rozanov's views on education:

> Ученые и наставники! не говорите, прямо или косвенно, молодым людям, что единственное поприще их есть чувственный мир; не говорите, что сами они - суть не что иное, как одни из

1987). It contains portraits of I.I. Panaev, Kol'tsov, Belinsky, Nekrasov, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Grigorovich and Fet among others. It is highly probable that the Panaevs' connections with, and insights into, these literary figures contributed to Oreus' strong sense of 'tradition', his reading informed by a sense of personal proximity to Russian literary life. Certainly his views on Nekrasov, a close friend of the Panaevs, were those of one who defied the popular image of the poet: see his letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of June 1900: **f.259, op.3, ed.khr. 17, l. 15**.

To illustrate the possible importance of such personal impressions in determining Oreus' consistently 'tradition-suffused' position within the milieu of early Russian Modernism, it is worth introducing a diary entry made by Bryusov in March 1899 which shows that, by contrast, although he was undoubtedly interested in previous generations of writers, he personally felt them to be extremely remote:

> Был еще у Бартенева. О, живой архив! *Мертвецы* для нас, - Аксаков, Хомяков, Вяземский, Тютчев, - это все для него знакомые, приятели, или, по крайней мере, современники. Если бы записывать все, что он говорит, - были бы богатейшие материалы.

(Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p.63. My italics. P.T. Bartenev (1829-1911) was a historian and early Pushkinist who published and edited the journal *Russkiy archiv* that employed Bryusov in the early 1900's.)

[5]Panaev, "Predislovie", *Raziskateli istiny*, vol.I, pp. viii-x. Italics mine.

безчисленного количества малых колес всеобщего механизма природы, что они присущностно - рабы необходимости; не говорите того, чего вы не знаете и чего доказать не можете. Наука не может произнести решающего приговора в вопросе о значении жизни и бытия вообще, и никогда не выведет законов для того, что стоит вне законов составляемых человеческим разумением. Не выдавайте же *мнения* за положительное знание, и не усиливайтесь объяснять *сверх-естественное* или сверх-чувственное - *естественным* образом.[6]

Panaev's new confidence in the face of materialism did not, of course, derive solely from *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), in which Kant nullified conventional metaphysical proofs for the existence of God, immortality and the freedom of will established on the basis of 'theoretical reason'. For *positive* arguments against materialism Panaev turned to *The Critique of Practical Reason* (1786) where Kant did allow that religious knowledge of the transcendent is accessible to us as postulates of *autonomous moral consciousness*.

Panaev placed his total trust in this 'rationalist faith', considering it to be the final arbiter in the great debate over the human condition. He understood the unique moral dimension identified in man by Kant to be a quality extricating the individual from the deterministic machinery of the materialist hypothesis. It allowed the individual to transcend that element in himself governed by material necessity - his generic animality. Its postulates confirmed the individual's freedom of will and reassured him of his personal immortality and the existence of a benign divinity.

It was thus that moral consciousness was pivotal to the statement of renewal with which Panaev opened *Raziskateli istiny*:

Все более и более приходил я к тому убеждению, что *я* - человек, составляя часть чувственной природы, в то же время *могу* стать выше ее. Я освободился от того приниженного, рабского состояния, от состояния существа, неизбежно подчиненного необходимости. Я сознал, что необходимость есть закон природы и есть, стало быть, закон и для меня в том, в чем я составляю часть природы; но в том, в чем я стою выше природы, она, необходимость, для меня не закон. Я сознавал, что явление природы - смерть в том, в чем я выше природы, для меня не угроза; что настоящая, истинная жизнь есть не чувственное стремление к достижению наилучших условий комфортабельности в чувственном мире, а - неугасающее, вечное, нелогибающее стремление к истине, стремление переступающее смерть. Я понял, наконец, что я не колесо механизма, а свободный работник.

Все это я передумал и перечувствовал, когда на меня повеяло *нравственною свободой*.[7]

This moral freedom underlay the new sense of ontological certainty that Panaev felt, faced by the "path of life":

Дойдя до такого состояния духа, человек может сказать:

«Я не боюсь смерти; не ропщу безполезно на прожитую, в незнании истинного пути, жизнь. Я знаю, теперь, настоящее направление остающегося мне пути. По этому направлению я буду стараться непременно идти. Приняв твердо такое намерение, стараясь добросовестно

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[6]Panaev, I.A., "Posleslovie sostavitelya", *Raziskateli istiny*, Vol.II, p.9.
[7]Panaev, "Predislovie", *Raziskateli istiny*, vol.I, p.ix. Italics concluding citation mine.

выполнять его, я уже этим самым делаю шаг в другой жизни, в той жизни, в которую надеюсь перейти.

«На смерть я смотрю как на феноменальное событие, как на расставание с чувственным миром, а не как на конец истинной полной жизни. Я понимаю, что Бог есть Бог живых, а не Бог мертвых».[8]

The *overall* corollary of Panaev's subscription to rationalist ethics was his overwhelming emphasis upon a process of individual *self-transcendence* which would lucidly show that materialism was not only epistemologically suspect, but also a gross truncation of human potentiality. Indeed, it was from this position that he continued to censure those who traded in materialist doctrine:

Не принижайте значения человека, отнимая у него нравственную свободу и указывая, основываясь на ваших *ученых* выводах, с усмешкою на закон чувственной природы, на закон необходимости: вы этим освобождаете его (человека) от его обязанностей. Некоторые из вас дают понимать или прямо говорят, «чувственный мир - вот единственная арена человеческой деятельности» <...> человек, по вашему, раб; он должен думать, согласно с *вашей* наукой, что он раб необходимости, а такая мысль не может не влиять на характер его деятельности.[9]

By contrast Panaev exhorted his readers to attain the moral ideal that is man's true prerogative - the moral freedom of the enlightened individual:

Один человек, как *мое я* бесконечно прогрессирующееся, призван выработать Божию идею существа мыслящего и нравственного, выработать ее постоянным старанием совершенствовать себя и других <...> Расположение к добру должно развиваться в постоянное и в бесконечное стремление к осуществлению Божией идеи мыслящего и нравственно свободного *моего я*, как в самом себе, так и в своих братьях.[10]

Significantly, in Panaev's interpretation of Kantian ethics this infinite process of individual self-perfection ultimately accorded with the suppression and extirpation of those qualities in the phenomenal self governed by external necessity:

Мысль человека, управляемая чистою любовью, вооруженная чистым долгом, повинующаяся нравственному закону, *побеждает чувственный мир*.[11]

Panaev maintained that the less consideration the individual allows sensual being in determining his actions, the closer his approximation to the realization of the postulates of rational faith - the morally free self and the immortality of the individual personality. *Self-abnegation* in the service of others, consonant with *unconditional*

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[8]Ibid., pp.xi-xii.
[9]Panaev, I.A., "Posleslovie sostavitelya", *Raziskateli istiny*, Vol.II, pp.10-11.
[10]Ibid., p.72.
[11]Ibid., p.78.

Christian love, was the logical objective of this *ascetic* process of self-perfection through which the true identity of the individual is realizable:

Умрет сознание чувственного мира, умрет чувственный субъект, но не умрет личность *моего я*. установившаяся не чувственными объектами, а повиновением чистой любви. Сознание такого *моего я* уцелеет и тогда, когда бы и весь чувственный мир, с его субъектами и объектами, разрушился и уничтожился <...> *Самоотрицание уничтожает личность чувственную и воздвигает личность бессмертную.*[12]

II

In the introduction to *Raziskateli istiny*, having recounted how his discovery of German idealism had engendered a sense of personal renaissance in him, Panaev stated:

После всего, что мною сказано выше, понятно, что во мне родилось горячее желание, перешедшее вскоре в настоятельную обязанность, способствовать ознакомлению с уломинаемыми философами других незнакомых с ними, - способствовать этому в надежде, что найдутся люди, которые, прочитав мою книгу, захотят продолжать чтение философов в более серьёзных изложениях. Вследствие этого очень может быть, что они придут в такое же утешительное состояние духа, в какое приведен был чтением я, а в таком состоянии, независимо от чувства собственного ощущаемого им довольства, сделают много полезного и хорошего для других.[13]

Panaev certainly encouraged Oreus to read. On the opening page of his *Kniga materialov. Chast' I* Oreus stated the object of this compendium of excerpts from diverse sources which he began to compile in the winter of 1892-3:

В эту книгу я записываю все, что в читаемом поражает меня. Поэтому я сюда записываю не только те мысли, которые мне симпатичны, но все вообще мысли, которые мне кажутся замечательными, оригинальными, достойными запоминания, иногда - хотя бы для того, чтобы впоследствии их отвергнуть, как главный оплот мнений, которым я не сочувствую. Вообще, эта книга не даром названа мною «книгою материалов». Я не раз воспользуюсь записанными в ней замечательнейшими человеческими мыслями для обсуждения их в будущих моих сочинениях.[14]

He then added:

Начата по совету Ипполита Александровича Панаева.[15]

Panaev's acute consciousness of the *relative* position of his essentially conservative values within the modern intellectual arena and the need to vindicate them in its terms clearly made an impression upon Oreus. This is further exemplified by his essay of 1893-4, *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, the earliest extant statement of conviction to result from the

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[12]Ibid., p.77. Italics mine.
[13]Panaev, "Predislovie", *Raziskateli istiny*, vol.I, p.xii-xiii.
[14]*Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l.1** (cited in part in *Ln* 92 (iv), pp. 184-5).
[15]Ibid.

reading which Panaev advised.[16] The overall spirit of the essay is encapsulated in its definition of the "ideal":

Идеал есть, - с одной стороны, - представление о такой форме человеческой жизни, в основе которой лежало бы начало, в полном своем виде небывалое еще в истории этой жизни, следовательно, о такой, которая - есть нечто отдельное от всякой, как прошедшей так и настоящей формы жизни, и наконец, по понятиям идеалистов, <...> нечто «возвышающееся» в нравственном отношении над всеми предшествовавшими ей формами жизни; но, - с другой стороны, - идеал есть непременно представление, коренящееся в современных условиях человеческой жизни и условиях человеческой жизни за все прошедшее время, следовательно, - представление не беспочвенное и не отрицательное, а такое, у которого задатки для развития и рождения лежат, заключаются в известных проявлениях человеческого духа, а именно: в таких, которые идеализм по той или другой основательной причине решил считать за невещественные (духовные) и нравственные (т.е. согласные с правилами нравственности).[17]

Here, prompted by Panaev, was an early expression of that need to reconcile man's past and present as a moral and spiritual force in future synthesis which we identified as typifying Oreus' broad development in our analysis of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* and discerned in essence in *Latyn' i algebra, istoriya vsya v datakh.*

However, the above definition of the ideal also intimates that the gentle proselytism of Panaev's *Raziskateli istiny* had a more specific influence upon Oreus at the time he wrote *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*.

Oreus introduces his essay with a quotation from I.S. Turgenev's lecture on Hamlet and Don Quixote which he finds exemplifies the terms in which the modern problem is typically phrased. Turgenev contrasted Hamlet, in his view the epitome of the *thinking* individual and thus of the *sceptic*, with Don Quixote, a paradigm of the *faith* underlying his often ludicrous *actions*. This perceived schism between thought and action, scepticism and faith, prompted Turgenev to ask:

Неужели же надо быть безумцем, чтобы верить в истину? И неужели же ум, овладевший собою, по тому самому лишается всей своей силы?[18]

This question posed, Oreus proceeds to paraphrase a poem by S.Ya. Nadson which is representative of the contemporary generation's enactment of the extremes identified by Turgenev:

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[16]**f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2**. Marked "begun 27 August 1893, at school" and "written in the course of winter 1893-1894", the full title of the work, which is the draft of a second variant, is *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi. Nekotorye razmyshleniya.* It is worth noting that, although "begun at school", the essay is a clear example of the extra-curricula pursuits that Oreus undertook in common with S.P. Semenov. See above, Chapter Six.

[17]*Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l.13**.

[18]*Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l.2**. Oreus cites part of the passage which he transcribed from Turgenev's *Gamlet i Don-Kikhot* (1860) into his *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l.169-170**.

Такие люди <...> клеймят элемент мысли вообще, говоря: «Наше поколение не знает юности, потому что оно не размахивается широко и необдуманно, руководимое естественным, природным, свежим чувством, а все подвергает разложению мысли, оно - холодно - расчетливо; оно дряхлеет чуть не с колыбели. Итак долой думу, долой - мысль. Загоритесь взоры, развернитесь крылья, закипи порывом, молодая грудь. Борись, сыпь удары направо и налево, руководись необдуманными, не охлажденными мыслью, но горячими, мощными порывами любви к человечеству.»[19]

Oreus resolves this apparent dichotomy of thought and action by reasserting their *interrelationship* in a way that demonstrates that he now felt confident to reject the widely accepted definitive status of materialist doctrine in the name of faith.

Having noted that swings from 'Hamletism' to 'Quixotism' end inevitably in the failure typified by Nadson's own untimely death, Oreus contends that the folly of the age is its inability to understand that *all* action should ideally derive from thought. The common failure to understand and effect this unity of thought and action stems from the erroneous belief that 'thought' is automatically to be equated with materialist epistemology and, as such, paralyzingly sceptical.

The generation which Nadson describes, Oreus maintains, is in fact 'sick' in thought as a result of its exposure to materialism:

Несчастные больные, повергнутые в уныние от разных популярных, ходячих идей всевозможной лжефилософии, которые прельщали их своей простотой, безхитростностью, прямолинейностью, и, казалось, могли объяснить все самым резким, отрицательным, безотрадным, но как-будто и замечательно легким и понятным образом.[20]

Indeed, in a manner which echoes Panaev's censure of irresponsible teachers and mentors, Oreus deplores the pretensions of those who trade in contemporary scientific opinion to the ultimate detriment of impressionable minds:

Разинут рот разные молодые люди и сперва воскликнут: «Ах, какой умный, какой глубокомысленный человек! Ведь он одним словом так обрежет все философские теории о самых важных отвлеченных вопросах, что уж дальше никто не может пойти. Что и говорит последнее слово науки!» Но Боже! Какое безотрадное, какое безнадежное последнее слово! И те же молодые люди, может быть, на несколько минут даже очарованные резкой и блестящей парадоксальностью философского софизма, горько заплачут и предадутся мыслимо самоубийстве при полном сознании безотрадности возведенного ими в высший цвет мысли учения. - Он отравлен, «размах их первых сил и расцвет их первых чувств».[21]

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[19]*Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l.3**. Oreus paraphrases Nadson's "Nashe pokolenie yunosti ne znaet" (1884), from which he also derived the title of his essay.

[20]Ibid., **l.5 ob**.

[21]Ibid., **l.6 ob**. One of the sources of *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, Heine's *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, is a more specific indication of Panaev's influence on Oreus' newly adopted stance. It was precisely this work that had introduced Panaev himself to German idealism: see "Predislovie sostavitelya", *Raziskateli istiny*, vol.I, pp.v-vi.

Oreus maintains that it is imperative that modern man now challenges this materialist hegemony over thought and rediscovers the 'true, healthy philosophy' which invests action with meaning rather than defining it negatively as a pointless, directionless excess of irrational energy or sentiment, such as Nadson's unreasoned proclamation of 'universal love'. Oreus claims that the very strength and credibility of this philosophy lie precisely in its discovery and admission that questions of the highest order will in fact never be fully accessible to the true source of cognition - the rational intellect, nor explicable in terms of pure reason. Yet, although it thus dismisses any materialist claim to offer an absolute definition of reality, this philosophy is, on the other hand, alone able to satisfy man's need for ontological security. It alone restores credence in the Christian metaphysics which materialism has condemned as a tired shibboleth. This 'true philosophy' that Oreus advocates as a remedy for the 'sick in thought' is of course Kant's subjective idealism and ethics:

Никто не написал такую даже черезчур безпощадную критику способностей нашего разума, как великий, строгий Кант, всю восьмидесятилетнюю жизнь свою потрудившийся над вопросами высшей философии.

Да, но, тем не менее, кто примкнет к такому благому мировоззрению, почувствует несравненно больший душевный мир, чем последователь резкой, всеразрешающей философии.

И вот почему: в том самом, что философия из которого оно вытекает признает слабость свойств своего разума для некоторых высших вопросов, как-то, прежде всего, вопрос о существовании Божием (что так блистательно доказал Кант в своей «Критике чистого разума»), и, с другой стороны, в том обстоятельстве, что вопросы, тоже первостепенной, основной важности, но более близкие и доступные человеческому пониманию, она разъясняет, хотя и не до тонкости, но в высшей степени утешительно и удовлетворительно для лучших светлейших потребностей духовной натуры человека, - лежит какой-то залог доверия всякого хорошего человека к такого рода философии; в этом какой-то признак и указание на то, что она находится на благом, правом пути; что она, а не какой другой теряющиийся во мраке философский путь, приведет мыслящего к той великой лучезарной цели, - познания всех первоначальных истин, в рарешение которых он углублялся; что на ее пределе разгорается перед нами тот неземной, непорочный, пока ослепительный для наших очей свет, к которому мы бредем в земных сумерках. Да, он чуть-чуть брезжится уже перед нами, когда мы стоим на пути здравой философии.[22]

Being the fruit of *moral* consciousness this philosophy of rational faith certainly confers action with meaning:

И не забудем, о не забудем, что она (filosofia) еще во все время своего спутничества преподает нам, в связи с отвлеченными теоретическими истинами - постепенным раскрыванием конечных идеалов человеческой думы, чистейшие идеалы дела, жизненной деятельности, всего нашего поведения, идеалы нравственности.[23]

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[22]*Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l. 7-8**.
[23]Ibid., **l. 8**.

It was thus that, in Panaev's wake, Oreus also invested his faith in a moral *process* of *individual self-transcendence* which he perceived as freeing man from the shackle of determinism and the finality of death:

Все, что прославляемая нами философия делает для человека сводится к указанию ему таких граней совершенства, которые лежали бы вне земного. Природные склонности человека, приковывающие его к мирскому веществу, к плоти, к праху она не утверждает, не узаконяет, так сказать; нет, она вырывает, высвобождает его из тысячи цепей, уз, нитей, которыми его опутала вещественная природа, которые стремятся погрузить его в нее, неразрывно связать, объединить его с ней. Напротив, лучшие свойства его духовной природы она питает в нем; им она старается открыть светлый исход, когда эти задатки обратятся в могучие порывы, так и силящиеся вырваться из своих земных оболочек и цепей, и которые так часто, неутоленные, извращенные в своем движении, бессмысленно погибают, если им не будет открыт этот правильный, светлый исход.[24]

III

Duma, serdtse i razmakhi, with its Panaev-inspired neo-Kantianism, is a key to understanding Oreus' first endeavours to resolve the modern crisis of faith. It certainly helps us to put the fragmentary pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of Oreus' development that survive from the period preceding 1896 firmly in place. Notes for Oreus' unfinished essay on histiography, *Kharakteristika istorika-khudozhnika*, complement the neo-Kantian views of *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, for example, exhibiting just how inextricably interbound he perceived Christianity, idealist ethics and the attainment of *individuality* to be up to early 1895:

Борьба личности со обществом, массой или деспотизмом.
Древний мир - личность подавлена государственным обществом <...> Одна всепоглощающая цель: могущество и благосостояние государства <...> Вообще: человеческой личности еще не существует, а существуют граждане отдельных государств.

Весь этот строй жизни ближе к типу животных обществ: пчелиного улея, муравейника и.т.л.

Перелом производит христианство.

Христианство кладет начало индивидуализма: каждый человек представляется личностью, ответственной только перед Богом за свои поступки, <...> зарождается понятие совести - первый оплот и в то же время, можно сказать, священное неотъемлемое достояние личности. Закон любви к ближнему, всякому человеку, поглощающий в себе все остальные нравственные правила; закон вечный и пригодный для всех времен и веков, носящий в себе самом условия неокончаемого обновления и прогресса, ибо он впервые указывает на совершенство, как на цель всей его деятельности. Вообще, впервые появляются недостижимые, удаленные в бесконечность идеалы, самые живучие и благотворные. Вообще - личность стремится выйти из рамок своего существа.[25]

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[24]Ibid., **l. 10**.

[25]*Materialy i nabroski soderzhaniya k sochineniyu 'Kharakteristika istorika-khudozhnika'*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.11, l.74**. Oreus worked on these sketches during the early months of 1895. See **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 2**.

These notes for *Kharakteristika istorika-khudozhnika* in turn allow us to confirm that it was precisely the Kantian-inspired vision of the ideal, ethically fulfilled individual that underlay Oreus' allusions to Rozanov and Tolstoy in the imagery of *Latyn' i algebra, istoriya vsya v datakh*. Indeed, the notes certainly accord very closely with the concluding passages of Rozanov's *Sumerki prosveshcheniya* which emphasize the *particular* relevance of the *individual* ideal in the contemporary age:

В христианском обществе, в противоположность древнему языческому, каждый единичный человек уже не есть только гражданин. Слитность, единство лица его, которое в античном мире безраздельно выражалось в государстве и удовлетворялось совершенно принадлежностью к нему, в новом мире не находит удовлетворения в одной и той же принадлежности, и, оставаясь гражданином, каждый хочет вне этого и независимо от этого быть еще христианином, отцом, наконец - мыслителем или художником. Человек сделался сложен; и было бы глубочайшим поворотом его от христианства вновь к язычеству, если бы он захотел снова простоты и слитности в себе, если бы чему-нибудь одному в своем сложении он допустил распространиться до целого, до поглощения всего себя.

Это открывает нам исторический смысл явления, которое в значение его для человека, для индивидуума мы пытались объяснить выше. Переход воспитания из лона семьи и церкви к государству не без причины совпал с началом прошедшего века и началом нынешнего: это была эпоха, когда вообще европейское человечество, как утомленное христианством, стало медленно сходить с основ его, чтобы переступить на новые, языческие <...> *Но это не прежнее мощное язычество Рима; это новое маленькое язычество перед своим «я», в стороне от больших путей истории и даже с возможным забвением об этих путях.*[26]

It is worth introducing the concluding stanzas of *Latyn' i algebra* here as they mirror Rozanov's critique of contemporary youth in the above passage:

В них есть пробел и роковой и странный [,]
Науки жизни нет в них и следа [.]
.....
Часть большая - груба и мыслию тупая.
Их взгляд на жизнь в то время уж созрел [-]
Сложился он у них в шестом иль пятом классе [,]
Взаимодействие товарищеских сил
Жизнь дало этой пестрой, дикой массе [,]
И гимназист тот взгляд в груди носил.

Труд - баррьер, мученье, необходимое зло.
Безделье, наслаждение [-] цель, идеал [-]
То отвращение к жизни трудовой [.]
Да, - от труда ловчее увернуться,
Жить на достатках, оградившись от труда,
Вот чем весь должен жизни бой замкнуться [,]
Весь ум и хитрость должно класть туда!

Вот то желание, что в большинстве горело,

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[26]Rozanov, *Sumerki prosveshcheniya*, chp. XXII, pp.89-90. It is worth noting that one essential feature of Oreus' projected essay on the "historian-artist" - a comparative evaluation of 'artistic' and 'scientific' histiographies - was possibly intended to elaborate the concerns voiced in a comparison of original, non-scientific historical texts and rationalized textbook history that Rozanov made in *Sumerki prosveshcheniya* (chp.X) where the latter was judged to be culturally and educationally sterile.

Когда учебная тянулась канитель,
Желание, что наконец созрело
До взгляда прочного на жизни цель.[27]

The notes inspired by the afterword of Tolstoy's *Kreytserovaya sonata* which Oreus made on the page facing the above verses of *Latyn' i algebra* further confirm that Oreus considered the ethical ideal of individual self-perfection to be the means to combat this modern malaise:

Высшая перед всеми прочими религиозными учениями спасительность и благотворность христианского учения, поистине бесконечная и неисчерпаемая, открывается в том, что оно одно обусловливает непрерывный и бесконечный нравственный прогресс, рост, движение вперед человечества, происходящий от бесконечного и вечно неудовлетворенного стремления к идеалу нравственно(го) совершенства, поставленного нам Христом, как единственное руководство нашего нравственного поведения, вечной погони за ним.[28]

Now that we have defined the nature of Oreus' early position, it is necessary to ask just how long Oreus would pursue the neo-Kantian ethical ideal and in precisely what circumstances he would change direction. For, as his letter to A.M. Veselov of November 1897 suggests, was it not this moral struggle that he would abandon in time?

Теперь же все более проникаюсь некоторым равнодушием к этим борьбам души.[29]

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[27]*Z.k. No.1*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.4, l.11 ob - 13**.
[28]*Z.k. No. 1*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.4, l. 14 ob.**
[29]*Pis'ma <...> Veselovu*: **f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 19, l. 1**. This quotation is the concluding sentence of the passage from this letter cited above, p.69.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Dostoevskian influence: the demand for *objective* faith

Да, я это утверждал. Нет добродетели, если нет бессмертия.

Ivan Karamazov. *Brat'ya Karamazovy*.

In the preceding three chapters we have attempted to establish that from its inception Oreus' development was a *positive* process of religious-philosophical definition which was *unjustifiably* dismissed or obscured by contemporary criticism. In the present chapter we will proceed to trace the dialectical divergence of this process from its emphasis on the moral consciousness of the individual into the sphere of metaphysics. For, indeed, this seemingly contradictory departure from an ethics-centred accommodation of faith, which Bryusov evidently took as his basis for asserting a rift between Oreus and his father, had its justification in the *same* process. Any sense of paradox that this claim might occasion will fade when we have more fully established how it was in fact no sudden conversion to 'Decadence' which prompted Oreus' departure from ethical interests, but the work of another writer seeking answers to the modern dilemma in the dynamics of faith. Indeed, it was arguably precisely because Oreus was made *more* aware of the exacting demands of his father's faith by this writer's work that it exercised the influence upon him that it did. The writer was one of those whom we met in our analysis of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*: F.M. Dostoevsky.

I

Oreus was well aware of the centrality of the free, empowered individual in Dostoevsky's world-view. The *earliest* record of Oreus' reading Dostoevsky is a transcription from his *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniyakh* in which he juxtaposed Western individualism with true, positive individuality:

Что же, скажете вы мне, надо быть безличностью, чтоб быть счастливым? Разве в безличности спасение? Напротив, напротив, говорю я, не только не надо быть безличностью, но именно надо стать личностью, даже гораздо в высочайшей степени, чем та, которая теперь определилась на западе. Поймите меня: самовольное, совершенно сознательное и никем не принужденное самоложертвование всего себя в пользу всех есть, по-моему, признак высочайшего развития личности, высочайшего ее могущества, высочайшего самообладания, высочайшей свободы собственной воли <...> Сильно развитая личность, вполне уверенная в своем праве быть личностью, уже не имеющая за себя никакого страха, ничего не может и сделать другого из своей личности, то есть никакого более употребления, как отдать ее всю всем, чтоб и другие

все были точно такими же самоправными и счастливыми личностями. *Это закон природы: к этому тянет нормально человека.*[1]

There is much here that might initially seem to accord with the individuality through self-abnegation which I.A. Panaev advocated on the basis of Kantian ethics. However, as the final sentence of the above passage perhaps most succinctly intimates, there were in fact crucial distinctions between Dostoevsky's vision of individuality and that of Panaev as Oreus would come to see. Panaev's overriding concern with *defending* his faith from the materialist theory of knowledge had precipitated an espousal of Kantian *critical* idealism which essentially limited his attempted vindication to the sphere of ethics. His advocation of self-abnegation was therefore founded in the abstract terms of the "categorical imperative". Dostoevsky's faith, on the contrary, was not constricted within these parameters, although he too was engrossed by materialist thought. His faith, stronger than Panaev's, was centred in an *intuition* of positive universality which he contrasted with what he perceived to be the patent inadequacies of the materialist claim to describe reality definitively. This faith positively incorporated *objective reality* and Dostoevsky understood self-abnegation in its terms. For him it was not an end in itself, but the natural order of things in a potentially perfect objective universe. It was the statement of this Dostoevskian faith in *Brat'ya Karamazovy* that prompted Oreus to explore the challenge that it represented to his rational faith.[2]

Oreus included Ivan Karamazov's name in a list of favourite fictional characters of winter 1897-98,[3] a choice which reflected the seemingly paradoxical fact that it was Ivan who had guided him in his exploration of Dostoevskian faith. In a novel of which one of the central themes is the distinction between unqualified faith in life and the need for a formal definition of life's *meaning*, the starets Zosima's vision is presented in appropriately simple terms. Proportionately the sections of the novel devoted to Zosima are concise. Although they are pivotal taken in the context of the work as an integral whole, in terms of plot development, the action of the novel, they seem initially to constitute an extended digression, unintegrated and static, even peripheral. Indeed, Zosima's discourses and sermons derive their poignancy and, more importantly, *justification* from the dynamics of the Karamazov drama occurring in the foreground of the novel. In Ivan Karamazov, the seeker for meaning, Dostoevsky embodied a devil's advocate whose very questions were designed to emphasize the essential value of the faith

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[1]Dostoevsky, F.M., *Pol. sob. soch.*, Vol. 5, p. 79. Transcription: *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 1, l. 35-7**. The transcription is undated. However, *Zimnie zametki* is not listed in Oreus' main catalogue of materials read begun in mid 1894 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6**). As *Kniga materialov* was begun during winter 1892-3, he must have read the work in the interim.

[2]Oreus read *Brat'ya Karamazovy* in late 1894: *Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.6, l.1**.

[3]In *Miscellaneous materials*, **f.259, op.3, ed.khr.4, l.77 ob.-78**. Published in part in *Ln* 92 (iv), p.184.

embodied in Zosima and the negative implications of *all* alternatives to its *absolute* affirmation.[4]

It was in one of Ivan's critical sallies against faith that Oreus' 'conversion' from Kant's critical idealism and ethics arguably found its basic impetus. Attempting to sully the credibility of Ivan's formulation of a theocratic jurisdiction, the liberal progressive Miusov relates an anecdote to 'unmask' his sceptical opponent:

Не далее как дней пять тому назад, в одном здешнем, по преимуществу дамском, обществе он торжественно заявил в споре, *что на всей земле нет решительно ничего такого, что бы заставляло людей любить себе подобных, что такого закона природы: чтобы человек любил человечество - не существует вовсе, и что если есть и была до сих пор любовь на земле, то не от закона естественного, а единственно потому, что люди веровали в свое бессмертие <...> ничего уже не будет безнравственного, все будет позволено* <...>

- Неужели вы действительно такого убеждения о последствиях иссякновения у людей веры в бессмертие души их? - спросил <...> старец Ивана Федоровича.

- *Да, я это утверждал. Нет добродетели, если нет бессмертия.*[5]

The interrelationship between ethics and metaphysics that Dostoevsky defined in these passages, which Oreus transcribed into his *Kniga materialov*, had obvious implications for one who considered himself to have found a complete vindication of faith in Kantian ethics and its attendant postulates. The uncompromising directness of Ivan's formulation of the problem precluded any Kantian 'half-measures'. His contention that man's subscription to an ethics of unconditional love derives its credibility and import *exclusively* from faith in the *objective* reality of immortality reversed the terms of the equation formulated by Kant and espoused by Oreus. In Dostoevsky's characteristically maximalist world the validity of ethics was dependent upon the validity of metaphysics and not *vice versa*. The force and value of Kant's 'rational faith' was clearly significantly compromised if judged from this perspective. Indeed, Oreus' subscription to an ethically *postulated* metaphysics could not hide the fact that he and the sceptical Karamazov were in fact improbable 'allies', sharing a common epistemological impediment to *objective* faith. Ivan Karamazov's categorical statement regarding ethics and immortality now compelled Oreus to realize that in order to attain *full* vindication he must either embrace absolute Dostoevskian faith or seek a *new* philosophical position

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[4]The essence of Dostoevsky's method is perhaps most succinctly and subtly captured by the theologian, G. Florovsky:

В историю русской философии Достоевский входит не потому, что он построил философскую систему, но потому, что он широко раздвинул и углубил самый метафизический опыт... <...> Достоевский больше показывает, чем доказывает.

(Florovsky, G., *Puti russkogo bogosloviya*, Paris, YMCA Press, 1937, p. 300).

[5]Dostoevsky, F.M., *Pol. sob. soch.*, Vol. 14, pp. 64-65. Transcribed in *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l.176-177**.

that would theoretically verify its direct intuition of universal integrity.

II

Not surprisingly Oreus turned again to Ippolyte Panaev's interpretation of Kantian ethics in initially attempting to respond to this challenge to the integrity of his system. This new and *failed* appeal to Panaev's neo-Kantianism is of particular interest as an indication of the direction in which Oreus' development would *have* to proceed if he aspired fully to fulfil his ideal of definitive vindication.

From 30 March - 18 August 1896, Oreus was working on a systematic answer to Ivan Karamazov's threat of justified anarchy in the absence of metaphysical faith:

> Иван Карамазов.
> Отчего не «все позволено», если даже человек отрешится от авторитета религии в деле предписания нравственного закона?[6]

This incomplete project comprises a compendium of *non*-Christian ethical systems defined in sketch form. It includes the 'utilitarian' theory that although the ego is in itself morally neutral, man's progressive formulation of a moral code has arisen through his gradual comprehension of the fact that mutuality is beneficial. It also features J.M. Guyau's (1854-1888) thesis that genuine morality is the formalized expression of an inscrutable life principle which strives towards universal solidarity and, interminably expanding and intensifying, engenders an instinctive altruism and creativity in higher forms of being.[7] More briefly examined are the aesthetic-ethical modes of being existentially conceived by Soren Kierkegaard, the botanist A.N. Beketov's study *Nravstvennost' i estestvoznanie* and the poet-thinker Sully Prudhomme's extended philosophical-ethical discourses in verse, *La Justice* and *Le Bonheur*. Synopses of the ideas of Darwin and the historian, N.I. Kareev, were projected but not realized.[8]

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[6]*Nabroski stat'i Konevskogo Ivana Ivanovicha 'Otchego ne vse pozvoleno'*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.8**. Dated in pencil, possibly by N.M. Sokolov.

[7]Notably, in a manner further indicative of Oreus' profound preoccupation with the Karamazov drama at this time, he found support for Guyau's view that suffering as much as happiness is a corollary of this universal 'life principle' in the celebratory hymn which Dimitry Karamazov foresees himself singing in penal servitude.

For the synopsis of Guyau's ethics upon which Oreus' analysis evidently draws in part, see *Es* vol. 9a, pp. 963-64. Oreus uses quotations from Guyau included in this entry which he could not have taken from the texts in the original, having only read the French philosopher-poet's *Vers d'un philosophe* (in Dec. 1894, *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l.1**) at this time.

[8]Preparation for the work involved a summer's research which constitutes a good example of Oreus' assiduous and eclectic reading in the pursuit of his philosophical interests. The work by Beketov (A. Blok's maternal grandfather) he recorded as re-read in early summer 1895 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l. 3**). He read the entry on Kierkegaard in *ES* and works in translation, *Garmonicheskoe razvitie v*

What was the objective of Oreus' analyses of ethical systems which were formulated objectively, independent from Christian thinking? Did this exercise not perhaps indicate that he had now conceded defeat in the battle for faith and sought a self-contained ethics which would in itself constitute a credible answer to Ivan's threatened anarchy? It is difficult to define Oreus' motive for cataloguing these diverse theories with absolute certainty. However, the fact that he conducted his researches principally on I.A. Panaev's Mikhailovskoe estate in the summer of 1895 [9] allows us to contend that this bid to meet Ivan Karamazov's challenge was in fact an attempt to remain wholly consistent with his development heretofore. For Panaev had his own solution to the problem raised by Ivan Karamazov, the full meaning of which he apparently impressed upon Oreus now.

In a manner not dissimilar to that of Ivan Karamazov, in *Raziskateli istiny* Panaev considered the implications of a Godless world:

> Все, что ни делал бы человек, что бы он ни думал, не могло считаться вменяемым, и тогда никакой нравственный порядок не был бы возможен <...> Если бы чувственный мир, мир необходимости, если бы только он один действительно учил мысль, то ничего и не могло бы вменяться ей в погрешность.[10]

Panaev continued to argue, however, that a sense of moral order in man is more indubitable than the dictates of natural necessity. He substantiated this view by noting that even those who do not actively and positively subscribe to *faith in immortality* (among whom he might, of course, have listed the principle subjects of Oreus' investigations) are governed by a sense of unconditional moral duty and thus unconsciously affirm the metaphysics they deny:

> Может случиться, что неверующий в будущую жизнь все-таки стремится служить идее добра, и нередко заботится о благосостоянии потомства, трудится для благоденствия грядущих поколений. Стало быть, он поступает, действует совершенно бескорыстно. Чем же в нем возбуждаются таковые стремления? - Возбуждаются они, конечно, и не чувственными

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chelovecheskoy lichnosti esteticheskikh i eticheskikh nachal (*Sv*, 1888, Sept-Dec.) and *Aforizmy Estetika* (*Ve*, 1886, May), in July (-August?) 1895 (Ibid., **l. 3 ob.**). Sully Prudhomme's *La Justice*, *Le Bonheur*, lyrical poetry, translation and foreword to Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* were listed as read in the course of July-August (Ibid., **l. 3-4**. See also transcriptions in *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l. 93-97** and **157** and *Chast' II*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.5, l. 90-96, 104**). He was to read Darwin's *The Origin of Man* in translation later, between Sept. 1895 and Jan. 1896 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l. 7**) and transcribed excerpts from it concerning the emergence of morality in man (*Kniga materialov. Chast' II*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.5, l. 35-37** and **180**). Professor N.I. Kareev (whose lectures on Russian history Oreus would subsequently attend) possibly merited attention as the author of two works read by Oreus: *Pis'ma k uchashcheysya molodezhi o samoobrazovanii* (read Dec. 1894, *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l. 1**) and *Besedy o vyrabotke mirosozertsaniya* (July (?) 1895, Ibid., **l. 3**). It is perhaps not unimportant that Oreus was to identify unattributed Kantian motifs in the latter work (*Z.k. No.4*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.17, l.59**).

[9]See *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l. 3** and **4**.

[10]Panaev, I.A., "Posleslovie", *Raziskateli istiny*, vol.2, p.70.

интересами в настоящей жизни, и не надеждами на награду в будущей жизни. Что бы он ни говорил, в нем, с потребностью повиноваться чистому долгу, повиноваться нравственному закону, все-таки живет и чувство нравственной ответственности. *А таковое чувство влечет признавание выше всего стоящей, все связывающей и всем правящей Чистой Любви.*[11]

It seems highly probable that Oreus' projected case against Ivan's uncompromising vision of an amoral universe was intended to amplify this essential point and the *moral intuitivism* which underlay it. For, as the attribution of distinct qualities to the Divinity in the above quotation intimates, Panaev did not regard it exclusively as a postulate of practical reason - Kant's abstract theistic legislator - but the *object* of moral consciousness. Panaev, although agreeing that noumenal essence is incognizable, saw no impediment, however, to taking what he perceived to be a logical step - the assumption of the positive existence of a distinct 'noumenal domain' of which the subject as a thing-in-itself is necessarily part:

Мы говорим, что для познания нашего имеется предел. Но если имеется предел, то не может не иметься при этом двух терминов: чего-то по сю сторону предела, и чего-то по ту сторону предела. По сю сторону имеется чувственный мир в наших познаниях; по ту сторону то, чего мы не можем познать, но *что, как второй термин предела, тем не менее, не может не быть.*[12]

Panaev considered that this assertion of the objective reality of the noumenal domain gave him licence to treat the transcendental ideas apprehended in moral consciousness in equivalent terms. If our sensual perception of objects can positively be said to be the representation of a distinct "world-in-itself", why not man's innate consciousness of moral duty and the metaphysical ideas postulated on its basis? Panaev could break free from the purely ethical constructs determining the nature of Kant's theistic 'Lord Chief Justice' and conceive of the *all-unifying absolute* in the above-cited passage, with which he equated the Johannine "God is love". On this basis too he was able to argue that man's unique apprehension of ideal moral freedom was symptomatic of his supreme status in the teleological process of a 'Divine idea'. Indeed, treated as positive intuition, man's ethical experience appeared to yield the 'objective' ground for faith that Ivan Karamazov demanded.

III

Notably, however, Oreus did not complete his project to answer Ivan Karamazov's ultimatum in intuitivist terms. Even as he catalogued the non-Christian ethical systems that were to be central to this formulation, he had begun compiling

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[11]Ibid., pp.70-71. Italics mine.
[12]Ibid., p.53. Italics mine.

preliminary notes for another project to parallel certain themes in the works of Dostoevsky and *Ibsen*.[13] The central point of comparison that Oreus discerned in the two writers was a common treatment of what he termed "universal injustice" (*vsemirnaya nespravedlivost'*). This new interest marked the fact that his attention was now gripped by the second, more intractable problem that Ivan Karamazov posed for the believer - his acceptance of God, admission of faith, yet repudiation of God's world and the suffering of the innocent countenanced by the faithful - his "rebellion".

Although Oreus' planned comparison of Dostoevsky and Ibsen was also to remain essentially unrealized, reference to Ivan in preliminary critiques of Ibsen's dramas indicate that it was now the "rebellion" that principally engaged him. He found the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" to be reflected in the battle between the realist Dr. Relling and idealist Gregers Werle in *The Wild Duck*.[14] More particularly, remarking upon the *destructive* idealism of John Rosmer (*Rosmersholm*) and Halvard Solness (*The Master Builder*), he observed:

Это-то самое, против чего в душе Достоевского пробуждались такие страшные возмушения, то самое, что так ясно сознавал Иван Карамазов, восклицая, что не может терпеть, чтобы люди настоящего должны «унавоживать» для каких-то грядущих поколений будущую гармонию. [15]

Oreus had realized that although both Ibsen and Dostoevsky saw an exclusively material happiness as a denial of higher aspirations, they also recognized unqualified idealism to be a potentially *destructive* force. In this Oreus perceived a new dilemma for one attempting to vindicate faith, a dilemma of greater complexity than that posed by abstract materialism alone, for its solution precluded any exclusive appeal to *idealist* ethics, intuitivist or not. Oreus lucidly defined this dilemma - the "universal injustice" to which his sketched literary parallel referred - in identifying the central theme of Ibsen's later psychological dramas:

Он ребром выдвигает страшную дилемму: либо отдайтесь стремлению к недостижимо-высоким идеалам и откажитесь от земного счастья, либо отдайтесь земному счастью, принося ему в жертву всякие мечты о высоких идеалах. Между стремлением к нравственным идеалам и стремлением к счастью, удовлетворяющему нашей жизнерадости, идет непримиримая борьба в сердцах людей. [16]

Patently, Oreus' idealist ethical justification of faith could represent only one of the tendencies that he now considered it imperative to reconcile. Both the Kantian postulates

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[13]*Nabroski proektiruemoy v dovol'no otdalennom budushchem literaturnoy paralleli: 'Dostoevskiy i Ibsen'*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 8, l. 21**.
[14]*Nabroski stat'i ob Ibsene*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.8, l. 22**.
[15]Ibid., **l. 33 ob**. Oreus' concern that the 'past' must necessarily be sacrificed for the sake of an ideal future perhaps again reinforces the view that his own sense of filial respect was profound.
[16]Ibid., **l. 31**.

and Panaev's intuitivism hinged upon idealist deference to a transcendent 'beyond' in which all the contradictions of material being were alledgedly annulled, as a rather awkward passage from Oreus' earlier *profession de foi*, *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, reminds us:

...грани, образы совершенства, указываемые нашей философией, лежат вне земного. Но как - вне земного? Представляют ли они что-нибудь диаметрально противуположное земному бытию? Противупоставляют ли они например бытию - небытие? Нет. Они представляет, правда, нечто диаметрально противуположное вещественной стороне земного бытия; но - не духовной. Образы совершенства, по идеальной философии, суть образы ПОЛОЖИТЕЛЬНЫЕ ДУХОВНОГО совершенства, которого мы, правда, не можем себе представить в полном его виде земными очами, но зачатки, начала которого мы видим во всех наиболее высоких проявлениях души человека, будь эти проявления - великие, добрые дела и чувства, будь они - плоды долгих дум, открытия вечных истин, умозрительные открытия. - Вот они - идеалы, от которых наша философия ведет самое свое название. [17]

Ultimately the idealist ethics of *duty* to which Oreus subscribed perforce sanctioned the negation or extirpation of man's links with the phenomenal world. Moreover, although the existence of a transcendental domain was postulated or intuited by this ethics, the nature of its interrelationship with the sensible world was considered essentially incognizable. Consequently the universal context and the function of individual suffering in that world could not be *positively* identified or justified in exclusively idealist terms. Faced by Ivan Karamazov's rebellion against "universal injustice", Oreus could no longer accept this conception of things without qualification.

IV

Panaev's moral intuitivism was therefore ultimately incapable of quelling Ivan Karamazov's "rebellion", the implications of which Oreus elaborated in his study of Ibsen. However, the attempt to find answers in this intuitivism had not been wholly futile. It represented a crucial shift in emphasis which, if it was not immediately apparent to Oreus, in fact made him receptive to new philosophical horizons.

In the Kantian *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi* Oreus had defined "healthy philosophy" in the *monistic* terms of the Swiss thinker, Ernest Naville (1816-1909):

Так определил стремления всякой философии Эрнест Навилль (Naville) в своем опровергающей материализм брошюре: "La science et le matérialisme" (Paris et Genève, 1891): «Всякая философия, говорит он, по существу своему, ставит себе задачей найти единство в кажущейся множественности явлений. Поэтому всякая философия может быть названа *монизмом* (т.е. так сказать, учением о единстве)». [18]

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[17] *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l. 10 ob.-11**. Oreus' emphasis.

[18] *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.2, l.6 ob**. My italics. Oreus refers to Naville's *La science et le matérialisme; étude philosophique*. Genève, A.Cherbuliez, 1891. Also published in abridged form in *Revue Philosophique*, 1890, vol. XXIX, pp.618-637.

Ironically, Kantian thought, although certainly offering fundamental conceptual unity in its answer to the question of *knowledge*, patently did not satisfy the need to establish an underlying unity in phenomenal reality. Kantian philosophy is essentially *critical*; indeed, it was this very quality which made it so powerful a force in combating the more excessive claims of materialist monism.

Panaev's moral intuitivism was a confession of the intrinsic limitations of this critical philosophy. Although his still radically circumscribed bid to assume the objective existence of an unconditional truth and to identify it with universal love failed to justify the contradictions in life against which Ivan Karamazov rebels, he acknowledged the need to find a *monistic metaphysics* that would. He tacitly sanctioned a metaphysical exploration of the "world-in-itself" that would provide unqualified 'Being' with an integral, universal context and thus *fully* justify a *positive* faith. This Oreus would find in the thought of Vl.S. Solov'ev.

CHAPTER NINE

Solov'evian influence: the promise of integral vision

Чувства свежи, обаятельны снова <...>
Глаз мой прозревший, глаз мой прозрачный,
Ясно на Божий мир ты взглянул!
Раньше смотрел он сквозь дымку тумана,
Нынче он празднует свет.
I. Konevskoy. "Voskresenie".

It is appropriate at this point in our study briefly to project ahead to Oreus' writings on Dostoevsky of *1899*, four years on from the immediate struggle with Ivan Karamazov's challenge which we unravelled in the preceding chapter. In passages appended to his essay of 1897, "Dve narodnye stikhii", Oreus would observe:

Правда, мысль о том, что «сознание жизни выше жизни», умственное постижение бытия - это есть то, с чем борется «смешной человек» и что развратило блаженных обитателей <...> в конечной гармонии творца Карамазовых не остается места, в самом деле, для любви к страданию и борьбе, столь владевшей им же; но самая гармония, самый слад запросов личности с жизнью и судьбой - все же более сложный, более расчленяющий чистое единство, чем, например, в вероучении Льва Толстого.[1]

On the one hand this passage reveals how Oreus had now come to accept Dostoevsky's insistence upon the integral union of individual and universe at the expense of the morality-based Tolstoyan individualism which he had previously championed.

On the other hand, however, the passage also ironically intimates that it was *not* Dostoevsky's faith alone that had persuaded Oreus of the validity of his vision. Oreus reminds us of the view expressed at the outset of our study of *Brat'ya Karamazovy* in Chapter Eight: Dostoevsky was not concerned with giving dialectical proofs in presenting the reader with Zosima's vision of universal harmony, but with challenging the very necessity for such proofs. Zosima's faith was thus simply given as an alternative perspective on, or relationship to the world. Dostoevsky made no specific claim for its validity. Indeed, his novel was informed by a realism that dictated, for instance, that the elder's corpse be abandoned to the "odour of corruption". Not requiring assurances for himself, Dostoevsky did not grant them to his reader. As Oreus himself identified at the beginning of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* (1897), although Zosima's presence was inspiring, it was *peripheral*:

Обитель его светится на горизонте карамазовой драмы огнями отрадного и приветного приюта, где все треволнения затихают.[2]

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[1] *Mid*, pp. 121-2/*Sip*, pp. 157-8. As we shall see in Chapters Thirteen and Sixteen, Oreus revised "Dve narodnye stikhii" for publication in *Mid* in 1899.
[2] *Sip*, p. 128.

Indeed, while Oreus stressed the stature of Dostoevsky's vision in this essay, he also noted that the novelist left much unresolved, not least the question of Ivan's "devil" - the chaotic principle of the universe:

...многого не досказав и не разрешив, истрадавшийся сердцеведец, в очень скором времени вслед за возвещением проповеди старца Зосимы, оставил жизнь.[3]

What, then, were the grounds for Oreus' differentiating Dostoevsky's vision of the individual from Tolstoy's on the grounds that it was more *sophisticated*? How was it that Oreus came to sanction the value of Zosima's world-view? What justification had he, one who had picked up the gauntlet thrown down by Ivan - the seeker for meaning, for accepting Zosima's mysterious ocean-like universe in which everything was inextricably interconnected?

It was certainly not, of course, the *answers* that Ivan Karamazov's critique of faith yields in *Brat'ya Karamazovy*. Indeed, in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, Oreus ironically identified Ivan's folly as an inability to escape the very "labyrinth" of *moral* issues by which we know he himself, as an ethical idealist, had previously been constricted.[4] However, the *spirit* of Ivan's enquiry into faith *did* play a role in Oreus' espousal of Dostoevsky's unqualified faith - as *positively harnessed by Vl. Solov'ev*. Indeed, although Oreus himself probably did not know it, this philosopher was allegedly Dostoevsky's prototype for Ivan Karamazov, being a paradoxical personality, capable of advocating the pro and the contra with equal brilliance and, seemingly, conviction.[5] It was his dialectical formulation of a mystical faith which *recognized Ivan Karamazov's need for meaning* that would allow Oreus comfortably to accept Zosima's unsubstantiated and incomplete vision.

In the present chapter we will examine the early, essentially confirmatory role that Solov'ev's views, broadly stated in shorter articles on art and the lyrical poets *A.K. Tolstoy* and *F.I. Tyutchev*, had in stimulating this general move from idealist ethics toward Dostoevskian faith in 1896-7.

I

[3]Ibid., p. 129.
[4]See *Sip*, p. 127. Likewise L.N. Tolstoy was again treated in this essay as being delimited by the purely 'moral faith' with which Oreus himself had previously identified: ibid., pp. 129-133.
[5]Dostoevsky befriended the youthful philosopher, who accompanied him on a pilgrimage to Optina Pustyn' monastery to see the starets Amvrosy, an experience which found reflection in *Brat'ya Karamazovy*. See, for example, Mints, Z.G., "Vladimir Solov'ev - poet", *Vladimir Solov'ev. Stikhotvoreniya i shutochnye p'esy*, Biblioteka Poeta, 1974, p. 10 and Solov'ev, S.M., *Zhizn' i tvorcheskaya evolyutsiya Vladimira Solov'eva*, Brussels, 1977, p. 41.

In a letter to Bryusov of 20 October 1901, Lt-General Oreus addressed the question of his son's health and its possible influence upon his poetry:

...здоровьем он всегда пользовался очень хорошим <...> Если он вам говорил о какой-нибудь болезни, то разумел, вероятно, болезненное душевное настроение. Предполагаю (может быть и ошибочно), что оно могло овладеть им при переходе из отроческого в юношеский возраст (между 14 и 16 годами жизни), когда в организме нашем происходят невидимые физиологические процессы, конечно, тем и другим образом влияющие на мозг и нервы. Допустив это предположение, можно приурочить к нему и приведенные вами стихи: «Небо, земля, что за чудные звуки...», потому что они (как я усмотрел из черного их наброска) написаны в феврале 1895 г.; значит, время их написания совпадает с окончанием вышесказанной переходной эпохи.[6]

This reference to Oreus' adolescence is of undoubted biographical interest, not least here, as it reminds us of his precocity, setting the metaphysical development thus far discussed in earlier chapters in context. However, Oreus' reading list for February 1895 allows us to speculate that the inspiration for "Voskresenie", the poem that had evidently aroused Bryusov's interest in the state of Oreus' health, was more specific than that suggested by the Lt-General.[7] Indeed, it appears that this poem constitutes our fullest documentation of the impression that Vladimir Solov'ev's short article "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" made upon Oreus.[8]

This article, occasioned by the republication in 1893 of N.G. Chernyshevsky's *Esteticheskie otnosheniya iskusstva k deystvitel'nosti*, falls into two parts. In the first Solov'ev censures an emergent aesthetic "separatism" as an irrational and immoderate reaction to the dominance of utilitarian ideas over aesthetics in the recent past. He pleads the case for "reason" and "truth". The new aestheticism is correct to assert that art is an autonomous province of human activity. It is fundamentally incorrect, however, in claiming art to be self-sufficient, exclusive of other spheres of activity, when these are in fact interlinked in an *integral, organic unity*:

Жизнь целого <...> требует и предполагает относительную самостоятельность частей и их функций, - но безусловно самодовлеющей никакая функция в своей отдельности не бывает и быть не может.[9]

Indeed, Solov'ev argues that a universal progress towards preordained "unitotal" harmony is discernible in history and he focusses upon a growing spirit of world community which belies such current phenomena as the *succès de surprise* of Nietzschean atavism or European militarism. The artist must play an integral and

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[6]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 541.
[7]Notably, excluding the prologue, "Voskresenie" opens *Mid*, p. 13 (also *Sip*, pp. 2-3).
[8]Solov'ev, Vl., "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike", *Ve,* 1894, No.1. It is perhaps not unimportant that on listing the article read in Feb. 1895, Oreus incorrectly entitled it "*Novaya* estetichecheskaya teoriya" (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 2**).
[9]Solov'ev, Vl., "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike", *SELk*, p. 141.

positive role in this "world process", Solov'ev argues, and on this basis he again emphatically denies the aesthetic separatist any right to abstract art from reality:

> Нет: искусства не для искусства, а для осуществления той полноты жизни, которая необходимо включает в себе и особый элемент искусства - красоту, но включает не как что-нибудь отдельное и самодовлеющее, а в существенной и внутренней связи со всем остальным содержанием жизни.[10]

It is this assertion that art is the potential extension of an *objective* beauty of world-wide significance that Solov'ev amplifies in the second part of the article, where, although he is critical of Chernyshevsky's aesthetic in its specifics, he embraces its fundamental theses:

> Главное ее содержание сводится к двум положениям: 1) существующее искусство есть лишь слабый суррогат действительности, и 2) красота в природе имеет объективную реальность, - и *эти* тезисы *останутся*.[11]

Although "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" was undoubtedly significant as an introduction to the Solov'evian aesthetic which would become the *primum mobile* of Oreus' development in 1896, it is probable that the article's *broader philosphical implications* initially hogged his attention in view of his growing doubts regarding critical idealism. Moreover, the article, in which Oreus' abiding distrust of "art for art's sake" surely found early impetus, was itself clearly less concerned with aesthetics *per se* than the simple demand that it be accorded a *metaphysical ground.* Chernyshevsky's arguments did not constitute aesthetic resolution, merely a first step towards the proper *metaphysical definition* of aesthetics.

In stating the case for a new aesthetic Solov'ev certainly sketched out the rudiments of a system which had relevance for one attempting to resolve metaphysical conundrums posed by Ivan Karamazov. The "unitotality" (*vseedinstvo*) which Solov'ev identified as the object of the "world process" was apparently a cogent affirmation of the *starets* Zosimas' unitive vision:

> У истории (а следовательно, и у всего мирового процесса) есть цель, которую мы несомненно знаем, - цель всеобъемлющая и вместе с тем достаточно определенная для того, чтобы мы могли сознательно участвовать в ее достижении <...> относительно всякой идеи, всякого чувства и всякого дела человеческого всегда можно по разуму и совести решить, согласно ли оно с идеалом всеобщей солидарности или противоречит ему, направлено ли оно к осуществлению *истинного всеединства* или противодействует ему.[12]

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[10]Ibid., p. 144.
[11]Ibid., pp. 146-7.
[12]Ibid., p. 142. Italics mine.

Moreover, on establishing the objectivity of the unitotal "world process", Solov'ev directly censured Ivan Karamazov's maxim "everything is permitted" in his critique of Nietzsche:

> Явился в Германии талантливый писатель (к сожалению, оказавшийся душевно-больным), который стал проповедовать, что сострадание есть чувство низкое, недостойное уважающего себя человека; что нравственность годится только для рабских натур; что человечества нет, а есть господа и рабы, полубоги и полускоты, что *первым все позволено*, а вторые обязаны служить орудием для первых и т. п.[13]

However, *unlike* Dostoevsky's faith, Solov'ev's system clearly reconciled formal philosophical bases with revelatory unitive vision. This article, which opened with a plea for reason and a truth that would transcend reactionary extremism, bore testimony to a *philosophy* of synthesis. Not only did it refrain from dismissing the views of Chernyshevsky, a seemingly natural foe of the ethos embodied in Zosima, it confidently reassessed these views and positively defined their core meaning within its formal terms.[14] The fact that this deliberately thought-provoking assimilation of Chernyshevsky's ideas was possible for Solov'ev showed that he commanded an all-embracing philosophical perspective on life which was denied to Oreus by his commitment to subjective idealism.

It was in the spirit of this article's 'testament' that Oreus wrote "Voskresenie" on 19 February 1895. In the first instance it was a paean less to beauty than simply to an objective world invested with the promise of new, uncompromised meaning within the context of Solov'evian "unitotality". "Voskresenie", like "Otryvok",[15] the poem which followed it (15 March 1895), marked a new aspiration spontaneously to celebrate the vibrancy and dynamics of the *objective* sphere of being from which Oreus had been alienated not only by materialism, but also in turn by critical idealism and the ethics formulated in its terms. Although the significance of the intellect remained undiminished in "Voskresenie", *spontaneous feeling* assumed a renewed importance:

> Чувства свежи, *обаятельны снова* <...>
> Глаз мой прозревший, глаз мой прозрачный,
> Ясно на Божий мир ты взглянул!
> Раньше смотрел он сквозь *дымку тумана*,

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[13]Ibid., p. 143. Italics mine. It is possible that this article, together with N.Grot's "Nravstvennye idealy nashego vremeni (Fridrikh Nitsshe i Lev Tolstoy)" (*Vfip*, bk I (16), 1893. Recorded read by Oreus in *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 10**) prompted the analogy between Ivan Karamazov and Nietzsche which appears in *Stikhotvornaya lirika* (see *Sip*, 126) as Oreus had not actually read the German philosopher at the time he wrote the essay.

[14]Here Solov'ev perhaps echoed the fact that he had himself been a committed materialist in his youth (see, for example, his article "Ideya sverkhcheloveka", 1899) and thus fully appreciated the right of materialism to a 'fair hearing' - a factor which undoubtedly made his ideas attractive at a time of great divisiveness.

[15]*Mid*, p. 20/*Sip*, p. 3.

Нынче он празднует свет.[16]

Yet, though bold, this "first step" towards the truth and beauty of the objective world was also premature, taken by one unsure of his footing. Although Oreus exulted in his *potential* discovery of a positive, formal resolution of Ivan Karamazov's dilemma, the broad philosophical assurances of Solov'ev's article were obviously offset by its paucity of detail. This impeded Oreus' immediate advance beyond idealist ethics. The article failed to address certain fundamental questions regarding the objective sphere and also to prevent a diversionary semantic confusion from arising.

To re-embrace the material sphere as an objective "unitotality" Oreus would have to understand and accept the autonomy of the natural laws from which critical idealism had given his justification of faith asylum. This he could not yet do, not being possessed of the logical grounds to explain natural processes in a way which would both preserve innate human dignity *and* make no concessions to determinist materialism. "Priroda",[17] a dissonant coda to the celebratory "Voskresenie" and "Otryvok" that Oreus significantly chose to omit from *Mechty i dumy*, is an eloquent expression of his confused position in early 1895. The poet, although desperate to understand and assume his true place in nature, lacked the metaphysical rationale at this time to do so and retreated again within the confines of subjective consciousness. The 'sea of life' into which he unreservedly ventured in "Voskresenie"[18] was now recontained within the epistemological strictures of critical idealism; he was only happy to sail the sea of subjective being within him:

Природа, ты не вторглася мне в душу.
Ценю и вижу всю красу твою.
Но, как моряк, спустившийся на сушу,
Здесь на ногах не твердо я стою.

Да, сердце мое там еще витает,
Где мутным морем темный град шумит.
Там странно меркнет, странно рассветает,
Там думами и чувствами дымит.

[16]*Mid*, p. 13/*Sip*, p. 2. In simply marking a new desire to accept and find answers in the objective world, "Voskresenie" was, however, necessarily also a "first step" towards the distinctly Solov'evian aesthetic so closely identified with his "unitotality". The "Divine world" (*Bozhiy mir*) which Oreus surveyed in "Voskresenie" was undoubtedly that same which Fet extolled in his poem "Komu venets: bogine l' krasoty, il' v zerkale ee izobrazheniyu?" There Fet dismissed the view that *beauty* is the subjective fabrication of the poet, prompting Solov'ev to draw a seemingly unlikely analogy between the poet and Chernyshevsky in "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" which again illustrates his aspiration to be a philosopher of synthesis.

[17]20 May 1895, *Sip*, pp. 3-4.

[18]Страстно я в новую жизнь окунусь.
Хлещут кругом меня волны мирския,
И увлекают в просторы морские:
В пристань век не вернусь!
("Voskresenie": *Mid*, p. 13/*Sip*, p. 3.)

<...>

И вдруг кругом меня все тишь святая,
Как суша, все незыблемо стоит,
И, красотой бесстрастною блистая,
Из недр своих природа жизнь струит.

<...>

Но в этом царстве дик я и растерян,
Красою этой чинной удручен.
Ах, каждый листик так в себе уверен,
И только я колеблюся, смущен.[19]

It was assailed by such fundamental uncertainties that Oreus travelled to I.A. Panaev's Mikhailovskoe estate in the summer of 1895 and gravitated towards his host's moral intuitivism as a means to meet Ivan Karamazov's challenge. Taken literally, Solov'ev's appeal to "reason" and "conscience" as a means to apprehend "unitotality" in "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike"[20] must have seemed wholly consonant with the espousal of Panaev's intuitivism. As we noted above, this attempted monism in fact undoubtedly exercised an important influence at this transitional stage of Oreus' development. However, it could not, of course, fulfil the full promise of "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike", as Oreus perhaps thought it did during his summer at Mikhailovskoe. "Reason" and "conscience" were accorded a significance by Panaev which reflected the epistemological constrictions by which he continued to abide. As Oreus was presently to recognise on confronting Ivan's "rebellion" against "universal injustice", Panaev's definition of "reason" and "conscience" precluded the assertion of a true marriage of temporal and ideal being - a truly unconditional "unitotality". It seems probable that Oreus' attraction to Panaev's intuitivism was at least in part the fruit of his inability as yet to appreciate the positive semantics of Solov'ev's non-critical, *objective idealist* philosophy. For as Oreus would soon discover, although "reason" and "conscience" were certainly apportioned particular significance in Solov'evian thought, they were not accorded *definitive* importance and were reconciled with the *full* range of human experience admitted by positive "unitotality".

II

Oreus' confusion might have found quicker and fuller resolution if his summer sojourn at Mikhailovskoe had not apparently denied him access to Solov'ev's contributions to the April and May issues of *Vestnik Evropy*, which he only came to

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[19]*Sip*, pp. 3-4.
[20]See above, p. 108.

read in the weeks following his return to Petersburg in August. These were Solov'ev's articles on F.I. Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy, the poets Oreus would identify with Dostoevsky in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*. Certainly these Solov'evian readings of Tyutchev and Tolstoy were pivotal to Oreus' new approach to resolving the Dostoevskian conundrums with which he wrestled throughout 1895. They restored the promise of "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" to justify Zosima's vision.

Consistencies between "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" and these later articles were immediately apparent. Solov'ev opened "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" with a celebration of Tolstoy's *impartial* championship of beauty which echoed his plea for objectivity of vision at the beginning of "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike".[21] Moreover, the similarities and disparities between Dostoevsky and Solov'ev that we noted in the earlier article were also echoed in the comparison of Pushkin with Tolstoy and Tyutchev in the new work. We have suggested that in "Pervyy shag" Oreus discerned what had seemed an irresolvable contradiction in terms: a qualified, but positive vindication of the starets' unmediated celebration of life. Solov'ev's perceived stance in relation to Dostoevsky's Zosima there was paralleled in the new article by that of Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy in relation to Pushkin. Solov'ev feted these *poet-thinkers* precisely because they intellectually *justified* Pushkin's spontaneous celebration of life in the face of Baratynsky's scepticism and Lermontovian malaise:

> Невозможно сознанию отказаться от рефлексии, раз она явилась, - нужно только довести ее до конца. Противоречия, возбужденные мыслью, должны быть разрешены ею же; и жизненность русской поезии доказано тем, что она не остановилась на разочарованности Баратынского и Лермонтова, *что после них явились поэты положительной мысли, сознательно понимавшие значение красоты в мире, примирявшие ум с творчеством и оправдывавшие поэзию, как выражение истины.* .[22]

Solov'ev's treatment of A.K. Tolstoy certainly contained many more resonances which cannot have failed to arrest Oreus' attention. Solov'ev cited the metaphysical interludes of Tolstoy's *Don Zhuan* as a poetically inspired, yet also philosophically subtle exposition of the same universal unity to which he had referred in "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike":

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[21]"Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *Ve*, 1895, No. 5, pp. 237-259. Oreus did not list this specific article among his reading of the time. However, he did list Z. Vengerova's "Novye techeniya v angliyskom iskusstve" which appeared in the same May edition of *Ve* as Solov'ev's article (see *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 5 ob.**). Furthermore, he read Solov'ev's "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" (*Ve*, 1895, No. 4) at the same time as the this May edition of *Ve* (**Ibid**) and the fact that he coupled Tolstoy and Tyutchev in a later chronological list of influences (see above, p. 84) would suggest a simultaneous introduction to the Solov'evian treatment of these poets. The strong parallels between Solov'ev's categorization of Russian lyrical poets in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" and passages in Oreus' *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* (which we noted in Chapter Four of the present work) also support the view that he knew the article.

[22]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 301. Initial italics mine.

Едино, цельно, неделимо,
Полно созданья своего,
Над ним и в нем, невозмутимо,
Царит от века Божество.
Осуществилося в нем ясно,
Чего постичь не мог никто:
Несогласимое согласно,
С грядущим прошлое слито,
Совместно творчество с покоем,
С невозмутимостью любовь,
И возникают вечным строем
Ее созданья вновь и вновь.
Всемирным полная движеньем,
Она светилам кажет путь,
Она нисходит вдохновеньем
В певца восторженную грудь;
Цветами рдея полевыми,
Звуча в паденье светлых вод,
Она законами живыми
Во всем, что движется, живет.
Всегда различна от вселенной,
Но вечно с ней съединена,
Она для сердца несомненна,
Она для разума темна.[23]

Solov'ev drew attention in citing Tolstoy's poem to a universal divinity and unitive love essential to all phenomena that was redolent not only of Zosima's teaching, but also seemed at first glance to echo the absolute love morally intuited in Panaev's system. Crucially, however, here the intuitional channel via which this love was apprehensible was not a preclusive rational ideal of duty. For Solov'ev the "unitotality" which he now identified as absolute love was directly apprehensible in *artistic* inspiration or intuition. This, moreover, was evidently not only the medium for the cognition of "unitotality" but also for its '*actualization*' in reality in objective beauty:

Вдохновенный художник, воплощая свои созерцания в чувственных формах, есть связующее звено или посредник между миром вечных идей или первообразов и миром вещественных явлений. Художественное творчество, в котором упраздняется противоречие между идеальным и чувственным, между духом и вещью, есть земное подобие творчества божественного, в котором снимаются всякие противоположности, и божество проявляется как начало *совершенного* единства, - «единства себя и своего другого».[24]

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[23]These interludes from *Don Zhuan* became almost canonical for Oreus, see *Mid*, p. 158/*Sip*, p. 169 and his correspondence with Bryusov: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 491 and pp. 530-31. There, in his last letter to Bryusov, Oreus berates him for both failing to include Tolstoy's *Don Zhuan* in a list of this oft treated subject in his article "Istiny" and for his dismissive attitude there towards Tolstoy and Polonsky - another poet of the Solov'evian 'fold' (Oreus read Solov'ev's entry on Polonsky for *Es*, *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 55**). Indeed, this final difference of opinion neatly encapsulates the fundamental distinction between Oreus and Bryusov despite their being so closely associated in the contemporary literary arena.
[24]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 305.

Here, clearly, was the promise not only of the positive metaphysical ground that Ivan Karamazov demanded for faith and morality, but also a possible answer to his "rebellion" against "universal injustice": *creativity*. Indeed, the above passage makes it possible on a rudimentary level to see how Solov'ev's attitude to the contradictions of the human condition began to effect Oreus' transition to a *creativity*-centred faith. Significantly, like Panaev, Solov'ev identified human consciousness as a potential means for man to transcend mortality and to realize himself as an individual and immortal personality. Yet this was not the freedom of Panaev's "moral consciousness", which, paradoxically regulated by the dictates of the "categorical imperative", was won negatively at the expense of temporal being. Solov'ev's view of consciousness as a free creative force championed the intrinsic worth of temporal being, advocating its *transfiguration* by that consciousness, not its negation:

Торжество вечной жизни - вот окончательный смысл вселенной. Содержание этой жизни есть внутреннее единство всего, или любовь, ее форма - красота, ее условие - свобода <...> Судьба человека и человечества, наше возвышение над животностью, зависит главным образом от *очеловечивания* и *одухотворения* <...> основных фактов жизни, от *перерождения* их из слепых инстинктов природы в сознательные принципы достойного существования.[25]

Significantly, as well as the thinker, the *poet* was again accorded a predominant role in this positive process:

Преобладающая роль в этом деле естественно принадлежит духовным вождям человечества - поэтам и мыслителям.[26]

The broad, essentially unqualified claims made by Solov'ev in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" found a more systematic and reasoned exposition in his article "Poeziya F. I. Tyutcheva", which Oreus read next. More particularly, this article also addressed the very uncertainties that Oreus had encapsulated in his poem, "Priroda", several months earlier.

In "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" Solov'ev directly identified an untenable duplicity in most post-enlightenment poetry in its relation to nature. He contended that the majority of contemporary nature poets were the sceptical priests of a divinity they themselves perceived to be no more than an illusion of the senses, a fanciful diversion from the indisputability of determinist thought. Solov'ev, like Oreus in *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*, argued that this seemingly irreconcilable duality of thought and faith could however in fact be easily dispelled. It was merely the issue of the *miguided* view in common currency that the truth according to mechanistic materialism was the *only* truth:

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[25]Ibid., p. 309. My italics.
[26]Ibid.

Простодушно принимая механическое мировоззрение за всенаучное и единственно-научное, а потому несомненное, веря ему на слово, эти служители красоты *не верят в свое дело.* Как художники, они передают нам жизнь и душу природы, но при этом в уме своем убеждены, что она безжизненна и бездушна, что их чувство и вдохновение их обманывают, - что красота есть субъективная иллюзия. А на самом деле иллюзия только в том, что отражение ходячих мнений на поверхности их сознания принимается ими за нечто более достоверное, чем та истина, которая открывается в глубине их собственного поэтического чувства.[27]

Yet Solov'ev's *solution* to the problem of this schism of thought and faith diverged radically from the neo-Kantian arguments that Oreus had employed in *Duma, serdtse i razmakhi*. Solov'ev's philosophy of positive synthesis eschewed the neo-Kantian retreat into the constrictive 'asylum' of critical subjectivism. He confidently accepted the natural laws in the face of which Oreus, even as he attempted to escape the limitations of critical idealism, had vented his extreme frustration and mistrust in "Priroda". Indeed, Solov'ev's dismissal of the epistemological rules and regulations of modern man was just as appropriate to Oreus' subjective idealism as to materialism:

Вовсе не высшее *знание,* а только собственная слепота и глухота заставляет людей отрицать внутреннюю *жизнь природы.*[28]

Moreover, in a manner which for Oreus could not but have further clarifed the radical distinction between Panaev and Solov'ev, the philosopher chose Schiller's requiem for nature, *Die Götter Griechenlandes*, to exemplify the detrimental influence of epistemology on art. Schiller, the poetic voice of the Kantian age, was precisely the artist whose moral example Panaev championed in *Raziskateli istiny* and whom Oreus had read extensively at the beginning of the decade.[29]

Solov'ev continued his analysis of nature poetry by noting:

...в новой литературе далеко не все поэты так доверчиво, как Шиллер, приняли механическое мировоззрение, так легко усвоили дуализм Картезия или *субъективизм Канта.*[30]

What was the secret of these poets whom Solov'ev identified as being able to disregard the prevailing materialist epistemology if it was not Kantian subjectivism or moral intuitivism?

It was Solov'ev's conviction that Tyutchev, whom he feted as the most perspicacious of these poets, was able to celebrate nature's beauty with the Hellenic spontaneity mourned by Schiller *without* conceding credibility by marrying direct artistic intuition and thought:

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[27]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva", *SELk*, p. 287.
[28]Ibid., p. 285.
[29]See Panaev, I.A., *Raziskateli istiny*, Vol.2, pp. 33-34 and p.37 and *Kniga materialov, chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l. 136-141** and **161-2**.
[30]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva", *SELk*, p. 288. My italics.

...у Тютчева <...> важно и дорого то, что он не только *чувствовал*, а и *мыслил, как* поэт, - что он был *убежден* в *объективной* истине поэтитеского воззрения на природу <...> Его ум был вполне согласен с вдохновением: поэзия его была полна сознанной мысли, а его мысли находили себе только поэтическое, т.е. одушевленное и законченное выражение.[31]

The rational justification for the poet's faith in his intuitive sense of universal integrity, of a "world soul" underlying the myriad phenomena of nature, was, Solov'ev contended, his consciousness of the limitations and contradictions dogging modern thought. These Solov'ev proceeded to explore with logical incisiveness. The positivist attempt to define the universal whole through the inductive analysis of its parts was, he considered, logically flawed. This empirical method was not able to deny nature integral being because it was equivalent to the dissection of various constituents of the human anatomy, which, even in their sum, clearly do not describe the integral individual personality. Nor, he continued, could one argue that integral being is not attributable to nature because it, unlike the human organism, is not perceptible in its entirety. Solov'ev noted that this was simply to confuse the relative proportions of the objects under scrutiny with the essence of the matter. Man stands in relation to nature as a fly in relation to the human face. We know that that which even the most observant fly perceives in a person's face does not constitute the essential truth or spirit of the being whose full facial expression we can appreciate:

Как телесная видимость человека, сверх анатомических и физиологических фактов, говорит нам еще своими знаками о его внутренней жизни или душе, так точно и явления всей природы, каков бы ни был их *механический состав*, говорят нам в своей живой действительности о жизни и душе великого мира.[32]

Solov'ev continued to argue, furthermore, that mechanical materialism must address a simple problem that it has neglected to recognize in a fashion indicative of its crudity. It must either accept that man is purely a mechanism, or it must allow that nature is an integral, organic entity. Materialism contradicts itself in maintaining that nature is knowable only as a mechanistic composite of material parts on the one hand, but attributing 'life' to man on the other. This position is untenable for a supposed monism. Materialism must either proclaim man to be inanimate like his milieu, a patent paradox, or admit that nature as a whole is animate in varying degrees and forms. The unavoidability of this admission is further corroborated by the very science which, the ever assimilative Solov'ev argued, materialism has unjustifiably made its exclusive vassal. Evolutionary science, he maintained, confirms that man is a part of a process interlinking

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[31]Ibid., p. 284 and 87.
[32]Ibid., p. 286.

all phenomena, inorganic and organic, plant and animal, in which there is no basis for unconditional human separatism:

Нет во всей вселенной такой пограничной черты, которая делила бы ее на совершенно особенные, не связанные между собою области бытия; повсюду существуют переходные. промежуточные формы, или остатки таких форм, и весь видимый мир не есть собрание деланных вещей, а продолжающееся развитие или рост *единого живого существа.*[33]

This critique of the materialist monism now offered Oreus the *foundations* for a *positive* system that would justify Zosima's vision in the face of disproportionate materialist claims. Moreover, within this logically and even scientifically grounded context, Solov'ev again accorded especial pre-eminence to the artist, expanding upon the claims made for art in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo". "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" not only corroborated Solov'ev's contention that artistic inspiration could credibly intuit absolute truth, but also restressed the *exclusive* power of art as a potential *incarnation* of its "unitotal" harmony. Solov'ev announced that as the *embodiment* of Truth and Goodness, Beauty was pivotal to a synthetical "triune" expression of "unitotality". Accordingly formal art, as the instrument of Beauty, mirrored its definitive importance in relation to rational philosophy and ethics:

Дело поэзии, как и искусства вообще, - не в том, чтобы «украшать действительность приятными вымыслами живого воображения», как говорилось в старинных эстетиках, а в том, чтобы воплощать в *ощутительных* образах тот самый высший *смысл* жизни, которому философ дает определение в разумных понятиях, который проповедуется моралистом и осуществляется историческим деятелем, как идея добра.[34]

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[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 281. See also pp. 292-3, where Solov'ev elaborates upon his view that *reason*, in itself purely formal, requires the *positive definition* of creativity.

CHAPTER TEN

Premature acceptance of the Solov'evian promise: philosophical impasse

Рай утоленья—не наша стихия.

I. Konevskoy. "V ogne zakata".

In February 1896 Oreus drew an epigraph from starets Zosima's "Discourses" for his poem, "Po dnyam".[1] This indicated that, after the transitional year of metaphysical difficulties that we examined in the preceding chapter, Oreus finally considered himself able to answer the challenge of Ivan Karamazov's "rebellion" with Zosima's teaching, which he had now seen through the qualifying prism of Solov'evian aesthetics. Indeed, that this 'conversion' took place in the wake of Oreus' reading Solov'ev's articles on A.K. Tolstoy and Tyutchev is more specifically apparent in the note that he made of a conversation with A.M. Veselov on 1 November 1895:

1 Ноября 1895 г.

Разговор с Веселовым.

Мрачное его настроение. Для чего стоит жить? Он не привязан к жизни... А ты, И.И., привязан?

Я: Да, в силу инстинктивного чувства, и потому, что не пресытился еще многими отрадами жизни. *Отрады жизни: творчество, познание души Мира и смысла нашего существования, проникновение непосредственным чутьем в таинственную суть явлений, ради получения светлых откровений о складе и смысле нашей природы.*[2]

This was clearly no longer the vision of someone who subscribed to a neo-Kantian accommodation of faith, and who had recently attempted to answer Ivan Karamazov's scepticism in such terms. The qualities and properties which Oreus attributed to the seekers of individual moral perfection in notes dated 18 January 1896 further evidenced a revised credo informed by Solov'evian influence:

Предполагая их веру в Бога и в бессмертие:
Вообще говоря - стремление к одухотворению, к превращению в обитателей более совершенных планет:
а) усилия проникнуть в самую сокровенную глубь всякой чужой души.
б) усилия слиться с душой нечеловеческой природы и передать во всей свежести и живости таинственные и вещие впечатления и настроения, сообщаемые этой природой избранным душам.*)
в) старания сделаться причастным жизни и мира духов (высших и низших).

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[1]See *Mid*, p. 27/*Sip*, p. 9. The epigraph is from Zosima's "Discourses and sermons": Dostoevsky, F.M., "Iz besed i poucheniy startsa Zosimy", *Brat'ya Karamazovy*, *Pol. sob. soch.*, Vol. 14, p. 288. The image of Christ's face at the conclusion of the poem also evokes Zosima's "Discourses and sermons".

[2]*Miscellaneous*, **f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 4, l. 3**. Cited by Stepanov: *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 182 (where reference *incorrectly* given as *Z.k. No.2*).

г) старания сокрушить закон непроницаемости материи - усилиями волевых нервов двоиться и действовать на расстоянии с самыми благотворными и человеколюбивыми целями.
*) вообще - «жажда мираж себе создать среди пустыни бесконечной» (Минский).
е) усиленные старания вселять в прочих людей желаемое - самое высокое и благое - действие при помощи внушения.
ж) наконец, вообще - отчаянная бескровная борьба со средой и человеческой расой (наследственностью) - стремление к искоренению в себе <...> низких и эгоистических чувств, вкусов и мыслей, напр. хотя бы самой малой доли привязанности к чистоличным и плотским удовольствиям.[3]

Significantly, the accompanying catalogue of those whom Oreus deemed to embody these new moral aspirations almost completely comprised *artists* (Dostoevsky, Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy among them). Indeed, the battle with genus and milieu commended at the conclusion of this list of values was clearly no longer the *unconditional* self-abnegation presupposed by the religious postulates of idealist ethics. On the back cover of a note book of this time Oreus inscribed:

И.О<реус>. «Борьба за свободное счастье личности».[4]

That struggle for individuality now took the objective universe, which Oreus had previously considered incidental to self-transcendence, positively into account. The medium to attain a sense of positive individuality was now the artistic intuition of temporal-eternal *harmony*. Indeed, the 'positive' individuality to which Oreus now aspired finds eloquent expression in his praise for Shelley in a sketch of early 1896, "Iz volneniy sovremennoy sovesti",[5] a 'history' of the very conflict between man's ideal and temporal interests that had engrossed him in the previous year:

...он <...> целым, можно сказать, веком зрелее современных ему, даже лучших умов, и именно в области тех противоречивых душевных влечений - то к недостижимым идеалам, то к удовлетворению жажды земного счастья, то к забвению и к смерти, то к отрешению от эгоизма. Среди байроновского разочарования и бесплодного отрицания и вслед за горячими воззваниями о свободе человеческой личности, в творчестве Шелли мерцают пророческие проблески - порывы к всемирной любви и всечеловеческому сближению, к прекрашению того «уединения», в которое замыкались и до сих пор замыкаются слишком усердные ревнители свободы своей личности.[6]

However, the rubric of the above-cited code of values also shows that Oreus' understanding of the positive philosophy of creativity and synthesis that he had adopted was still *strictly limited* at this stage. The very title of this exposition of Oreus' new mystical-aesthetic credo indicated a speculative attempt to define the nature of the Absolute by tracing the destiny of those it had "hastened to bring out of the midst of

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[3]*Gibel' lyudey na vysshey stupeni nravstvennogo sovershenstvovaniya v zemnykh usloviyakh*, **f.259, op.3, ed.khr. 4, l. 19**. Oreus cites N.M. Minsky's poem *Kak son, proydut dela.*
[4]*Mysli, nabroski, zametki (na pamyat')*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.12, l. 27**.
[5]"Izvolneniy sovremennoy sovesti" in *Mysli, nabroski, zametki (na pamyat')*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.12**.
[6]Ibid., **l. 3**.

iniquities": *Gibel' lyudey na vysshey stupeni nravstvennogo sovershenstvovaniya v zemnykh usloviyakh.* Although Oreus referred to their ascension to "more perfect worlds", an image redolent of Zosima's "Discourses" and *Son smeshnogo cheloveka.* the *explorative* agenda that he devised for probing the mysteries of the cosmos paradoxically belied his confidence in the very existence of such "worlds". This was obviously by no means a complete metaphysics. Again Oreus had assumed prematurely that he had found a definitive justification for faith, just as he had at the time that he wrote "Voskresenie". This time he had invested his faith in what was essentially only a *negative* definition of the Absolute. It was temporarily sufficient for him that Solov'ev had seemed logically to confound the materialist and idealist epistemologies' right to deny the knowability of an Absolute unity. Indeed, if the epigraph from Zosima to "Po dnyam" typifies the sense of exultation which Oreus experienced on temporarily seeming to escape the epistemologies, it also marks the superficiality and limitations of his *Dostoevskian* reading of Solov'ev. Solov'ev's articles had helped Oreus to justify Zosima's unqualified pantheistic vision; but ironically that vision now in turn impeded Oreus from *fully* understanding Solov'evian "unitotality" and artistic intuition.

"Po dnyam" was one of three poems of early 1896 that might be grouped under the heading "poems of light". The other two, also concerned with luminary cycles, are "V ogne zakata"[7] and "Vozhdi zhizni"[8]. The present chapter will juxtapose these poems and the Solov'evian articles that Oreus read in back issues of *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* in early 1896, "Krasota v prirode" and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", in order to illustrate just how limited his understanding of Solov'ev's philosophy was by his Dostoevskian agenda.[9] Indeed, although "Krasota v prirode" significantly had an epigraph from Dostoevsky: "*Krasota spaset mir*",[10] the article's study of the nature of beauty went far beyond the Dostoevskian faith of Oreus' "poems of light". "Krasota v prirode" is a study which, in its complexity, shows how far Oreus still had to go before he would identify Solov'ev's vision, not Dostoevsky's, as the key to the future in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii.*

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"Krasota v prirode", like "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike", contended that if man's future as a genuine artist was to be realized, it was firstly imperative to

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[7]*Mid*, p. 14/*Sip*, p. 8.
[8]*Sip*, p.11.
[9]Oreus marked "Krasota v prirode" and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" (*Vfip*, 1889, kn. 1, pp. 1-50 and 1890. kn. 5, pp. 84-102 respectively) as read in early (March?) 1896 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l.10**). For transcriptions, see *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 1, l. 109-111, 175** and *Kniga materialov. Chast' II*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 5, l. 104**.
[10]Words attributed to Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *Idiot.*

understand beauty's objectivity in nature. However, whereas the latter article had simply stated the case for such objectivity, "Krasota v prirode" justified its validity in some depth. Crucial to this justification was a much more specific exposition of the Absolute or unitotal "Idea". Beauty in nature was the expression of this "Idea", the *objective*, pre-adamite rubric of the universe:

> Идеей вообще мы называем то, что само по себе достойно быть. Безусловно говоря, достойно бытия только всесовершенное или абсолютное существо, вполне свободное от всяких ограничений и недостатков <...> Частное бытие идеально или достойно, лишь поскольку оно не отрицает всеобщего, а дает ему место в себе, и точно так же общее идеально или достойно в той же мере, в какой оно дает в себе место частному. Отсюда легко вывести следующее формальное определение идеи или достойного вида бытия. Она есть *полная свобода составных частей в совершенном единстве целого.*[11]

In the above form, this definition of "worthy being" does not appear to contradict the universal integrity celebrated in Zosima's intuited vision: an ocean of divine immanence in which everything is eternal; a reality in which the transience, dissolution and death of phenomenal being are an illusion, shattered by the transfigurative mystical insights of the enlightened individual into ultimate beauty.[12] However, the fundamental distinction between such an essentially pantheistic vision and the Solov'evian philosophy of the Absolute becomes clear if we reinstate a clause omitted from the above passage:

> Частные или ограничненные существования, сами по себе не имеющие достойного или идеального бытия, становятся ему причастны чрез свое отношение к абсолютному во всемирном процессе, который и есть постепенное воплощение его идеи.[13]

Solov'ev's "unitotality" incorporated the dynamics of a universal *process* in which the Absolute idea was being *embodied* by disunited forces, which, although evidently emanations of the First Principle, were not identical with it. They were consequently obliged to "become" party to "worthy being". It was this apparent paradox that was absent in unqualified Dostoevskian faith in universal unity. It was this too which Oreus' poems of light indicate that he did not fully understand or accept at this time.

In "Krasota v prirode" Solov'ev observed of matter and light:

> Вещество есть косность и непроницаемость бытия - прямая противуположность идее, как положительной вселроницаемости или всеединству. Лишь в *свете* вещество освобождается от своей косности и непроницаемости, и, таким образом, видимый мир впервые расчленяется на две

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[11]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Krasota v prirode", *SELk*, p. 100. Transcribed by Oreus: *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.1, l. 110-111**.

[12]A vision described in the passages of Zosima's "Discourses and sermons" from which Oreus took his epigraph to "Po dnyam". See above, note 1.

[13]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Krasota v prirode", *SELk*, p. 100. Transcribed by Oreus: *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.1, l. 110-111**.

противоположные полярности. Свет или его невесомый носитель - эфир - есть первичная реальность идеи в ее противоположности весомому веществу, и в этом смысле он есть первое начало красоты в природе.[14]

Oreus' poems of light certainly accorded with Solov'ev's view that light was a supramaterial portent of the true, positive being in the phenomenal sphere. In "V ogne zakate" Oreus exclaimed:

Свет ты тревожный, чуткий, манящий,
Сколько в тебе откровений сокрыто,
Правды щемящей!
<...>
Ждем неземного рассвета.[15]

Taking the sun as the purest symbol of the mysterious, all-unifying principle underlying the phenomenal sphere, Oreus awaited the revelatory dawning of an eternal day which would annul the relativity of time and space. Neither this contemplation of the sun, nor the apprehension of ultimate 'triumph' in its dawning, were in themselves inconsistent with the Solov'evian system. As Solov'ev states in "Krasota v prirode":

Мировое всеединство и его физический выразитель - свет - в своем собственном активном средоточии - солнце. Солечный восход - образ деятельного торжества светлых сил. Отсюда особенная красота неба в эту минуту, когда
По всей
Неизмеримости эфирной
Несется благовест всемирный
Победных солнечных лучей. (Тютчев).[16]

However, Oreus' "poems of light" placed a disproportionate emphasis upon unreflected, pure light which indicates that he did not understand the permutations of the *transfigurative synthesis* of light and *matter* that Solov'ev went on to expound as *essential* to beauty in nature. Indeed, Solov'ev identified *categories* of objective beauty's emergence in nature - the embodiment of the "Idea" (light) *in* matter. The first of these categories was the *inorganic* world, in which he discerned two types of beauty. Firstly he examined "beauty at rest"[17]. Oreus' poems of light were essentially variants of this form of beauty in the inorganic context: a series of static, direct light phenomena, generated by radiance or refraction, both astral and terrestrial. To these, as we have seen, Solov'ev attributed beauty as a revelation of the all-pervading and imponderable qualities of the Absolute. Yet this was only the first, *most fundamental* category of beauty in nature. Solov'ev

[14]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Krasota v prirode", *SELk*, p. 102.
[15]*Mid*, p. 14/*Sip*, pp. 8-9.
[16]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Krasota v prirode", *SELk*, p. 103.
[17]*'krasota v pokoe'*: the title and terminology of "Krasota v prirode" are possibly echoed in the title of the paper *Krasota v dvizhenii* which Oreus read to the "Literaturno-Myslitel'nyy Kruzhok". See above. Chapter Four, note 1.

himself intimated that, while such phenomena were indisputably beautiful, their aesthetic value was necessarily limited compared with the higher orders of beauty in nature. They were potent objects of *prescience*, but in their stasis, remoteness and, in the case of refracted light, passivity, they merely symbolized the *potential* of the idea's creative expression in beauty, they did not actively embody it. In these phenomena light was *revelatory* rather than *transfigurative*.

Moreover, even within this fundamental category of beauty Oreus diverged from Solov'ev. Oreus' preoccupation with the sun in his "poems of light" inspired poems of vitality and boundless hope, but Solov'ev did not sanction this preference for the sun, or its issue in Oreus' poems - a bitterness towards the moon which reached its apogee in "Vozhdi zhizni"[18] (where the moon's refracted light is seen as a reproach to man for his powerlessness to transcend the confines of phenomenal being). Indeed, of all the luminary phenomena, Solov'ev saw the stars as the most perfect expression of the idea's positive union of *whole and parts*, not the sun, a mystical revelation of the First Principle in itself:

> Мировое всеединство и его выразитель, свет, в своем первоначальном расчленении на множественность самостоятельных средоточий, обнимаемых однако общею гармонией, - красота звездного неба. Ясно, что в этой последней полнее и совершеннее, нежели в двух первых, осуществляется идея положительного всеединства.[19]

Indeed, the apparently paradoxical prerequisite of cosmological perfection as defined by Solov'ev was that this synthesis of light and matter objectively create *complex* and *contradictory* forms to attain an aesthetic of whole and parts *in actuality*. Moreover, he maintained that this *process* of synthesis must have a *chaotic* ground to be truly beautiful. Indeed, in the inorganic sphere he proceeded to identify a second group of phenomena in which the combination of light and matter produced seeming life: flowing water of various kinds, the stormy sea, lightning, the sound of waves and thunder. The beauty in motion that Solov'ev ascribed to these phenomena derived precisely from the juxtaposition in them of chaotic, elemental forces and the indestructible integrity of the universal whole:

> Хаос т.е. само безобразие, есть необходимый фон всякой земной красоты, и эстетическое значение таких явлений, как бурное море, или ночная гроза, зависит именно от того, что «под ними хаос шевелится».[20]

Solov'ev proceeded to turn to the synthesis of light and matter in the *organic* world, further complicating his emphasis upon an Absolute in the seemingly

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[18]It is perhaps not insignificant that Oreus omitted this poem from *Mid.*

[19]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Krasota v prirode", *SELk*, p. 104.

[20]Ibid. This passage was notably recapitulated in Solov'ev's "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva".

contradictory process of perfecting itself. In plants, Solov'ev maintained, light and matter first organically synthesize to produce forms of *external* beauty. In animals the transfiguration of inert matter is evidenced in an ascending, increasingly complex scale of such external perfection, in the co-ordinated harmony of the constituent parts and the free mobility of the whole. However, this is also progressively combined with *internalized* beauty - the intensification of the idea's presence in *consciousness*. In man it is the combination of *both* external and internal beauty which finds ultimate, potentially perfect, expression. Indeed, man, Solov'ev contended, can both consciously conceive of the Absolute in reason and actualize it in *art*. This was the subject of the companion piece to "Krasota v prirode" which Oreus read at this time, "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva".

This article significantly expanded upon the second contention of "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike": that art in its present definition is a poor surrogate for beauty in nature. It challenged Oreus' limited interpretation of Solov'evian aesthetics by setting standards and objectives for art which dramatically exceeded the powers of the *passive* artistic intuition that the "poems of light" show he had taken as a definitive ideal. Indeed, as "V ogne zakata" illustrates, Oreus not only over-emphasized light at this time in a way which suggests that he was inclined to equate the *presentiment* of the Idea in light with the Idea itself. The fruit of this mistake was that Oreus saw the light as the sole transfigurative agent of the universe. It was the artist's role merely to yearn and pray for the transfigurative enlightenment that it alone could bring:

> Все напряглось—и что-то должно совториться,
> Свет неприступный—с земным естеством примириться:
> Эти лучи, это—проблески рая!..
>
> Что-то меж тем на дне души шевелится.
> Шепчет оно заклинанья глухия:
> Свет безвестный, помедли—нам ли с тобой уже слиться?
> Наша судьбина—жаждать, рваться, молиться:
> Рай утоленья—не наша стихия.[21]

Conversely Solov'ev now argued that, properly defined, art itself is *literally* transfigurative. It must strive to complete the process which nature, as an unconscious aspiration to the unitotal Idea, cannot perfect: the incarnation of the Idea in absolute Beauty. Indeed, the Absolute Idea remains unrealized in all nature's manifestations of beauty principally because the processes of nature have failed to eradicate death - the dissolution of spiritualized matter, its return to inertia. This is the prerogative and task of man, the apogee of the cosmogonic process, who is conscious not only of self, but also the objective Idea which underlies being. Through art, the

[21] *Mid*, p. 14/*Sip*, p. 8.

philosopher stipulated, man must actualize the threefold transfiguration of imperfect reality which will ultimately conquer death:

1) прямая объективация тех же глубочайших внутренних определений и качеств живой идеи, которые не могут быть выражены природой; 2) одухотворение природной красоты и через это 3) *увековечение ее индивидуальных явлений.*[22]

In its various disciplines, art at present *is*, an important *anticipatory* or *prophetic* expression of the task, Solov'ev continued. Lyrical poetry and music are a direct intuitional or magical channel via which the essence of things is apprehended and expressed, as exemplified by Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy; architecture, sculpture and painting potentialize perfection; epic, tragic and comic genres indirectly demand perfection by variously depicting the degree to which the human condition presently falls short of the ideal.

Yet *formal* art, even if it were successfully to depict the perfection which has eluded its portrayals of humanity heretofore, will never succeed in embodying the genuinely transfigured spiritual life. This, Solov'ev announced, would require art to assume an *unprecedented* form:

Совершенное искусство в своей окончательной задаче должно воплотить абсолютный идеал не в одном воображении, а и в самом деле, - должно одухотворить, пресуществить нашу действительную жизнь. Если скажут, что такая задача выходит за пределы искусства, то спрашивается: кто установил эти пределы? В истории мы их не находим; мы видим здесь искусство изменяющееся, - в процессе развития <...> Я <...> не нахожу особенно смелым утверждение, что как <...> формы художества завершены еще древними, так ново-европейские народы уже исчерпали все прочие известные нам роды искусства, и если это последнее имеет будущность, то в совершенно новой сфере действия.[23]

II

The exploration of the full meaning and potential of this radically redefined aesthetic standard was arguably to become the lode star governing the whole of Oreus' subsequent development until his death in 1901. Yet this exploratory process did not find immediate, conscious impetus or direct expression. Not only, as the "poems of light" show, was Oreus' *Dostoevskian* understanding of Solov'ev's aesthetic conditional to begin with. Ironically, the *order* in which Oreus read Solov'ev's work in itself impeded his further Solov'evian development. Thus far we have looked at "Krasota v prirode" and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" in so far as they illustrate the *limitations* of Oreus' understanding of Solov'ev's complex system, and pre-empt the direction he would have to take to attain full understanding. However, it is now necessary to examine how, taken out

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[22]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", *SELk*, p. 133. Italics mine.
[23]Ibid., p. 138.

of context, these works could have been construed by Oreus as being riven with contradictions that sanctioned his position.

On the one hand, there was the simple fact that although the articles heralded the 'art of the future', they did not *positively* attempt to define what seemed a remote prospect. Oreus was unaware at this stage that Solov'ev was actually in the process of developing his position in these articles. Consequently, Solov'ev's association of the future art with the end of history in "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" seemed to confirm that the philosopher himself submitted to the present impossibility of art's transcending its valuable, but purely *anticipatory* role.

On the other hand, and more importantly for Oreus at this stage in his development, it was clear that in order to understand the aesthetic implications of the Solov'evian philosophy of the Absolute, he needed to understand its *metaphysical* bases. Oreus would not proceed far beyond yearning for the remote beauty of the sun if he did not address the complexities of the Solov'evian Absolute. What was the justification for an Absolute that was both real, yet unrealized, eternal, yet transient? How could perfect unitotality be said to contain, or even derive from a chaotic principle? If phenomenal being and its ultimate issue, death, were not merely a phenomenal illusion, what were the ontological implications for the individual personality in the absence of Solov'ev's transfigurative art of the future? Indeed, did this system, in which contradiction was pivotal, really pacify Ivan Karamazov's "rebellion" against the extremes of "universal injustice"?

Here too Solov'ev's own work paradoxically acted as an impediment to development. In both "Krasota v prirode" and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" Solov'ev reiterated the thesis touched upon in "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" that the Absolute idea was *triune* in its expression.[24] Both these aesthetic articles therefore also re-emphasized the particularity of objective beauty: its unique capacity to invest the moral and theoretical aspects of the Idea with sensible form. Indeed, the opening sections of "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" were specifically devoted to countering claims that perfection is the preserve of Goodness and Truth alone.[25] Oreus, who was versed exclusively in Solov'ev's aesthetic, the *apex* of his system's ethical-metaphysical foundations, appears temporarily to have erroneously taken these arguments in "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" as a licence to swing to the other extreme, to neglect formal ethics and philosophy altogether. He evidently assumed their meaning to be intrinsically manifest in objects of true Beauty. At this time he certainly resisted the need to qualify his aesthetic faith philosophically.

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[24]See "Krasota v prirode", III and "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", II.
[25]See "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", I.

Oreus' suspension of philosophical enquiry resulted in a vacuum which filled with further impediments to understanding. Although Oreus' concurrent discovery and rapid absorption of Symbolist poetry no doubt seemed to complement the Dostoevskian-Solov'evian ideal to which he now subscribed, it appears to have been diversionary in many respects. Oreus' later modification or refutation of his own opinion of much of the Modernist poetry that he read at this time illustrates well how his voracious reading could distract him. His uncritical digestion of seeming echoes and amplifications of the Absolute idea in Symbolist poetry appears to have given him false assurances that his new, unqualified aesthetic position was definitive.

It is appropriate here, for instance, to recall the line from N.M. Minsky's poem, "Kak son, proydut dela", which Oreus used as an illustration of poetic intuition in *Gibel' lyudey na vysshey stupeni nravstvennogo sovershenstvovaniya v zemnykh usloviyakh*:

...жажда мираж себе создать среди пустыни бесконечной.[26]

Minsky's poem was actually an expression of his "Meonist" system.[27] Oreus, however, evidently identified an expression of his new Solov'evian 'faith' in this poem, which eschewed conventional virtue and truth for the aesthetic contemplation of an ambiguously non-existent, but eternal, perfect world. Moreover, this reading of the poem may have seemed to find confirmation in "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva". As we have suggested, despite Solov'ev's call for a future art in that article, it may have appeared to Oreus that within its context the philosopher was forced to fall back upon the purely anticipatory art of the present. Accordingly he could also have been construed as confirming the validity of Minsky's ambivalent aesthetic of hope and impotence in the following sentiments:

Допустим, что поэт более могучий, чем Гете и Шекспир, представил нам в сложном поэтическом произведении художественное, т.е. правдивое и конкретное, изображение истинно-духовной жизни, - той, которая должна быть, которая совершенно осуществляет абсолютный идеал, - все-таки и это чудо искусства, доселе не удававшееся ни одному поэту, было бы среди настоящей действительности *только великолепным миражем в безводной пустыне*, раздражающим, а не утоляющим нашу духовную жажду.[28]

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[26]See above, p. 119. Oreus cited the poem within days of encountering Minsky's poetry for the first time in late 1895, *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.hr.6, l. 7**.

[27]An attempt to find explanatory vestiges of an *extinct* architectonic First Principle in the phenomenal flux, which Solov'ev notably described as "dialectical abracadabra" (see, Solov'ev, Vl., *Sob. soch.*, vol. 6, p. 246).

[28]Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", *SELk*, p. 138. Italics mine. Transcribed by Oreus: *Kniga materialov. Chast' II*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 5, l. 104**.

Clearly the coincidental use of metaphor here would only be exposed if the disparate metaphysics underlying these respective "mirages" of perfection were understood.

Oreus' compromised understanding of Solov'ev's aesthetics and philosophy at this time also saw him honour K. Bal'mont, whom he would later so unceremoniously dismiss, in the list that he compiled of artists who typified his new aesthetic-ethical standards.[29] Oreus was clearly briefly attracted to the vitality and pantheistic leanings of this mercurial romantic-aesthete and translator of Shelley who *eschewed propounding any systematic metaphysics*. Indeed, it is possible that Oreus' use of an epigraph from Zosima's discourses was finally prompted by the precedent set by Bal'mont's *V bezbrezhnosti*, which he read prior to writing "Po dnyam".[30]

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[29]See, *Gibel' lyudey*, **f.259, op.3, ed.khr. 4, l. 19 ob**.

[30]Oreus read Bal'mont's *V bezbrezhnosti* in January 1895 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 7 ob**), prior to writing "Po dnyam". For the Dostoevskian epigraph and potentially Solov'evian inspired title of this early Bal'montian collection, see Markov, Vl., *Kommentar zu den Dichtungen von K.D. Bal'mont 1890-1909*. It is not probable that Oreus appreciated any allusion to *Solov'ev* in the title *V bezbrezhnosti* (certainly not at the time he wrote "Po dnyam", at least. He read Solov'ev's poetry for the first time only in February-March 1896, and possibly in the edition of 1891 which did not include "Zachem slova? V bezbrezhnosti lazurnoy" (1892): *Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 9 ob.**). However, Markov's identification of the possible allusion further illustrates the complex and confusing appropriation of ideas and motifs at this time which could easily occasion the erroneous association of writers who were in many ways very different.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Critical catalyst of renewed philosophical development: Akim Volynsky

...без разумения точного и ясного нельзя сделать ни одного нового шага вперед.

A. Volynsky. "Literaturnye zametki", *Sv*, 1896, No. 12.

After several months of relative certainty, Oreus' limited understanding of the Solov'evian system ultimately left him vulnerable to doubt. On the 10 August 1896, during his stay at the Panaevs' estate, he described an evening walk in his notebook:

При наступлении ночи одинокая прогулка на станцию, туда и обратно. Полная луна, во всех ластинах и долинах - туман. Проникновенные созерцания, возбужденные проникновенным чтением наедине с самим собой различных стихотворений Фета, Тютчева, А. Толстого и др. С этого места, где с станционной дороги вдруг открывается вид на поворот реки Валдайки луна сияла над рекой, облеченной в тумане, как над большим озером или даже морем.

Луна, просвечивающая сквозь деревья в сосновом лесу близ станции - несказанно вещий вид.[1]

This prescient vision, inspired by the very poets whom Solov'ev championed, an example of the "contemplative moments" ("*sozertsatel'nye mgnoveniya*") which Oreus carefully catalogued that summer,[2] was pregnant with a sense of his new faith in ultimate universal harmony. Yet, that this sense of assurance was in fact fragile and increasingly required philosophical qualification is patent in a starkly contrasting note of *two* days later:

12-го августа: Одинокая прогулка через порецкую мельницу.[3] Состояние души гнетущее: *сознание своей неспособности к философскому мышлению.*

Both Oreus' own growing awareness of his need for philosophical definition, and the weakness of his position without it, are further illustrated by the failed 'polemic' with Jean Marie Guyau that accompanied the first variant of his sonnet cycle, "Syn solntsa".

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[1] *Z.k. No.3*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 16, l. 6 ob. -7**.
[2] See *Z.k. No.3*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 16, l. 1 ob.**
[3] **Ibid., l. 7.**

On reading Guyau's *l'Irreligion de l'Avenir* in late 1896,[4] Oreus evidently felt that he had identified an good example of the *illogicality* of modern positivist thought that Solov'ev had attacked in "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva". He took an excerpt from Guyau that he understood as typifying contemporary *resignation* and appended it to "Syn solntsa", which he then subtitled "V otvet Guyau". He apparently saw such resignation as the root cause of the ingenuous sensualism of A. Ya. Bilibin,[5] the "son of the sun" with whom the cycle gently took issue:

> Dans cet univers où les mondes ondulent commes les flots de la mer, ne sommes-nous pas entourés, assaillis sans cesse par la multitude des êtres? La vie tourbillonne autour de nous, nous enveloppe, nous submerge: nous parlons d'immortalité, d'éternité; mais il n'y a d'éternel que ce qui est inépuisable, ce qui est assez aveugle et assez riche pour donner toujours sans mesure. Celui-là fait connaissance avec la mort qui apprend pour la première fois que ses forces ont une limite, qui se sent le besoin de se reposer, qui laisse tomber ses bras après le travail. La nature seule est assez infatigable pour être éternelle.[6]

Oreus evidently perceived his cycle, with its unequivocal affirmation of *personal* immortality,[7] to be a reproach to Guyau's illogical ambivalence. This was a writer who on the one hand advocated a monistic life principle and universal "solidarity", but on the other deferred to the very positivist thought which Solov'ev had shown to be illogically limited when faced by the question of individual immortality.[8] Guyau's *ultimate* concession to materialism was, Oreus intimated, worse than unqualified materialism. Guyau cruelly clipped the wings of his own monistic faith in universal solidarity in refusing to sanction personal immortality.

However, Oreus' "answer to Guyau" in his cycle was itself, of course, far from being informed by a *positively defined* metaphysics. In the significantly entitled "Ot solntsa k solntsu"[9] he betrayed the fact that his understanding of universal integrity still essentially amounted to the starets Zosima's simple intuition of "other worlds". Indeed, in this sense the whole polemic with Guyau *actually* merely served to emphasize just how *insubstantial* Oreus' position was. Perhaps tellingly, he was subsequently to withdraw all reference to Guyau from the cycle.

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[4]Fouilée, A. (ed.), *Pages Choisies des Grands Écrivains: J.M. Guyau*, Paris, 1895. See, *Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 26 ob.**

[5]The cycle was dedicated to Bilibin, whom Oreus dubbed "the son of the sun". See, *Mid*, p. 36/*Sip*, p. 15. See also *Stikhotvornaya lirika*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 55 ob.-56** for Oreus' own reference to the cycle, and Bilibin's role in inspiring it.

[6]Ibid, p. 183. Recorded in an edition of *Mid* with annotations from the poet's original albums by N.M. Sokolov: **Gbl., f. 386, V.Ya. Bryusov. Knigi 858, l. 12**.

[7]See, most particularly, "Starres Ich", *Mid*, p.39 /*Sip*, p. 17.

[8]For a brief discussion of the blend of optimism and pessimism in Guyau's thought, see N.N. Glatzer's introduction to the reprinted English translation of the *The non-religion of the future*, Schoken books, N.Y., 1962, pp. 17-20.

[9]"Ot solntsa k solntsu" is the concluding poem in the cycle: Nov. 1896, *Mid*, p. 40/*Sip*, p. 18.

If, as his notebook of August 1896 and 'polemic' with Guyau suggest, Oreus now seriously aspired to advocate the *metaphysics* of his new faith, then he would clearly have to turn again to *philosophy*. It is the particular circumstances surrounding his move back to philosophy that we shall now examine. In fact, Oreus' re-emergent need for philosophical definition would find resolution only a few months later in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, with its systematic, critical analyses of Modernist metaphysics and confident endorsement of a Solov'evian future. Although therefore ultimately incidental to Oreus' development, this period of transition is however an important process as it fostered a *critical* dimension in him that allowed him to differentiate himself from many of the disaffected neo-romantics of this period, and to continue his *personal* quest for a *positive* vindication of faith. Indeed, it was not Solov'ev who would give Oreus' need for philosophical qualification this purpose and direction, it was the resident critic of *Severnyy vestnik*, Akim Volynsky (1861-1926).[10]

I

Although Volynsky's specifically neo-Kantian 'manifesto' was undoubtedly important in initially attracting the attention of Oreus, a former Kantian, it was the

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[10]From the end of 1895 to the journal's closure in 1898, Oreus read *Sv* almost without fail (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, *passim***). His interest in Volynsky's critico-philosophical position was such, moreover, that in addition to reading the contemporaneous "Kriticheskie/literaturnie zametki", he felt prompted to turn back to the more theoretical works of the early 1890's:
Dec. 1895: "Oskar Uayl'd", *Sv*, 1895, No. 12 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 6 ob.** Transcribed: *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l. 21**); "Apollon Grigor'ev", 1895, No. 11 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 6 ob.**). Although not listed read, this edition of the journal also included: "Kritika i bibliografiya. Russkie Simvolisty. Valery Bryusov. Chefs d'œuvre"); "Vrazhda i bor'ba partiy", 1894, No. 5 (Ibid., **l. 7**).
Jan. 1896: "Kriticheskaya zametka (o knige N.M. Minskogo 'Pri svete sovesti')", 1890, No. 2 (ibid).
Feb. 1896: "Kritika. Minsky - Bal'mont - Sologub", 1896, No. 2 (ibid., **l. 8**).
Early 1896: From Volynsky's book *Russkie Kritiki* (1896): "Svobodnaya kritika pered sudom burzhuaznogo liberalizma"; "N. Mikhailovsky i ego rassuzhdeniya o russkoy literature"; "Esteticheskoe uchenie Chernyshevskogo"; "O prichinakh upadka russkoy kritiki (retsenziya na knigu D.S. Merezhkovskogo)" (ibid., **l. 9**); "Nauka i filosofiya", *Sv*, 1890, No's. 1-5 (ibid. Transcriptions: *Kniga materialov. Chast' I*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr.1, l. 16-20, 24**); "Nauka, filosofiya i religiya (cogitata metaphisica)", 1893, No. 9 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 9**); "Literaturnye zametki" (including "Dekadentstvo i simvolizm"), 1896, No. 1 (ibid., **l. 9 ob.**); "Nravstvennaya filosofiya gr. L'va Tolstogo", 1890, No. 5 (ibid., **l. 10**); "Kritika. D.S. Merezhkovsky: Novye stikhotvoreniya", 1896, No. 3 (ibid).
Mid to late 1896: "Literaturnye zametki. 'filosofskiya techeniya v russkoy poezii', izd. P.P. Pertsova", 1896, No's. 7-8 (ibid., **l. 18**. See also above, p. 81); "Literaturnye zametki. Dva poslednikh romana Zola", 1896, No. 9 (ibid., **l. 19**); "Literaturnye zametki. 'Quo vadis' Senkevicha", 1896, No. 10 (ibid., **l. 20**); "Literaturnye zametki. Apollon i Dionis", 1896, No. 11 (ibid., **l. 20 ob.**); "Literaturnye zametki. F. Sologub. Dekadentstvo i simvolizm. Pis'mo L. Denisova", 1896, No. 12 (ibid.).
Late 1897: "V poiskakh za Leonardo da Vinchi", 1897, No's. 9-12 (ibid., **l. 42-43, 50**).
Early 1898: "Leonardo da vinchi, ego trud i uchenaya deyatel'nost'", 1898, No's. 1-5 (Ibid., **l. 51-54**).

general ethos of this critic's writings that exercised a direct influence upon him in 1896. Volynsky ranks alongside Solov'ev as an important early influence on Oreus precisely because, in contrast to the philosopher, who dealt in the universal terms of his assimilative, positive system, the critic was a consistent and immediate presence with the journalist's licence to question in the name of philosophy *per se*. Although Volynsky and Solov'ev both called for a new idealist credo in the face of both materialism and aestheticism, Volynsky did not share Solov'ev's confidence that such a credo had already been found, and he eschewed the philosopher's positive outlook.[11]

Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii, Oreus' philosophical calling to account, reflected his absorption of this militant, critical ethos, which reawakened his tendency to reassess his standards and ideals in search of perfection. Volynsky's exacting demands in the name of "philosophical criticism" and "philosophical poetry", a "serious" or "true" Symbolism which would supercede the raw, Decadent yearnings of the present, largely disaffected generation, informed the content of the essay. Indeed, even as Oreus wrote *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, with its highly conditional praise for the early Modernist vanguard, Volynsky's campaign against Decadence on behalf of "true symbolism" reached its apogee:

> Будучи важным протестом искусства против фальшивых формул материализма и позитивизма, декадентство само по себе, как явление, знаменует только перелом в мировоззрении общества <...> За этим переломом должна последовать эпоха, когда протестантские силы соберутся для серьезной переработки старых философских и эстетических понятий, потому что без разумения точного и ясного нельзя сделать ни одного нового шага вперед, потому что, при замешательстве сознательных идей и понятий, не могут прорваться творческие силы человека, которые бессознательны по своей природе, потому что в хаосе противоречивых голосов не может проявиться *единая* правда человеческой скорби о красоте, неразлучной с божеством.[12]

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[11]For example, he attacked Solov'ev's attempt to accommodate Chernyshevsky's aesthetics in "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike" as 'Byzantine tact' (See Ivanova, E.V., "Severnyy Vestnik", *Literaturnyy protsess i russkaya zhurnalistika kontsa XIX - nachala XX veka. 1890-1904*, p. 105). He also censured Solov'ev for his playful parodies of Bryusov's *Russkie simvolisty*, exhorting him to subject such writings to systematic deconstruction and dismissal instead (See "Kritika i bibliografiya", *Sv*, 1895, otdel II, pp. 50-53).

[12]Volynsky, A., "Literaturnye zametki", *Sv*, 1896, No. 12, otdel I, p. 249. It is worth noting here that if the *general* tendency of Oreus' *Stikhotvornaya lirika* can be identified with Volynsky's criticism of Modernism, as we have suggested, then this is an insight which gives us further justification for questioning the reputation Konevskoy earned through literary associations. Significantly, Volynsky cited the letter of one L. Denisov to show that his critical position had support in literary circles (ibid., pp. 249-51). This was in fact a pseudonym of *Z.N. Gippius*. If Oreus sympathised with the anti-decadent tone of her letter, this would certainly shed light on the paradoxical knot of tension in Oreus' "Ob otpevanii novoy russkoy poezii", where, although he defended Modernists including Bryusov and Sologub from Gippius' dismissive ridicule, ironically he *agreed* with her view that they were compromised by their indifference to metaphysical questions. Moreover, it does not seem wholly coincidental that in the wake of reading Volynsky's attacks on Moscow decadence, Oreus *wholly* ignored Bryusov (of whose existence he was undoubtedly made aware by adverse criticism, see letter to Vl. Gippius, *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo doma na 1977 g.*, p. 97) and only read his work upon personal acquaintance with him (see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 445). It was certainly the demand for a beauty of metaphysical 'substance' such as that which

More particularly, during the preceding year Volynsky had subjected individual Modernists to a scrutiny which sought to expose their philosophical credos as capitulations to pessimism, or devoid of positive direction and clarity. He questioned their introverted self-consciousness and subjectivism, identifying it as the issue of metaphysical irresolution. Stylistically conservative, he condemned their undue emphasis on form as an affectation which also stemmed from their failure to address the essential meaning of things; he championed a fusion of form and content. If, for example, we take Minsky and Bal'mont, the two poets whom we identified at the close of the preceding chapter as distracting Oreus from full philosophical understanding, we find that Volynsky subjected them both to critical analysis. Imperiously he praised and yet also censured Minsky in one breath:

> В новых стихотворениях Минского прозвучала нежная, трепетная мелодия, выражающая и возбуждающая какую-то своеобразную, философскую мечтательность. Вот когда поэтическая деятельность Минского, - *при всех несовершенствах форм, при коренных недостатках его философского мировоззрения, при постоянной спутанности его непосредственных художественных ощущений, задерживающей полет его фантазии,* - стала серьезным явлением в современной литературе.[13]

Notably, in his treatment of Minsky in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, Oreus had revised his assessment of the very line from that poet's work, "Kak son, proydut dela", which he had celebrated upon first impression and may have consequently associated with Solov'ev. He now understood the "meonist" implications of the poem, making the confusion of its vision and his own no longer possible:

> Божественной сущности мира нет больше; красоту поэт называет ее «отблеском средь природы», но, конечно, нельзя не сознаться, что, если это и «отблеск», то, во всяком случае, какой-то безнадежный и мучительно дразнящий отблеск невозвратно закатившегося светила. И красоту, значит, нельзя не назвать словами самого поэта «*миражом*» несуществующего мира, что человек «*силой жажды сам себе создал среди пустыни бесконечной*».[14]

Volynsky envisaged that informed Oreus' dismissal of Bryusov's too indiscriminate 'pantheon' of beauty (see above, p. 21), and much of his criticism of his Moscow friend, despite their association within the 'Skorpion' circle. Indeed, it is also possible to suggest that the very philosophical approach to poetry that Bryusov so valued in Oreus (see Bryusov, V. Ya., "Avtobiografiya", *Russ. lit. XX v.*, vol. I, bk. 1, p. 112) was ironically partly Volynskian in origin.

[13]Volynsky, A., "Kritika. Minsky - Bal'mont - Sologub", *Sv*, 1896, No. 2, otdel II, p. 73. Italics mine.

[14]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 16**. Italics mine. Cf. Oreus' reference to the poem in early 1896, above, p. 119.

Oreus had clearly been *prompted* to analyse the specific *philosophical content* of Minsky's poetry. Indeed, as his continued critique of the poet in *Stikhotvornaya lirka v sovremennoy Rossii* shows, although he recognised that Minsky had a gift, like Volynsky he made clear that this required positive philosophical qualification and direction:

Ему еще впитались во все существо его учения позитивизма и чистого феноменизма. Что такое его странный «меонизм», как не разукрашенное кое-какими гностическими фантазиями, по существу своему чистое учение о мире явлений, как о потоке призраков <...> за которыми открывается Ничто <...> У г-на Минского, по вине века и духовного воспитания, все еще остается вытравленным дар ясновидения и проницания пестроты явлений.[15]

Volynsky dealt uncompromisingly with Konstantin Bal'mont, in whose work no cogent metaphysics was discernible:

Несмотря на известную внешнюю красивость, стихи г. Бальмонта читаются с трудом и скоро исчезают из памяти, не оставляя в ней никакого яркого следа. Заурядная мысль, при искусственности поэтических описаний, при деланном стиле, не возбуждает никаких серьезных эстетических настроений. В своих попытках послужить новому искусству г. Бальмонт никогда, однако, не подходит к предметам, его вдохновляющим, с тою простотою, с какою относится всякий истинный талант к сюжетам своих произведений.[16]

Notably, in contrast to his position in early 1896, Oreus reduced K.D. Bal'mont's significance to that of lyrical virtuoso without philosophical substance in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*.[17] This view would shortly develop into the harsh, almost uncompromising criticism of Bal'mont which punctuates Oreus' correspondence with Bryusov and perhaps finds its most virulent expression in an unpublished 'review' of *Goryashchie zdaniya* in 1900.[18]

II

What, however, was the impact of Volynsky's campaign for a philosophically credible art upon Oreus' *own* world-view, a world-view with which he had formerly

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[15]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 16 ob.**
[16]Volynsky, A., "Kritika. Minsky - Bal'mont - Sologub", *Sv*, 1896, No. 2, otdel II, p. 80-81.
[17]*Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 42** (see also *Ln* 98 (i), p. 483).
[18]For examples of Oreus' criticism of Bal'mont, see *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 491, 497, 518, 530. See also letter to Vl. Gippius, *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo doma na 1977 g.*, p. 97. For his review of *Goryashchie zdaniya* see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 520.

identified such figures as Minsky and Bal'mont. It certainly appears that Volynsky's critical presence gave impetus to Oreus' growing consciousness of his *own* need for philosophical qualification. Although the conclusion of *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* was positive, investing hope in D.S. Merezhkovsky and Solov'ev, Volynsky's influence is inversely apparent there. Oreus' commitment to a Solov'evian future at the end of the essay reflected a *reaction* in progress, precipitated by Volynsky's *direct* criticism of Solov'ev's metaphysics.

Already, early in 1896, Volynsky's theoretical manifesto "Nauka, filosofiya i religiya", which preached an idealist system grounded in Kant and Hegel, had arguably prompted Oreus to clarify his position in relation to these philosophers by reading *Solov'ev's* entries on them in the *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'*.[19] Oreus' rather incongruous, *temporary* coupling of Merezhkovsky and Solov'ev in *Stikhotvornaya lirika* is symptomatic of a further reaction to Volynsky's criticism.

Volynsky, for whom the 'Absolute' approximated to the Hegelian Idea, attacked *Merezhkovsky* in March 1896 for what he saw as an untenable polarity in the poet's wilful celebration of both ultimate harmony and a purportedly Nietzschean chaotic "demonism".[20] It was for *precisely* this same, seemingly paradoxical admixture of

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[19]See *Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 9-11**. Oreus read "Nauka, filosofia i religiya" in February 1896 followed by Solov'ev's entries on Kant and Hegel in March. Notably, later in the year Oreus was again to turn to Solov'ev in *Es* for definitions of terms of the type in common currency in Modernist circles for which Volynsky demanded an appropriate usage. In Oct.-Nov. 1896 he noted: "mistitsizm" and "metafizika" (ibid., **l. 20**); in Dec.: "mirovaya dusha" and "mirovoy protsess" (ibid., **l. 27**).

[20]See "Kritika. D.S. Merezhkovsky. Novye stikhotvoreniya", *Sv*, 1896, No. 3, otdel II, pp. 36-43.

A good example of Volynsky's 'Hegelianism' can in fact be found in another of his critiques of Merezhkovsky, regarding *O prichinakh upadka*:

Кто сказал Мережковскому, что кантовская теория познания воздвигала плотину между познаваемым и непознаваемым, которая росла все выше и выше? Это неверно <...> Плотина между двумя мирами не только не выростала, но падала все ниже и ниже и в учении Гегеля уничтожена окончательно.

("O prichinakh upadka russkoy kritiki (retsenziya na knigu D.S. Merezhkovskogo)", *Russkie kritiki*, p. 769.)

It is perhaps most appropriate here to address the question raised by Vl. Gippius' reported claim that *Oreus* was a 'Hegelian' with a portrait of the philosopher hanging above his bed (*Ln* 92 (iv), p. 176). It is my view that Oreus' attitude to Hegel, like Vl. Solov'ev's, was deeply ambivalent, a mixture of profound respect for his seminal innovations as a dialectician, yet disregard for his monistic dissolution of objective reality in pure idealism (for Solov'ev's position, see, for example: "Forma razumnosti i razum istiny", VI and *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*, XXXIX). Certainly Oreus' one written opinion of Hegel of any substance (1896) appears to corroborate this view. Referring to Heine's pantheism he observed:

Наивный оптимизм этот, особенно в Германии, являлся, между прочим, и прямым порождением величественной, блестящей, светлой, но *призрачной* и *безпочвенной* метафизики Гегеля.

("Iz volneniy sovremennoy sovesti", **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 12, l. 5**. My italics.)

It is also worth noting that for a 'Hegelian' Oreus was not well versed in the original writings of the philosopher. Apart from elements of Hegel's philosophy of history, he only read the first section of *Wissenschaft der Logik* (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 53**). Moreover, Oreus was periodically occupied with it from February to April 1898, precisely when his relations with Vl. Gippius were apparently at their

"demonism" and the Absolute that Volynsky censured Solov'ev in a critique of the philosopher's article on Tyutchev of July 1896. How, Volynsky demanded to know, can man fulfil *any* moral ideal if he is 'chaotic' in essence?

Если корень жизни безобразен, если ее мистическая основа демонична - в том именно смысле, как понимает это слово Соловьев, - нельзя придумать такой силы, которая могла бы одолеть эту основу, переделать ее, влить в нее новые соки. Назначая человеку высокую жизненную цель, нельзя сказать, что сущность его противоположна поставленной нравственной задаче. Если она несообразна с человеческою природою, она не имеет права на существование. Если она противоречит идеальной основе жизни, она должна быть признана нелепостью <...> Такой задачи нельзя разрешить никакими логическими средствами, потому что сущность человека, какая-бы она ни была, демоническая или христианская, едина, и всякая последовательная философия, организованная с методической стройностью, философия, которая не торопится вперед никакими произвольными скачками, *никогда не соединит в себе двух противоречащих логических сил, разрушающих одна другую.*[21]

Volynsky patently did not understand the full complexities of the Solov'evian Absolute. For that very reason, however, his critique now bluntly posed the very question regarding Solov'ev's system which *Oreus* had evaded upon first reading the aesthetic articles: how could the apparently contradictory principles intrinsic to that system be logically unified?

Volynsky undoubtedly remains a 'ghost' influence in Oreus' development. Ironically, Oreus turned the critical principles that Volynsky awakened in him upon the neo-idealist himself. However, the defence of the two champions of seeming paradox, Merezhkovsky and Solov'ev, that Volynsky's criticism provoked in Oreus in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii* was profoundly significant.[22] For it was a defence which spurred Oreus to read Solov'ev's most seminal, formal *philosophical* work, *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*. This systematic exposition of Solov'ev's metaphysics was not only to inform the positive conclusion of *Stikhotvornaya lirika*, but

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closest (he dedicated "Debri" to Gippius at this time), a fact that perhaps explains Gippius' impression of Hegelianism.

[21]"Literaturnye zametki. 'Filosofskie techeniya v russkoy poezii'. Izdanie P.P. Pertsova", *Sv*, 1896, No's. 7-8, otdel I, pp. 234-5. Oreus read this article to his father on 24 August 1896 on returning from Mikhailovskoe as noted above, p. 81.

[22]For Oreus on Solov'ev in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*, see above, p. 59. Oreus observed there of Merezhkovsky:

Он устремляется в <...> хаотический плеск, но сквозь плеск всегда сияет ему стройное блаженное светило.

(f.259, op. 3, ed.khr. 5, l. 56.)

Notably, however, *unlike Solov'ev*, Merezhkovsky was not deemed to have *fully* fathomed the unity underlying the dualistic extremes of which he was aware. It was with an analysis of Solov'ev's poetry of Absolute *synthesis* that the essay *concluded*. Indeed, that Merezhkovsky's presence together with Solov'ev in *Stikhotvornaya lirika* was more symptomatic of a reaction to Volynsky than an abiding idea, see Oreus' modified opinion of Merezhkovsky: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 491 and 493.

the renewed direction of Oreus' essentially Solov'evian development henceforth, the subject of Part Three of this thesis.

PART THREE

CHAPTER TWELVE

Beyond the impasse: *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* - a pivotal exposition of Solov'evian metaphysics

Как же, вникая во все часы дня, не ощутить непонятного существа. всем живущего, и во всем мире не узнать его? Плоть и дух, знойный плотский полдень и детски-простое, ясное утро и проникновенная дума вечерних сумерек—все это оно, все это едино.

I. Konevskoy. "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni".

The last two chapters of Part Two of this thesis described a period during which the *dialectical* processes of Oreus' vindication of the metaphysics of faith admittedly lost momentum. However, Part Three will now explore how Vl. Solov'ev's *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* not only gave that dialectic renewed impetus, but also a new, *distinctly Solov'evian* character. The present chapter examines the pivotal importance of *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* as a positive, philosophically qualified answer to Akim Volynsky's charge that Solov'ev's metaphysics of the Absolute was flawed by innate contradiction. Further chapters explore how in turn this new, positive definition of universal synthesis increasingly compelled Oreus to look beyond its purely formal terms for equally positive expressions of the Absolute in *reality*. Indeed, Part Three charts Oreus' ongoing dialectical progression from satisfaction with broad mystical intimations of Absolute synthesis in nature, to renewed demands to understand the *individual's* place in this macrocosmic scheme of things. This new search for resolution involved prolonged periods of uncertainty that, together with positive motifs, found expression in Oreus' *poetry*, which also underwent significant development during this period. It is a particular objective of Part Three of this thesis to set this poetry of uncertainty and discontentment, upon which contemporary criticism placed disproportionate emphasis, in the overall context of positive continuity that *actually* underlay Oreus' development as a poet-*thinker*.

I

Демоническая сила отчетливой членораздельности или «индивидуальности», возмутившаяся против первобытного всесливающего единства, воплотившаяся в роскоши мироздания. вполне может проявляться, объектироваться и в единичном, цельном образе. Для этого не требовалось бы отлива ее из всей множественности мира: родник ее неиссякаем, необъятен, и потому она может пребывать одновременно и во всех раздельных формах существ, и вся опять-таки целиком сказываться в одном каком-нибудь, не входящем в число тех раздельных форм, образе.[1]

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[1] *Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 10 ob. -11**. See also *Sip*, p. 226 where, while this piece did in fact find posthumous publication, copied verbatim and included under the heading "Demony" in the section "Mysli i zamechaniya", it was *incorrectly* dated 1900.

This entry in Oreus' notebook of 6 July 1897, made during his walking expedition of Thüringen, is clearly symptomatic of a radical advance in his thought. This was not the Oreus who in early 1896 had effectively circumvented the seeming paradox of perfection and imperfection in the Solov'evian Absolute. Here he confidently acknowledged the universal *materia prima* to be the "demonic" or "chaotic" principle which Solov'ev had claimed was immanent in everything, and thus the ground for Beauty. Oreus had clearly confronted and accepted the paradox that Volynsky had identified so pointedly in his polemic with Solov'ev's Absolute.

Indeed, in the summer of 1897, he no longer contemplated the static, passive perfection of an eternal First Principle symbolized in the ethereal light of the sun. He now patently understood the evolutionary synthesis of light and matter that was pivotal to the emergence of beauty in nature in Solov'ev's "Krasota v prirode":

Какое явление природы, после хаоса земного лона, более близким осталось к такому бытию, чем самое родное порождение этого лона, глушь бора?

Но как вдвойне поэтому ценно, мило и желанно проникновение цельной лазури и ясного солнца сквозь пышную зелень, растущую над обрывом!

Перед сознанием - наслоения, одно над другим. Сначала - глубь теснин, с пещерными камнями, мхом, дикими травами, выше - стройная, но густокудрая еще древесная сила, и наконец верховный строй - слава безоблачной лазури. С какой величавой явственностью всем этим знаменуются человеку ступени и ход возникновения существ из непроницаемой тьмы первобытного семянника.[2]

This new awareness of the transfigurative genesis of beauty in nature was the dominant feature of that summer, as Oreus' letter to S.P. Semenov of 8 July further indicates:

Такой жизни, какую в Зальцбурге мне довелось вести с неделю, я еще никогда не переживал. Я жил в благодатной, обновляющей атмосфере. Каждый день приносил с собой новые просветления и вознесения всего существа. Кругом сияла роскошь мироздания, явное таинство проявления единой Сущности в многообразии.[3]

It was this ecstatic sense of enlightenment which generated the dynamic cycles of nature poetry which Oreus wrote during that summer and the next.

In notes which described one of the profound mystical experiences of the Absolute that he had in Thüringen, Oreus intimated that his new confidence had a specific *formal* justification:

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[2]*Mid*, p. 115 where entitled "Styd pered mater'yu zemley". For the original see: *Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 33-34 ob**.

[3]*Pis'ma <...> Semenovu*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 21, l. 1.** Oreus' poems "Pod zvuk ushel'ya" (*Mid*, p. 45/*Sip*, p. 21), "V listve" (*Mid*, p. 46/*Sip*, p. 22) and "Sily" (*Mid*, p. 47/*Sip*, p. 22) were inspired by Salzburg and its environs. The letter to Semenov expands upon the impressions that inspired them.

Мне сладко было так чисто понимать великую, любимую истину, что так часто чуждалась меня <...> *Хорошо было, что я внял ее звуку прежде того, что меня ожидало.*[4]

Moreover, these notes also indicate that the "truth" to which Oreus referred here had a *Solov'evian* stamp. The recitations from Tyutchev and Fet that he went on to claim induced this revelation of the "truth" intimate this[5]; so too does the later title that he gave his notes for publication: "'Na volosok' ot *zadushevnoy* zhizni lichnosti". To this he appended a footnote which explained that his definition of the epithet "*zadushevnyy*" was that of Solov'ev.[6] However, the *precise* source and nature of the metaphysical justification underlying Oreus' mystical experience is not revealed in "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni lichnosti", but in his unpublished letter to A.M. Veselov of 22 November 1897. There, Oreus observed:

Совершенное - *конечно, не в обычном значении нравственного совершенства* - бытие, в силу самого совершенства или точнее - бесконечного объема своего - должно включать и все не совершенное, частичное, прямо, стало быть, себе противоположное. Это рассуждение кажется софизмом, но мне оно представляется безупречным. С некоторыми логическими оглядками и робкими оговорками я его нахожу в самом замечательном труде мысли Вл. Соловьева «Критика отвлеченных начал».[7]

That Oreus' very reservations regarding the logical minutiae of Solov'ev's *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* (1880) were "timid" serves only to emphasize further his deference to a work which, as the following survey of its basic content will show, was precisely the confirmation of his thinking thus far that he needed in the face of Volynsky's challenge.

II

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[4] *Mid*, p. 111/*Sip*, p. 149. My italics.

[5] As noted in *Sip* (p. 245) in the original (*Z.k. No. 6*) Oreus actually listed the poem/"incantations" that he recited. They included Tyutchev's "Den' i noch'" and "Svyataya noch' na nebosklon vzoshla", both of which exemplified that poet's sense of the chaotic "abyss" and were pivotal to Solov'ev's praise for his vision in "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva".

[6] For perhaps the clearest definition of "*zadushevnyy*" in Solov'evian writings which we know Oreus (who does not give his source) to have read, see the philosopher's entry under "metafizika", *Es*, vol. 19, kn. 37, p. 165.

[7] *Pis'ma Veselovu, A.M.*, **f. 259, op.3, ed.khr. 19, l. 2**. Italics mine. It is worth drawing attention to the distinction that Oreus makes here between moral and objective perfection. This reminds us that this is the letter to which we referred in Chapter Five (see above, p. 69) in which Oreus announces his divergence from his friend's purely moral interests, and his new preoccupation with cosmological and aesthetic concerns. We proposed in Chapter Five that the letter could not be taken as a definitive rejection of childhood faith without first exploring its context. Now that we have defined Oreus' abandonment of a morality-centred world-view in terms of his dialectical development, we can indeed appreciate that the letter to Veselov was more indicative of a departure from *neo-Kantian idealist ethics* than of the metaphysics of faith *per se*. The search for *objective perfection* was essential to Oreus' *continuing* attempt to find a positive vindication of faith.

Significantly, as Solov'ev quickly established in the foreword to his "Critique", its title belied its ultimately *positive* objective. His intention was to invalidate the claims of various branches of knowledge to a *disproportionate* or *definitive* significance. He did not seek to negate them unconditionally, however. He simply aspired to show how they could in fact only be partial expressions of one genuine, objective Absolute. Here was the promise of systematic philosophical definition that Oreus had been looking for.

Moreover, although the "Critique" divided human experience into the familiar Solov'evian categories of ethics, knowledge and aesthetics, it concentrated principally upon the first two of these. Indeed, the "Critique" offered a statement of the ethical problem that challenged Oreus' *exclusively* aesthetics-centred reading of Solov'ev.

For one with Oreus' personal experience it must have seemed as if the call for the verification of moral experience that concluded the section of the "Critique" on ethics effectively turned the clock back and confronted him again with the point in his development at which he had felt compelled to abandon Kantian ethics:

Полагая <...> прямую зависимость этического вопроса от вопроса метафизического, мы становимся на точку зрения, диаметрально противоположную с точкою зрения Канта <...> мы должны устранить то весьма <...> распространенное воззрение, которое обособляет нравственную область, придает ей безусловное значение, отрицая всякую зависимость должного от сущего, этики от метафизики.[8]

Solov'ev echoed the very Dostoevskian arguments that had precipitated Oreus' own abandonment of a Kantian system in which metaphysics was contingent upon ethics. Notably, however, Solov'ev proceeded to make no allusion here to the *aesthetic* intuition that Oreus had accepted as the *one* definitive means to apprehend "truth" upon reading the philosopher's aesthetic articles. Here Solov'ev demanded a *positively defined, formal* metaphysical ground for ethics as an absolutely essential guarantee of its validity:

Фактически несомненно, что человек имеет религиозное стремление, то есть стремление утверждать себя не как условное явление только, но и как безусловное существо, стремится утверждать себя в Боге или Бога в себе; но ведь предмет этого стремления может быть иллюзией, субъективным призраком <...> *Осуществимость <...> цели зависит <...> не от ее внутреннего достоинства или желательности, а от объективных законов сущего, которые составляют предмет не этики, или практической философии, а философии чисто теоретической, принадлежат к области чистого знания.*[9]

Although at the conclusion of the "Critique" Solov'ev confirmed that *creativity* was the *apogee* of his philosophical system and stated that the aesthetic question was

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[8]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 595.
[9]Ibid., pp. 593, 595-6. Italics mine.

worthy of a separate volume,[10] the work as a whole emphasized that in the first instance aesthetics, like ethics, demands a *metaphysical* ground.

III

Solov'ev began his "Critique" from the fundamental premise that truth is that which *is*, and true knowledge is that which knows *what is*. His first objective was analytically to break down the long chain of conflicting epistemologies that this problem had generated in order to establish what the object of true knowledge is *not*:

> Этот предмет не может быть определен ни как факт, ни как вещь, ни как природа вещей, ни как материя, ни как мир явлений, ни, наконец, как система логически развивающихся понятий.[11]

Solov'ev showed systematically that the truth as defined by conventional abstract theories of knowledge was in fact necessarily conditional. They centred upon the material and formal outward signs of truth, but not its essence proper. Truth could not be reduced to phenomenal sensation or logical thought in themselves. Solov'ev's essential conclusion was that epistemological extremes of pure fact and pure conceptual form were illusory hypostatizations of the *predicates* of being, of thought and feeling. They circumvented the object of true knowledge.

Solov'ev argued that if the cognition of unconditional truth was to be admitted, it was necessary to distinguish the object of true knowledge from relative states of consciousness. This demanded a leap of cognitive faith to which Solov'ev attributed *religious* significance: the admission that the object of true knowledge possesses absolute being in which the cognizing subject abides and directly communes with it:

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[10]It was an intention which Solov'ev never systematically fulfilled. Only the aesthetic articles of the 1890's give a mosaical impression of its projected content.

[11]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 589. As intimated in the above list of things that could not be defined as unconditional truth, Solov'ev's survey of epistemologies encompassed substantial or 'naive' realism (naturalism, materialism and atomism), phenomenal or critical realism (sensualism, empiricism and positivism) and both critical idealism and Hegelian panlogism.

Aspects of this survey were in themselves of specific importance to Oreus' development. Of obvious significance in view of Oreus' past was the dismissal in chapter XXXIX of the contention that the question of knowledge was resolved by Kantian critical idealism. It was not a resolution, Solov'ev contended, merely the question rephrased in a new and provocatively irresolvable form. Of particular significance to Oreus' immediate and further development was Solov'ev's discursive logical dialectic justifying the speculative theory of *dynamic* atomism which viewed matter as an amalgam of atomic *forces* (XXXIII). It was such arguments, overturning the materialist insistence on the 'impenetrability' of matter, which informed Oreus' growing preoccupation with 'forces' in the summer of 1897 (see for example "Olitsetvoreniya sil": *Mid*, p. 105/*Sip*, p. 143) and beyond. In its elaborated form "Olitsetvoreniya sil" also seems to reflect the influence of Solov'ev's argument that abstract empiricism, while a valid means of observing the temporary generalities of immediate reality, has no right to elevate its findings to the level of law, this being contradictory to its whole ethos (XXXVII).

Истина <...> не может быть только отношением, а есть то, что дано в отношении, то, к чему субъект наш относится <...> только в связи с истинно-сущим, как безусловно реальным и безусловно универсальным <...> могут явления нашего опыта иметь настоящую реальность и понятия нашего мышления настоящую, положительную универсальность; оба эти фактора нашего познания сами по себе, в своей отвлеченности, совершенно безразличные к истине, получают, таким образом, свое истинное значение от третьего, религиозного начала.[12]

Having thus postulated the *objective* content of that which theoretical reason conceptualizes, Solov'ev was able to formulate a general logical definition of the unconditional object of true knowledge. In response to the question "what is truth?", our initial answer is that the truth is that which *is*. But, Solov'ev argued, a multiplicity of individual objects, states of being, phenomena exist and cannot be termed "truth", as it presupposes identity. Multiplicity can therefore only be true in so far as it is integral to a truth which, in addition to being that which is (*sushchee*), is also a "unity" (*edinoe*); but what is unity? In the first instance, it can be defined as "oneness". However, if it is exclusively "oneness", i.e. the simple negation of multiplicity, then it exists in *relation* to the many, which are outside it. As such, it is only one of many, or an element of the many, and the many share an equal claim to being "truth", which disintegrates in self-contradiction. Therefore, to be "truth", "unity" cannot exist in contradistinction to the many - be a purely *negative* oneness - but must be a *positive* unity, *possessing multiplicity within itself*. Since many in unity are "all" or "everything", then the positive or true unity is unity which contains or exists as the *unity of everything*. Thus the object of true knowledge is that which *is* (*sushchee*) and a *unity* (*edinoe*) which simultaneously is, or contains, *everything* (*vse*). It is therefore definable as the "unitotal entity" or "Being" (*sushchee vseedinoe*).

This skeletal definition of unconditional truth clearly accords with the seeming "sophism" which Oreus commended to Veselov in his letter, deeming it "faultless".[13] However, as the term "sophism" there would suggest, did this *formula* not require further justification to explain Oreus' confidence in it? How, indeed, did it relate to the immediate reality of Thuringen in the summer of 1897? How did it allow Oreus positively to attribute a chaotic ground to the universe in defiance of Volynsky? In fact, as Oreus' letter to Veselov indicates, the philosopher continued to elaborate his definition of the object of true knowledge on the basis of this logical dialectic. In his letter to Veselov, Oreus significantly attributed "modes of being" to this Absolute object:

Предвечное совмещение всего должно все состояния обнимать, совокуплять в себе, стало быть, оно должно быть не только в своем всеобъемлющем состоянии или *«способе бытия»*, но и в

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[12]Solov'ev, Vl., *Sochineniya*, Vol. 1, pp. 684-5.
[13] See above, p. 141.

прямо противоположном ему - в состоянии множества частных, обособленных, разъединенных сил.[14]

In referring to a "mode of being" here, Oreus intimated that he had absorbed the further exposition of the Solov'evian Absolute in the "Critique" that qualified the logical formulation of unitotality (*vseedinstvo*) and granted him the licence to look upon nature in 1897 and 1898 with a new and inspired eye.

Solov'ev proceeded to contend that ultimately "being" is a *predicate* that presupposes a *subject* or First Principle. Indeed, as the ultimate substance of everything, including ourselves, we are able to intuit this subject deep within as an inscrutable feeling of something absolute in which all concrete representations of being are effaced. Notably, however, the philosopher immediately cautioned against an unqualified satisfaction with this intuition of unity, which he termed *abstract mysticism*. Notably, too, it was precisely the kind of negative and indeterminate vision of unity that Oreus would censure in his own critique of the early Modernists in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*. The First Principle, Solov'ev continued, recalling his dialectical definition of unitotal being, derives positive definition as the "Absolute" only by virtue of its assertion within itself of itself and its *other*: the multiplicity of relative being:

Абсолютное <...> определяет себя, проявляясь как безусловно-единое чрез положение своего противного; ибо истинно-единое есть то, которое не исключает множественности, а, напротив, производит ее в себе и при этом не нарушается ею, а остается тем, чем есть, остается единым и тем самым доказывает, что оно есть *безусловно-единое*.[15]

This supreme logical law, Solov'ev notably observed in passing, is only the abstract expression of the physical and moral fact of *love* - the seemingly paradoxical self-affirmation or definition of self through the affirmation of another. Indeed, to assert that the First Principle is the Absolute unity of itself and its other is, the philosopher observed, only to repeat in abstract the words of the Apostle: "God is love". This aside also undoubtedly had a particular resonance for Oreus. It will be recalled that Ippolit Panaev's 'dialectic' of pure love had also taken St. John's words as its premise. Here, however, Solov'ev's God was not the issue of a delimiting 'moral intuitivism', but the positive object of 'true knowledge'. Here was the monism to which Panaev had come to aspire, but could not attain, constricted by his subscription to Kant's critical idealism.

Solov'ev thus argued that in the first instance, properly defined, the First Principle is an Absolute in which two 'poles' are distinguishable. The first is the principle of unconditional unity in itself, free of all form and manifestation, and thus also of being. The

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[14] *Pis'ma Veselovu, A.M.*, **f. 259, op.3, ed.khr. 19, l. 2**. Italics mine.
[15] Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 706.

second is the immediate potential of being, or *prima materia*, the "Idea" of unitotal multiplicity.

It was the next step in Solov'ev's exposition of this "Absolute", however, which evidently held a particular interest for Oreus. Set out in chapter XLIV of the "Critique", which Oreus transcribed almost complete into his *Kniga materialov*,[16] it concerned the relationship of the Absolute "in itself" to *reality*. In chapter XLIV Solov'ev explored how the multiplicity essential to the unitotal definition of the Absolute could translate from being pure potential or idea into *actuality* without *contradiction*. It was this theory which Oreus echoed in his attribution of "modes of being" to the Absolute in his letter to Veselov.

Solov'ev opened chapter XLIV of the "Critique" with a reminder of his formulation of the Absolute and a pointed question:

Истинно-сущее, чтобы быть истинно-сущим, то есть всеединым или абсолютным, должно быть единством себя и своего другого. Не есть ли это противоречие?[17]

The philosopher allowed that if the First Principle was a concept or a material object then it would be subject to the law of identity, and the Absolute's affirmation of its "other" in itself would be a contradiction. Concept or object *A* cannot be concept or object *B*. He noted, however, that the Absolute subject *transcends* any such conceptual or material definition, a consideration which radically alters the complexion of things. Indeed, he reintroduced his distinction here between the First Principle as a transcendent *subject* and the *predicates* of which it is possessed in "being", and argued that there is nothing to impede it from possessing more than one definition or "mode of being" (*sposob bytiya*) without contradiction. If two different definitions, or "modes of being" are signified as *a* and *b*, and a substantive being (*sushchestvo*) is denoted by *A*, then, he maintained, no contradiction arises if it is asserted that *A* is both *a* in one relation and *b* in another, even if *a* and *b* are contraries. The First Principle, in itself defying or transcending definition, can in one relation be the subject of unitotality or "God", while in another the subject of inabsolute being. In fact, Solov'ev contended, this is essential as unitotality presupposes a multiplicity which becomes "everything" in unity, but is, in itself, "not everything". As the subject of the unitotal idea, however, the Absolute in itself cannot be "everything" and "not everything". To be both in one act is logically impermissible since there cannot be more than one act (perforce entailing change, transition and process) in the Absolute, which can thus be said to possess its "other" -multiplicity- only in the *potentiality* of the "Idea". But pure potentiality is *nothing*. If multiplicity cannot be in actuality in the

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[16]Ibid., Chapter XLIV. Transcription: *Kniga materialov. Chast' II*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 5, l. 108-9/** *Dopolnitel'naya ko II chasti 'Knigi materialov' tetrad'*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 11, l. 49-51**.
[17]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 709.

Absolute in itself, and its unconditional autonomy is logically impermissible, then it must be of the Absolute and yet simultaneously somehow not absolute. To resolve this paradox Solov'ev proceeded to contend that alongside the Absolute in itself it is necessary to admit a "second Absolute" or God which, not identical with the Absolute Being as such. is, however, also the subject of unitotality - of unitotality in a state of "becoming" (*stanovyashcheesya vseedinoe*):

Так как быть абсолютным - значит быть субъектом абсолютного содержания (всеединства), и если быть субъектом абсолютного содержания в вечном и нераздельном акте свойственно единому истинному существу, или Богу, то другое существо может быть субъектом того же содержания в постоянном процессе; если первое *есть* всеединое, то второе *становится* всеединым, если первое вечно обладает всеединым, то второе прогрессивно им овладевает и постольку соединяется с первым.[18]

It was precisely the logical necessity for such a second Absolute "mode of being", a state of "becoming" in which multiplicity is in actuality, that Oreus proceeded to elaborate in his letter to Veselov. Referring to the "dichotomy" between the being of a macrocosmic First Principle and the being of the individual subject in multiplicity, he asked:

Как сроднить одно с другим, не выходя из сферы логики, которую мы признали общеобязательною для всей вселенной? Достичь такого желаемого результата можно <...> признав некоторое всеобъемлющее бытие от века, предвечно совмещающее в себе все действующие в мире силы, но в силу именно этой всесовместности своей, не могущее существовать только в этой установленной гармонии единства с множественностью, покоя с движением, но неизбежно принужденное существовать и в прямо противоположном состоянии - неразрешимого разлада этих сил и эти два параллельных способа бытия были и будут от века и до века.[19]

Here Oreus intimated his understanding of the paradox in Solov'ev's *aesthetic* articles that he had formerly circumvented: the philosopher's apparently contradictory reference to immanent unitotality in a universe with its ground in formless chaos. Universal chaos and cosmogonic order were not paradoxical, but integral to the Absolute in a state of "becoming" unitotal, a "mode of being" in which the Absolute in itself finds the positive content of its "Idea". Indeed, the "Critique" showed that Oreus' earlier. unqualified yearning for a revelatory union with the "light", in which the individual transcends the contradictions of phenomenal being, was an unduly *pantheistic* reading of Solov'ev. In the Absolute in itself the individual *was* contained positively in the divine harmony of unitotality, but only in the Idea, potentially. The seemingly contradictory reality of multiplicity and flux in which the individual abides in the Absolute in a state of "becoming" was, however, the *positive* definition of that Absolute unitotality in itself. It

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[18]Ibid., p. 711.
[19]*Pis'ma* <...> *Veselovu*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 19, l. 5 ob**.

was thus that, assured of the pivotal place of cosmogonic *processes* in the Absolute equation, Oreus no longer eschewed them as a phenomenal "abyss", but scrutinized them in the summer of 1897 with the positive eye of an artist at one with them:

> Как же, вникая во все часы дня, не ощутить непонятного существа, всем живущего, и во всем мире не узнать его? Плоть и дух, знойный плотский полдень и детски-простое, ясное утро и проникновенная дума вечерних сумерек—все это оно, все это едино.[20]

Indeed, it was equipped with these insights into the Absolute that Oreus' had the mystical experience described in the subsequently entitled "Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni". Oreus' poem "Gul", written on the same day, bears further compelling testimony to his new sense of eternity and flux in harmony:

> Строги игры вселенной,
> *То нетленной, то тленной* —
> Ветра вой,
> Мерный рокот потока...
> Игры жизни глубокой,
> Роковой.[21]

The pithy epigraph from Kol'tsov to Oreus' poem, "Sily", perhaps most effectively intimates, however, that it was upon the beauty of the *dynamics* and *processes* of the phenomenal domain that he now placed a *particular* emphasis:

> Мир жизнью кипит.[22]

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[20]*Mid*, p. 112/*Sip*, p. 150. For original see *Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 16 ob.**
[21] *Mid*, p. 49/*Sip*, p. 24.
[22]*Mid*, p. 47/*Sip*, p. 22. The epigraph is from Kol'tsov's "Bozhiy mir", from which Oreus also drew the epigraph to "Syn solntsa".

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Solov'evian influence limited?

I

The impersonalism of the Absolute

> ...сколько бы я перед лицом жизни природы и человека ни переживал восторгов, которые вызывали бы во мне чувство трепета вселенской жизни, но передо мной всегда очевидно останется что-то, что, хотя бы я даже чувствовал и в жизни того всемирного Бытия, настойчиво преграждает мне путь к этому Бытию, показывает себя бесконечно превосходящим мои силы.
>
> I. Oreus-Konevskoy. *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*

This is the first of two chapters (the second is Chapter Fifteen) in which we will examine Oreus' new subscription to the Solov'evian metaphysics of the Absolute and ask whether it really was the basis for his further development, or not in fact ultimately incidental, as his increasingly polyphonous poetry would suggest. In exploring this question we will find support for the case *against* positive philosophical influence in the emphasis that, for differing reasons, both Konevskoy's admirers (most particularly Bryusov) and critics (A. Smirnov)[1] placed upon the *undeniable* vein of *uncertainty* which emerged in his later poetry.

I

> Поскольку «становиться абсолютным» для данного субъекта предполагает, с одной стороны, абсолютное, *чем* становится этот субъект, и, с другой стороны, неабсолютное, *из чего* он становится, то мы имеем необходимо два порядка бытия, относительно противоположные: с одной стороны, порядок логический и метафизический по существу в котором *prius* есть то, *что есть*, абсолютное и, с другой стороны, порядок генетический, феноменальный, по природному происхождению, в котором *prius* есть то, *что не есть* в истинном смысле, из чего все становится, неабсолютное, многое или частное. Что в одном порядке есть первое, то в другом становится последним; первое по существу, абсолютное, *становится* последним в процессе, во времени. Очевидно при этом, что генетический порядок, в котором абсолютное становится предполагает порядок метафизический, в котором оно *есть*.[2]

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[1] In his article "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*, No. 4, 1904, pp. 81-83.
[2] Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 717.

Thus Vladimir Solov'ev concluded his thoughts in *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* on *man's* place within the Absolute. Man is, the philosopher maintained, the denizen of two *equally* essential spheres of being existing within the Absolute in an abiding and mutually interdependent relationship, each presupposing the other. That which Solov'ev termed the "metaphysical" order of being assured the individual personality of its status within the "Absolute in itself" as an *immortal* and *free* subject of unitotality However, the "genetic" or "phenomenal" being of the "second", "becoming" Absolute or "World Soul" was also shown to be invested with meaning as the positive content of the unitotal Absolute.

Does this monistic system not constitute the effective resolution of Oreus' dialectical search for a vindicatory metaphysics of faith and our attempts to redefine his integral identity? Was Oreus' early need to champion the spiritual dignity of the individual in the face of materialism not positively resolved here *together* with his later demand to know the meaning of that individual's temporal life? Was not Zosima's God of ultimate harmony reconciled here with Ivan Karamazov's chaotic "devil" without paradox?

If we now reassess Bryusov's "Mudroe ditya" we certainly find that the seemingly irreconcilable antinomies at the core of that canonical analysis of Oreus' poetry begin to find positive resolution. Solov'ev's monistic metaphysics resolves the apparent contradiction between Oreus' pride in his genealogy and love for the natural world on the one hand, and uncompromising affirmation of the individual on the other, which Bryusov left open-ended in his account of the ascendancy of Oreus' *artistic* dynamism. Bryusov exemplified Oreus' pride in his lineage, for example, in the poem "Po pravu rozhdeniya" (autumn,1898),[3] the content of which is epitomized in its title. This he juxtaposed with Oreus' acute sensitivity to, and disavowal of, his generic origins in the chaotic forces of the world process in "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e" (31 January,1899):

В крови моей - великое боренье.
О, кто мне скажет, что в моей крови?
Там собрались былые поколенья
И хором ропщут на меня: живи!

<...>

Ужель не сжалитесь, слепые тени?
За что попал я в гибельный ваш круг?
Зачем причастен я мечте растений,
Зачем же птица, зверь и скот мне друг?

Но знайте - мне открыта весть иная:

[3]"Mudroe ditya", *Sip*, p. xiv.

То - тайна, что немногим внушена.
Чрез вас рожден я, плод ваш пожиная,
Но родина мне - дальняя страна.

Далеко и меж нас - страна чужая...
И там - исток моих житейских сил.
И жил я, вашу волю поражая,
Коль этот мир о помощи просил.[4]

Bryusov's juxtaposition of these antithetical poems was in itself obviously not incorrect. However, we can now appreciate that it is imperative in turn to qualify that juxtaposition with reference to the Absolute system to which we have established Oreus subscribed. For according to its terms the simultaneous subscription to both positions was *not* contradictory or illogical. The two contrasting poems are not necessarily indicative of the negation or displacement of one principle in favour of another. The definition of evolution given in "Krasota v prirode" and *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* as a unitotal process of "becoming" clearly sanctioned the celebration of a Swedish-Slavonic ancestry which Oreus deemed to embody this positive "world process". However, the transcendence of that same genealogy and assertion of one's unconditional being in the Absolute in itself, the moment of essentially *ascetic* refinement championed in "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e", also *wholly* accorded with the Solov'evian metaphysics of the Absolute. Indeed, Oreus took the syncopated epigraph to "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e" ("*Genus-genius*") from Chapter Eight of Solov'ev's tract *Opravdanie dobra*, "Edinstvo nravstvennykh osnov". There Solov'ev in no sense contradicted his own contention that the natural processes of procreation *at present* have a *positive* purpose. He simply argued, in terms that Oreus clearly echoed in "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e", that the procreative perpetuation of the cycle of individual life and death that sustains the genus must *eventually* be confronted and overcome:

На человека его родовая сущность предъявляет свои права, и через него она хочет увековечиваться; но его внутреннее существо отвечает на такое требование: «я не то же, что ты, я сверх тебя, я *не род*, хотя *от рода*, - я не genus, а genius. Я хочу и могу быть бесконечным и бессмертным не в тебе только, а сам по себе. Ты влечешь меня в бездну своей дурной, пустой бесконечности, чтобы поглотить меня и уничтожить, но я ищу себе той истинной и полной бесконечности, которою мог бы поделиться и с тобою.[5]

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[4]*Mid*, p. 192/*Sip*, pp. 59-60. Cited by Bryusov: *Sip*, p. xiv.
[5]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 225. Oreus did not list "Edinstvo nravstvennykh osnov" as read. However, supplementary to the first edition of *Opravdanie dobra*, it appeared for the first time separately in *Knizhki nedeli*, 1898, No. 2, precisely at the time that Oreus wrote "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e". Moreover, he frequently read *Knizhki nedeli* (see *Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6** *passim*).

As the above passage clearly shows, in Solov'ev's view to affirm the "genius" of the individual personality was not to assert the ascetic principle unequivocally, to deny or extirpate the life of the genus unconditionally, but to exhort its *sublimation*. Indeed, when Oreus' celebration of the "genius" is judged in terms of Solov'ev's monistic system, it is also clearly shown to be guiltless of the negative, abstract freedom for which Z.N. Gippius condemned the Decadents, and which A.Smirnov identified as Konevskoy's folly in "Poet bezplotiya".

II

The metaphysics of the Absolute therefore offers us valuable insights into the genuine rationale and context of some of Oreus' later metaphysical poetry. However, it must be allowed that even his most systematic *poetic* exposition of his Solov'evian ideals, "Slovo k Istine" (April 1899), which concludes *Mechty i dumy*, betrays the fact that his subscription to them was not entirely unproblematic.

In "Slovo k Istine", just like Solov'ev in his "Critique", Oreus dismissed "abstract principles" or truths on the one hand, while admitting their relative validity as partial expressions of absolute Truth on the other. Furthermore, this Truth significantly no longer took the form of the pure light for which he himself had previously yearned, but, unitotal, positively integrated *all* contraries:

Солгали все великие ответы,
Вернее, не солгали - правы все.
Но не хочу их - издавна воспеты
Они. Меня влечет к иной красе.

Я не хочу их: грубы и убоги
Их светлые иль темные цвета.
Наскучили все демоны и боги:
Их жизнь закостенела и проста.

Пойми, что и тебя я отвергаю,
О Истина, о истукан людей,
Когда тобой я с бытия слагаю
Хоть часть из всех явлений, всех страстей.

Пойми, что обольщаешь самозванно
Ты слуг твоих, когда один хоть свет,
Который нам сияет так желанно, -
Не твой единый истинный ответ.

Знай, что люблю я и обман твой нежный,
Что гонит с небосклона злую тень,
Из-за бессильных, коим мир безбрежный

Тогда лишь мил, когда их греет день.

Но мне не нужно нежного обмана:
Пускай он даже прав, а не обман.
Но взор мой - брат и солнца, и тумана:
Он роскошью всемирной обаян.

Так - только если Красота откроет
Мне славу всех явлений и страстей,
Все истины зараз и враз построит,
Тогда лишь буду в Истине я *всей*.[6]

This was patently a Solov'evian poem. However, its final stanza begs a question. Did not the formal dialectic presuppose the possibility of the literal *realization* of the ideal if faith in its terms was to be justified? If the ideal was merely conceptual or intuited was it not justifiably neglected by Bryusov, who actually identified the stress upon Beauty in the final stanza of "Slovo k Istine" as the fullest expression of the uncompromised aesthetic freedom that he sought to emphasize in "Mudroe ditya".[7] Even if A. Smirnov argued the opposite case to Bryusov - that Oreus' poetry lapsed into repetition and plaintiveness - was he not also justified in dismissing the dialectic from his analysis of Konevskoy by virtue of its insubstantiality? Was he not right to introduce the first stanza of Oreus' "Do i posle" (April 1898) in "Poet bezplotiya" to illustrate the compromised position of one so dependent upon metaphysical constructs:

За что люблю я с детства жизнь и землю?
За то, что все в ней тайной веселит.
За то, что всюду вещему я внемлю -
Ничто не дарует, но все сулит.[8]

In fact in this poem, which Oreus significantly chose to conclude his summer cycles of 1897-98 in *Mechty i dumy*, he was ostensibly satisfied with the passive percipience of the exclusively contemplative poet-thinker. Yet Smirnov's insistence that "Do i posle" betokened inevitable tension is certainly not wholly unjustified. Did it not indeed show that, although Oreus now better understood the metaphysics of the Absolute, his role was as passive, his vision as impracticable, as they had been when he yearned for the "light" in 1896?

III

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[6]*Mid*, p. 208/*Sip*, pp. 82-3.
[7]See "Mudroe ditya", *Sip*, p. xvii.
[8]*Mid*, p. 80/*Sip*, p. 38. See also "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*. 1904, No. 4. p. 83.

Oreus was certainly prone to doubt and dissatisfaction with his purely contemplative stance. Even at the height of his stay in Thüringen, on 7 July 1897, he confessed to feeling unfulfilled:

Мысли IV

Покуда я нахожусь в положении учеников Иоанных, которые, как сыны чертога брачного, постятся, потому что при них нет жениха; а немногие из рода человеческого находятся в положении учеников Иисусовых, которые могут не поститься - т.е. широко радоваться жизни, потому что у них не отнят жених.[9]

Oreus acknowledged a new *moral* challenge here, even if he was not fully to confront its implications for some time. He realized that his credo depended upon constructs and portents of an impersonal, macrocosmic scale. He himself lacked the authority, the knowledge to *effect* positive moral order. He could only aspire to beauty in passive contemplation, an essentially ascetic process of spiritual purgation and preparation, rather than of confident affirmation. If he had bridged the divide between absolute and inabsolute being in theory and intuition, he did not know how it was to be bridged *in fact*.

The reasons for Oreus' feeling that his vision was flawed are perhaps best explored with reference to that mystical experience that he had on the same day that he voiced this sense of unfulfilment, 7 July 1897, and which he described in the notes later entitled "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni lichnosti":

...желал я вызвать внутренних духов ночи, открыть в себе неведомые родники, выпустить на волю незримые воды из-за высоких запруд. И голос мой провозвестил многие и вечные песни ночи—пророческие слова Тютчева и Фета. В те минуты, чувствовалось, что не я, не то, что обыкновенно называет себя «я», говорит: из груди моей звуки взрываются странные, нежданные. Да, это уже не тесное, всегдашнее «я» мое, через меня глаголет что-то всезряшее, сама ночь <...> А в то же время я чувствую себя легким, свободным, крепким - я не бессильный раб той новой природы, что выступила во мне. *Она мгновенно срослась, составила единый сомкнутый круг с цельным составом моей сознательной личности.*[10]

This passage forcefully corroborates the view that, no longer shy of the nocturnal "abyss", Oreus had accepted his integral place in Solov'ev's Absolute. However, it also indicates the *limitations* of the account of man's role in relation to the Absolute in *Kritika*

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[9]*Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 15**.
[10]*Mid*, pp. 111-12/*Sip*, pp. 149-50. For original see *Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 16 ob. -18** where it appears as "Mysli V" without the subsequently imposed title "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni lichnosti".

otvlechennykh nachal. The passage shows that once again the *order* in which Oreus read Solov'ev was pivotal in determining his development. It allows us to suggest that Oreus had absorbed something of the theories of "godmanhood" and "mystical knowledge" as presented in chapters XLIV and XLV of the *incomplete* "Critique" and mistakenly taken them to be definitive.

In chapter XLIV Solov'ev described man's unique place in the process of universal "becoming" in the following terms:

> ...«второе абсолютное» (мы знаем, что такое выражение не заключает в себе противоречия, ибо второе есть абсолютное не в том же смысле, как первое, обладает абсолютным содержанием не так, как первое), - это второе абсолютное (которая пантеистическая философия всегда смешивает и отождествляет с первым), будучи основанием всего сушествующего вне вечного, божественного акта, всего относительного бытия, будучи в этом качестве душою мира, в человеке впервые получает собственную, внутреннюю действительность, находит себя, сознает себя.[11]

Rational man is, Solov'ev maintained, the apogee of the "world process". In him the "second Absolute" or "World Soul" is *conscious* for the first time of *both* its principles: of its relative being *and* of the unitotal ideal immanent in it. In the enlightened individual the "second Absolute" potentially attains consciousness of its proper definition as a subject of unitotality. On this basis Solov'ev contended that man has a pivotal, god-like role in *effecting* the Truth as he now definitively formulated it. This truth, the mutually determinative interrelationship of the two Absolutes, could therefore be termed "godmanhood" (*bogochelovechestvo*).

Oreus' description of his mystical experience in "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni lichnosti", with its emphasis upon the integral interaction of individual and universe, certainly seems to be symptomatic of one now fascinated by *man's* potential stature as the conscious subject of unitotality - as the "second Absolute". Crucially, however, "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni" also shows that Oreus evidently based his exploration of this possibility upon the systematic exposition of "mystical knowledge" in the next chapter of Solov'ev's "Critique", chapter XLV. This was the source of his mistake and the source of his frustration.

In chapter XLV of the "Critique", Solov'ev followed his dialectic of the Absolute with a study of the intuitive knowledge that he allowed was necessary if the truth was to be known not only conceptually, but in essence. The philosopher returned there to his earlier assertion of a third, "religious" mode of cognition which transcends the incidentality of sense and the purely formal nature of logical reason, of which his

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[11]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 713.

dialectic of the Absolute was the issue. This "religious" knowledge of the objective world, Solov'ev maintained, is founded in *faith* in an absolute link between cognizing and cognized in the unconditional being of the Absolute in itself.[12] This faith is the first, elementary moment in a subconscious, *tripartite* act of mystical cognition. To have significance, the absolute unity of subject and object admitted in "faith" presupposes positive *content* - knowledge of the object in itself. This in turn presupposes that the subject and object can interact as essential "ideas" within the Absolute and that this interaction precedes actual consciousness within the phenomenal sphere. Termed "imagination" ("*voobrazhenie*", "*umstvennoe sozertsanie*") by Solov'ev, he maintained that this direct intercourse with the "idea" of the object in its constant, integral essence is in turn combined with "creativity" ("*tvorchestvo*"), an organizational act which sets its pre-existent stamp upon the kaleidoscopic chaos of relative experience. In the domain of immediate experience, the philosopher claimed, sensations and thoughts can therefore be said to be attributes ("*priznaki*") of absolute objective essence.[13] Indeed, in the final analysis, man could ideally apprehend *everything* in *one* object through this triune act of "mystical knowledge", in which he knows himself and his object in their unitotal being.

A preoccupation with "mystical knowledge" certainly seems to have informed the title of "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni lichnosti" and reference there to "unknown springs" ("*nevedomye rodniki*") of experience and the "invisible waters of high dams" ("*nezrimye vody iz-za vysokikh zaprud*"). This view finds further support, moreover, in Oreus' letter to Veselov of November 1897 where he defended the credibility of such knowledge:

Мир явлений никак нельзя признать завесой сущности раз сущность необъятна, безпредельна, то и при состоянии ее раздельности на частные явления, в каждой частице должна заключаться вся бесконечность. Ибо, действительно, что такое, скажите вы мне на милость, ограниченная часть бесконечности? - об этом спрашивал еще Спиноза в «Этике», которую изучаю в настоящую минуту. Итак, ничто не заслоняет нас от мира всеобъемлющей Сущности.

"In's Innre der Natur" -
- O du Philister! -
"Dringt kein erschaffner Geist!"
Mich und Geschwister
Mögt ihr an solches Wort
Nur nicht erinnern.
Ich sage:
Ort für Ort
Sind wir im Innern.

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[12]Solov'ev defined faith here as "veshchey oblichenie nevidimykh". As noted above (p. 61), Oreus used this same Pauline definition of faith in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii.*

[13]It is worth noting here that for Oreus it must have seemed as if Solov'ev again both echoed and qualified I.A. Panaev's system. Panaev also referred to *priznaki* of the "world-in-itself" (see "Posleslovie", *Raziskateli istiny*, Vol. 2, p. 58). However, unlike Solov'ev's, the neo-Kantian's efforts to cicumvent critical idealism by attributing reality to noumena remained strictly limited.

-"Glückselig, wem sie nur
Die äußre Schale weist" -
Das hör ich dreißig Jahre wiederholen,
Ich spotte drauf, aber verstohlen.[14]

Both the mystical experience of "'Na volosok' ot zadushevnoy zhizni" and the arguments for a mystical form of knowledge in the letter to Veselov did not in themselves contradict Solov'evian philosophy in the "Critique". However, in their *emphasis* upon "mystical knowledge" they indicate that Oreus had failed to appreciate the implications of Solov'ev's broad call for *action* - for the *actual* transfiguration of reality - at the end of his incomplete "Critique".

Indeed, in the final chapter of the "Critique", Solov'ev observed that although "religious" or "mystical knowledge" is the necessary presupposition of true knowledge it is effective in the subject *only to the extent that he is a 'metaphysical' being*. It is, the philosopher continued, precisely man's *dual* nature which makes him ideally suited to embody the second Absolute, *to attain Godmanhood*; resolution *cannot* involve the assertion of metaphysical consciousness alone. To attain true knowledge man must synthesize mystical knowledge with reason and sense, the conditional modes of cognition, since in their absence the metaphysical sphere has no reality for phenomenal existence. This, the philosopher observed, would entail a switch of emphasis from knowledge to *creativity*. For if we can know "Truth" as it exists eternally in God, we ourselves exist in an unqualified multiplicity in which his idea is but potential, which is not true, but false. The inauthenticity of our knowledge is contingent upon the inauthenticity of our very reality. Before true knowledge can be fully experienced, therefore, this reality must be changed, a task which requires an act of *theurgic* creativity, not passive knowledge. Notably, however, this synthesis, or "free scientific theosophy", the broad terms of which Solov'ev proceeded to define, remained an ideal at the end of the "Critique". It was to have been the subject of the third, subsequently unrealized part of the work.

Certainly Oreus' writings of 1897 suggest that the sketchiness of this call for aesthetic resolution in comparison with the detailed exposition of "mystical knowledge" meant that it failed to make the necessary impression on him. He consequently took what

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[14]*Pis'ma Veselovu, A.M.*, **f. 259, op.3, ed.khr. 19, l. 5**. Previously acquainted with Spinoza only through prof. A.I. Vvedensky's lectures on him (see *Z.k. No. 4*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr. 17, l. 34 ob.**). Oreus read *Ethica* in Nov.- Dec. 1897 (*Spkis*, **f.259, op.1, ed.khr.1, l. 50 ob.**). With minor corruptions of the original the unattributed citation is from Goethe's "Allerdings: Dem Physiker" which in translation reads: "Into the core of nature"-/ O philistine-/ "No earthly mind can enter"./ The maxim is fine;/ But have the grace/ To spare the dissenter,/ Me and my kind./ We think: in every place/ We're at the center./ "Happy the mortal creature/ To whom she shows no more/ Than the outer rind"./ For sixty years I've heard your sort announce./ It makes me swear, though quietly. (*Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. Selected poems*, pp. 236-37).

he understood - "mystical knowledge" - to be the key to "Godmanhood" and in doing so remained dissatisfied by his seeming incapacity to *act*.

Oreus' deference to Spinoza and Goethe in his letter to Veselov is in itself symptomatic of one whose understanding of Solov'ev's uncompromising logic was limited. These names were by no means wholly incompatible with Solov'ev's position. The Russian philosopher had profound admiration for both Spinoza and Goethe. He defended Spinoza against the neo-Kantian professor A.I. Vvedensky's charge of atheism and confessed that the great pantheist and substantival monist was his philosophical 'first love'.[15] He frequently cited lines from Goethe. Significantly, he used one from "Allerdings: Dem Physiker", the very poem that Oreus quoted in his letter to Veselov, in annotations to his "Critique".[16] Yet this admiration was necessarily conditional. For Solov'ev such *unqualified* pantheism was ultimately to be condemned as a theoretical evil, *the abrogation of man's potential "godmanhood"*.[17] It did not acknowledge process and the need to transfigure reality. Thus, while Solov'ev acknowledged a debt to Spinoza in his article on him, ultimately he distanced himself from him, acknowledging him as a transitional, rather than a definitive, influence. He preferred Tyutchev's 'chaos' to the unruffled harmony of the 'olympian' Goethe.[18]

Oreus was undoubtedly aware of these reservations. He was inspired to turn to Spinoza's *Ethica* after reading Solov'ev's article;[19] he would later compare the *best* of the Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin's work not with Goethe's "pure pantheism" ("*chistyy panteizm*"), but with the more elevated, *unitotal* divinity celebrated by A.K. Tolstoy, the poet whom Solov'ev credited for evading the "Scylla and Charybdis of pantheism and dualism".[20] At this point in his development, however, Oreus felt competent to accord definitive importance only to the mystical intuition that Spinoza and Goethe sanctioned in its unqualified form.

Both Oreus' disproportionate emphasis upon the speculative or mystical understanding of unitotality and the inevitable need for an *active* principle that it would engender in him find further reflection in the opening pages of his essay "Dve narodnye stikhii", the first half of which was written on his return to Russia in 1897.[21] It seems that

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[15]See Solov'ev Vl., "Ponyatie o Boge. (V zashchity filosofii Spinozy)", *Sob. soch.*, Vol. VIII, p. 1.
[16]See Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 747.
[17]See, for example, "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva", II.
[18] See Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva", *SELk*, p. 288.
[19]Oreus read "Ponyatie o Boge. (V zashchity filosofii Spinozy)" in early November 1897, see *Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 43**.
[20]See "Zhivopis' Beklina" (1897-98), *Mid*, pp. 157-8/*Sip*, pp. 168-9. For Solov'ev on Tolstoy, see "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 306.
[21]It is important to note that we refer here to pages 117-119 in *Mid* and 153 to the end of the first paragraph of 156 in *Sip*. These *alone* were sketched in 1897: *Z.K. No. 8*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 20, l. 14**

the essay was actually intended to summarize the insights and achievements of the summer abroad; but its comparison of Slavic and Teutonic topography and mentality inadvertently illustrates the degree to which these insights were *constricted* by the *metaphysical* constructs upon which they were based.

In "Dve narodnye stikhii", Oreus turned firstly to what he now evidently saw as the folly of the uncritical Slavonic-Orthodox concept of one God: emphasis upon unconditional self-abnegation as a means to attain confluence with His oneness, as mirrored in the overwhelming vastness and unifomity of the steppe. He contrasted this with a *critico-speculative* Teutonic principle that he, steeped in the German metaphysics of the Absolute which underlay Solov'ev's marriage of philosophy and religion in *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*, had personally come to appreciate that summer. Enclosed by forest, the German peoples do not wholly merge with the 'beyond', he maintained. They are thus acutely conscious of the relationship of 'self' and 'other' and scrutinize its *meaning*. They have a sense of the individual's integral place in defining the whole. This, Oreus intimated, was imperative if the ultimate implications of the 'mystery' were in fact to be fully realized:

> Русская душа раскрылась в чистом поле, германская—в густой дубраве. И потому тайны славянства страшны явностью, простотой и близостью <...> русское славянство глядит как бы прямо в лицо тайне, подходит к ней просто и прямо вплотную. Оно неслышно сливается с начальной наготой и пустотой. Но этот серый белый день, потому же, что лишен тени, потому и ближе уже не к живому сиянию, а к мертвому зиянию. В нем источник необъятной и вековой русской скуки <...> оно <Slavyanstvo> не привыкло противополагать себя другому, оттого же оно и во всей жизни вселенной не видит чего либо отличного от себя, оттого ему не дают себя знать тайны этой жизни, что то же—необъятность ее сил; оно не чувствует именно величайшей загадки бытия—разделения между личностью и миром, подлежащим восприятия и его предметом <...> в лукавой германской тактике относительно таинства мировых сил—больше самоощущения личности, независимости ее: потому же и восприятие тех же непонятных сил независимее. выделеннее, явственнее. Сквозь сомкнутую чащу бора, сквозь тесные просветы его живее и проникновеннее чается простирающаяся за ним степь, чем если стоять по середине самого степного пространства.[22]

This advocation of the 'Teutonic' principle as a means to a fuller understanding of the truth underlying faith patently signified the important developments that had occurred in Oreus' bid to invest religious principles with metaphysical credibility in 1897. However, the claims that he made for *knowledge* here again begged fundamental questions. If such knowledge furnished man with greater certainty regarding the truth which conventional faith accepted uncritically, did it also furnish him with a

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ob.-16 ob. The remainder of the essay, to which we will return in Chapter Sixteen, was an addendum of 1899 prepared for publication in *Mid.*

[22]*Mid*, pp. 118-19/*Sip*, pp. 154-5. See also Oreus' poem "Debri" (*Mid*, pp. 83-87/*Sip*, pp. 30-35) for an exploration in verse of these two contrasting principles.

correspondingly reinvigorated course of *moral action*? This Oreus' claims for knowledge conspicuously did not deliver. Indeed, in the pages of "Dve narodnye stikhii" written in 1897, Oreus equated action - the very prerogative of the "followers of Jesus" to which he had aspired in the summer - with the *Slavonic* principle.

Notably, although he ignored it in his letter to Veselov and "Dve narodnye stikhii", the challenge to translate the metaphysics of the Absolute into an *active* principle was to confront Oreus again with renewed vigour as the mystical triumphs of the summer faded. Indeed, he wrote "Do i posle", in A.Smirnov's opinion a *vain* attempt to reconvince himself of the potency of 'mystical knowledge', precisely at the time when this challenge inadvertently re-emerged to haunt him: during the formulation of his incomplete tract *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*, the inner tensions of which belie the certitude of its title. Indeed, it does not seem coincidental that when Oreus undertook this attempt to *define* his views, his friend S.P. Semenov had recently presented his world-view to the "Literaturno-Myslitel'nyy Kruzhok".[23] Oreus' tract, whether written in a spirit of sympathy or polemic with Semenov, was therefore a *reaction*, not the work of one who was necessarily *ready* to make a conclusive *profession de foi*.

Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya undoubtedly addressed questions of abiding interest to one continually engrossed by the problem of the individual's place in the universe: the individual in space and time; the unity of infinite forces as apprehensible within and without the individual personality; the interrelationship of body and spirit, mechanism and consciousness, life and death. However, any claim to be definitive was premature. This is apparent in the degree to which the work focussed upon interests of the time that were to be essentially incidental to Oreus' development as a whole; upon the Schopenhauerian philosophy of the will, for instance.[24] More particularly, however, Oreus' unpreparedness finds expression in the fact that the study, a first attempt to sally beyond the *conceptual* bounds of his world-view, *floundered* on the question of *positive action*. Significantly, this bid to accommodate the findings of contemporary physiology, psychology and physics within the philosophical system that Oreus had derived from

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[23]The agenda of the "Kruzhok" for 1898 noted:
16-го февраля <1898> : реферат: некоторые разъяснительные замечания к изложению общих начал своего мировоззрения сделаны были С.П. Семеновым.
(*Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 48 ob.**)

Oreus' *Kraeugol'nye kamni* (*Stat'i*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9, l. 12**) was dated *February*-April 1898. That Semenov was connected with the tract is perhaps also suggested by the fact that its third section was noted as being "*u Semenova*" by N.M. Sokolov (Ibid., **l. 18 ob.**). A letter to Semenov of 4 May 1900, in which Oreus requests a systematic statement of his *Weltanschauung*, further testifies not only to their philosophical discussion, but to its duration (*Pis'ma <...> Semenovu*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 21, l. 20**).

[24]Oreus read Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* from 8 August-15 September 1897: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 42**. See also letter to Veselov of November 1897: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 19**.

Kritika otvlechennykh nachal served merely to emphasize the *fragilities* of that system, rather than to affirm its terms.

In the opening pages of *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya* Oreus felt empowered by *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* to attack the 'abstract' theories of knowledge - idealism and sensualism - as hypostatizations of predicates: of thought and feeling. Oreus took "doubt" as his means of illustrating this. He argued that for the critical idealist, bound by an exclusively subjective formulation of the external world, doubt itself was just another state of consciousness, and therefore in itself doubtful. He then noted that the by-product of this vacuum of unknowability was a reactionary realist inclination simply to abandon the scruples of idealist reverence for subjective intellect and to assert that the 'I' is what it sensually experiences, a *tabula rasa*:

> Самая это, значит, каверзная штука - эта подозрительность по отношению к чистосердечию внешнего мира <...> Мыслитель вертится как белка в колесе, и остается связанным по рукам и по ногам. Уже если сомневаться в соответствии всего внешнего с тем, что есть «на самом деле», так непременно приходится и в процессе сомнения <...> После этого, что же остается делать? Мыслитель остается совершенно загнанным в тупик. Невольно возникает мысль: а уже не разделаться ли со всеми этими странными зазрениями ума, и не признать ли просто на просто огулом всю «действительность» за то, что есть «на самом деле», то есть за то, что было бы при всяких условиях помимо нашего «я»?[25]

Significantly, having shown idealism and sensualism to be inadequate theories of knowledge, Oreus did not proceed *directly* to the *purely* formal dialectic of the Absolute, as he had done in his letter to Veselov of November 1897. In a move that was evidently indicative of a growing desire to create a system of *substance*, perhaps approximating to the "free scientific theosophy" postulated at the end of Solov'ev's "Critique", Oreus developed the theory of "forces" that he had already briefly explored during the preceding summer.

> Вопреки единственному философскому мировоззрению, безусловно ложному, вытекшему всецело из человеческого узколобия, точнее - бессознательности, именно: материализму, нам в окружающем мироздании, да и в сфере нашего внутреннего опыта ничего не дано, кроме сил. Вещество - слово, само по себе никакого смысла для нас не имеющего, а вот сила - это точно мы ощущаем ежеминутно, и вещество, конечно, - не что иное, как сочетание, группировка сил.[26]

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[25]*Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9, l. 13 ob.-14**.
[26]Ibid. For Oreus' previous references to "forces" see, in particular, "Sily" (*Mid*, p. 47 /*Sip*, p. 22) and "Olitsetvoreniya sil" (*Mid*, p. 105/*Sip*, p. 143).

Notably, this theory of "forces" was closely related to the "dynamic atomism" to which Solov'ev had logically reduced empirical reality in the earlier chapters of *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*:

Атомы суть не составные частицы вещества, а производящие вещество силы. Не сила есть принадлежность, accidens, вещества, как это должен предполагать механический материализм, а напротив, вещество есть лишь результат сил, или, говоря точнее, общий предел их взаймодействия.[27]

Solov'ev, however, had left the implications of this dynamic atomism essentially unelaborated in his "Critique" as he proceeded to his formal dialectic of the Absolute. Oreus now tried to introduce the dialectic of the Absolute as the only logic adequate to describe the interrelationship of forces in this atomistic reality:

Из этого явления возникает в нас, напрашиваясь само собой, мысль о единой Силе - совокупности всего бесконечного множества сил, действующих в разных направлениях. Это, стало быть, должно было бы быть таким состоянием сил (или - можно здесь сказать безразлично - силы), в котором заключались бы равно как силы нашего собственного «я», так и всего, что - «не я». Все силы «не я» постоянно меняются «во времени»; «я» пребывает, как то нечто, та сила, что связывает, стягивает в пучок или в узел все «не я», все состояния или предметы сознания. А в совокупности Бытия всех сил должно было бы быть, значит, совместное бытие - бок-о-бок и друг в друге - текучего мира времени с миром постоянного, вне времени сущего «я» <...> Таким образом, в совокупном Бытии сил уничтожался бы клин между «я» и «не я» со всеми его условиями - пространство и время. Но, с другой стороны, раз в нем вмещались бы все силы, в нем должен был бы совершаться не только этот процесс сглажения граней между всеми «не я» и силой «я», связывающей их в узел, но также и процесс включения в круг своего бытия этой особой силы сосредоточения множества, так называемого «я», отсекающего от себя «иное».[28]

The introduction of ultimately homogeneous "forces" literally to 'substantiate' the logical dialectic of the Absolute also initially seemed to be a successful basis for affirming Solov'ev's "mystical" knowledge. Oreus felt able to assert the being of a conscious self that, rather than being delimited by it interaction with other forces, transcends the threshold of immediate sensibility as evidenced in dream, mediumistic and mystical states, and *is* those "forces", turning them into itself.[29]

By contrast, however, Oreus' arguments in the sub-section of *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya* on the intuition of universality "within" were significantly to

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[27] Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 1, p. 631.

[28] *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9, l. 16-17**.

[29] Ibid., **l. 16**, where Oreus notably lists a range of paranormal experience and phenomena in support of his argument that are symptomatic of his reading of Carl du Prel's *Philosophie der Mystik* in January-February 1898: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr.6, l. 52**.

remain negative and unresolved - critical rather than affirmative. Oreus, preoccupied at the time by Schopenhauerian philosophy, challenged the view that the individual could take will, a hypostatized predicate in Solov'evian terms, as the *sole* basis for identifying the Absolute subject "within". However, in arguing that will is not absolute, but subject to spatial-temporal relations, Oreus also found himself making an *admission* which was broad in its implications. The mock old Slavonic script which emphasizes the text at this point suggests the profound impact that this admission had upon *him*:

Значит, сколько бы я перед лицом жизни природы и человека ни переживал восторгов, которые вызывали бы во мне чувство трепета вселенской жизни, но передо мной всегда очевидно останется что-то, что, хотя бы я даже чувствовал и в жизни того всемирного Бытия, настойчиво преграждает мне путь к этому Бытию, показывает себя бесконечно превосходящим мои силы. Эта - сила пространства и времени, образующая обособленность моего «я» и раздробленность его восприятия.

Верховный закон над нами тяготеющий - закон: «не я» неотделимо от «я».

Может быть, сила этого закона - не всемогуща, но во всяком случае, никакая из имеющихся в нашем распоряжении сил устранить ее не может.[30]

The implication of Oreus' apparent submission to this "supreme law" of phenomenal being,[31] which denied the possibility of *acting upon* that intuited in "mystical knowledge", was amplified in an impromtu note appended to the text of *Kraeugol'nye kamni*. The note began exultantly:

(Мыслительные заигрыши) Вселенная есть круг, у которого центр везде, окружность - нигде.

(Совместность бесконечности с конечностью) Во вселенной нет верху и низу.

В бесконечности есть место всему, что только ни вообразить себе.

(Начало мыслительного потока).

Что заградит приток из всей бесконечности в каждую точку бесконечности? Нет ничего, что бы было, вне самой бесконечности.

Если другая точка той же бесконечности, тогда и данная точка сольется с ней, и это будет все та же бесконечность.[32]

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[30]Ibid., **l. 18**.

[31]By "*'Ne ya' neotdelimo ot 'ya'*" Oreus clearly did not mean the positive integrity of "I" and "not I", but the law of necessity which negatively defines the phenomenal "I" *in relation* to externality.

[32] *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9, l. 22 ob.**

After deliberation, however, the note swung to "*sceptical reserve*" regarding its initial premise:

Конечно, нам невозможно поручиться за то, что когда весь материал, питающий голые формы нашего чуятельного восприятия, исчезнут со «смертью» наших органов восприятия - не исчезнут и все эти законы нашего мышления. И вдруг - окажется тогда нечто совсем непредвиденное. Остается в полной силе детский вопрос: «А вдруг?» «Вдруг нас кто-нибудь морочит?» <...> Скептический ресерв.[33]

This was "sceptical reserve" regarding the very intuition of universality in singularity that Oreus had so confidently advanced in his letter to Veselov, exemplifying it in the thought of Spinoza and Goethe. This reserve marked Oreus' realization that even if the Absolute was apprehensible in "mystical knowledge", it was not enough to effect "Godmanhood" - the ultimate "Truth". Indeed, ironically, even as he systematically and proudly set out his logical and mystical proofs for the Absolute in *Kraeugol'nye kamni*, Oreus was forced to confront the "supreme law" of phenomenal being and to admit that he needed an *active* means to overcome its seemingly impregnable power if his faith was to be truly vindicated.

V

In view of the above analysis of *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*, we must now ask again: was not Valery Bryusov right to disregard the metaphysical faith in Oreus' "Slovo k Istine" and to emphasize the 'appeal' to Beauty in its final stanza? Was it not with justification that A. Smirnov neglected the dialectic in his critique of Konevskoy, considering it to be nothing more than the linchpin of the poet's ultimate failure?

In attempting to answer these questions we must allow that certainly, as both critics point out, a note of perplexity *did* come increasingly to punctuate Oreus' later poetry, appearing to belie the seeming assurance of the schematic philosophical and metaphysical poems which, as we showed above, he also continued to write.

We must ask: were the final lines of "K plastiku" (December 1898), which Bryusov cited as capturing the *overall* questioning tone of Oreus' poetry, not indeed redolent of the despair of "Priroda", written almost three years earlier?

Куда ж несусь, дрожащий, обнаженный,

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[33]Ibid.

Крутясь, как лист, над омутом мирским?[34]

Was Smirnov not in fact correct to cite the opening lines of "Elegiya", written directly after "K plastiku", as an elegy for the spirit of prophetic hope in "Do i posle"?

Я жизнь люблю - и я плачусь за то:
Она любовью скупо мне ответит.[35]

Was Bryusov not correct in "Mudroe ditya" to disregard the final, consolatory line of "Pripev", a poem which so compellingly expressed Oreus' frustration in the face of the disintegral annual cycle:

Плачь, а втайне тешься, человек![36]

Were not both Bryusov and Smirnov justified in referring to "Osennie golosa", written almost a year later, as a seemingly unequivocal statement of the fact that Oreus remained adrift (artistically free in the eyes of one critic, metaphysically bankrupt in the eyes of the other). In the first part of the poem (August 1899), Oreus certainly withdraws from life's challenge into the purely contemplative state which Bryusov considered to epitomize his artistic self-sufficiency:

И всегда не хотел я людей.
Я любил беспристрастный обзор
Стен, высот и степных областей,
Величавый, игривый узор.[37]

Moreover, the second part of the poem, written as the Petersburg winter loomed, undeniably suggests one who had lost all patience with his quest for a positive metaphysics. The poet unequivocally asserts the primacy of his absolute self there and seems inclined to *negate* temporal being altogether as a wholly incidental and absurd illusion:

Зачем ты здесь, мой дух, в крови глухих страданий,
О ты, что веруешь в блаженство горячо?
<...>

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[34]*Sip*, p. xii and 53/*Mid*, p. 196. Cf. "Priroda": *Sip*, pp. 3-4.
[35]See Smirnov, A., "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*, 1904, No. 4, p. 83. For "Elegiya": *Mid*, p. 188/*Sip*, p. 53.
[36]*Mid*, p. 199/*Sip*, p. 61. See also pp. xv-xvi for Bryusov's reference to the poem.
[37]*Sip*, p. xiii and 98.

С беспечностью косясь на призрачное тело,
Что в слякоть немощью своей меня влечет,
Прозрящий взор летит к блаженному пределу,
Где радужная жизнь в глуби теней течет.[38]

It must also be acknowledged that there were many other poetical works of 1899 to which the critics could have referred, which, taken in *isolation*, seem symptomatic of a negative process of disillusionment with the dialectic. Oreus' undeniable drama, seen by Bryusov as a struggle for artistic freedom, by Smirnov as the issue of a bankrupt philosophy, is discernible for example in such titles as "Prezrenie" (February 1899) and "Neudomenie" (June 1899).[39] Moreover, did not the plea for help in "Sverstniki" (March 1899) perhaps imply that Oreus now identified with those very 'children' of the age to whom he had presumed to offer hope in *Stikhotvornaya lirika v sovremennoy Rossii*:

Кто нам поможет в бореньи мирском уцелеть?[40]

Significantly, "Grani poeta" (December 1899), again a title suggestive of content, renewed the appeal for succour:

Кто же придет выручать?[41]

[38]See *Sip*, pp. xv-xvi and 99 and "Poet bezplotiya", p. 82.
[39]*Mid*, p. 193 and 195/*Sip*, p. 68 and 88 respectively.
[40]*Mid*, p. 170/*Sip*, p. 74.
[41]*Sip*, p. 103.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Positive continuity

I

The Solov'evian philosophy of love

> Его (Solov'ev's) спаситель человечества и мира - зиждительная воля и порыв самобытного духа - платоновский Эрос.
>
> I. Oreus-Konevskoy. Letter to Bryusov, 2 October 1900.

It is the objective of the present chapter to begin to construct a case against the thesis that Oreus' most active period as a poet took its impetus from a growing disillusionment with the metaphysics of the Absolute. The chapter will seek specifically to show that the "Beauty" to which Oreus appealed in "Slovo k Istine" *was* Solov'evian in nature. The chapter does this by turning to a whole thematic strand of Oreus' poetry in 1898-99 which contemporary critics either neglected or misread, but which is a vital key to understanding this poet-thinker's latter years. Indeed, Oreus' poetry of *love* is a window upon processes occurring within his philosophical development which allow us to identify a principle of *positive continuity* in the polyphony of 1899 and beyond.

I

In P.P. Pertsov's opinion the erotic principle was wholly absent in Oreus' poetry:

> В его поэзии, несомненно своеобразной и самостоятельной, нередко сквозят мотивы, которые после так блестяще разработал Блок (русской природы, русской истории), но над этими сухими, тяжелыми упражнениями не пронеслось дуновения животворящего Эроса.[1]

The few critics who actually touched upon the subject of love in Oreus' poetry essentially concurred with this view. They viewed Oreus' poem of July 1897, "Mnogim v otvet", as his definitive statement on the subject of love.[2] In "Poet bezplotiya", A. Smirnov

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[1]Pertsov, P.P., *Literaturnye vospominaniya*, p. 244.
[2]*Mid*, p. 29/*Sip*, p. 29.

cited "Mnogim v otvet" as a seminal expression of the impersonalism, the negation of the "Flesh", that he identified as the ultimate issue of Oreus' philosophy:

Несмотря на все свое настойчивое утверждение красоты и радости жизни, Коневскому не удалось скрыть глубокого, полусознательного страдания, проникающего всю его поэзию: мук отчужденности, раздельности <...>:

Я не любил. Не мог всей шири духа
В одном лице я женском заключить.
Все ловит око, все вливает ухо,
И только так могу в любви почить,

пишет он, хорошо, однако, понимая, что это не есть уже любовь, что это не значит уже почить. Человеческие чувства вообще исключены из его поэзии.[3]

At the other end of the critical spectrum, N.O. Lerner, in his article, "Ivan Konevskoy", viewed "Mnogim v otvet" as the precedent for what he saw as the 'sexlessness' of Oreus' poetry:

Ощущение пола у него словно отсутствует: странный бред мечты, смутные видения, творческое кипение духа - как непохоже все это на любовь пола к полу. Любовь Коневского, его «лада и сестра», «дева думная» бродит где-то там «по ласковым полям».[4]

Indeed, the feminine presence that features in a series of Oreus' later poems of 1898-99 was, Lerner insisted, *purely* the personification of metaphysical concepts:

Та, которую он готов полюбить, - дочь пантеистического мира, в котором жил Коневской, «дриада», меньше всего женщина, больше всего совершенное создание природы, ключ к тайне, в которой сочетаются мудрость и хмель.[5]

However, although it is certainly true that *none* of Oreus' poetry resembles the exotic, highly sensual eroticism of the period, Bryusov's essay "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)" makes it clear, that there *was* a profound distinction between "Mnogim v otvet" and the later "love poems" which must be explored. Contrary to the vow taken in "Mnogim v otvet", Oreus actually fell in love:

Зима 1898-1899 г. важна в жизни Коневского еще тем, что в эту пору пережил свою «первую» - вместе с тем и последнюю любовь. Обращено это чувство было к той же особе, которой посвящена «Праздничная кантата», под которой читаем: «Анне Николаевне Г.»[6]

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[3]Smirnov, A., "Poet bezplotiya", *Mi*, 1904, No. 4, p. 83.
[4]Lerner, N.O., "Iv. Konevskoy" in *Kniga o russkikh poetakh poslednego desyatiletiya*, p. 121.
[5]Ibid., p. 122.

There was, therefore, a definite sexual or erotic dynamic to the poems of the later period. Moreover, contrary to Bryusov's own rather perfunctory treatment of the affair and dismissal of it as ultimately meaningless, this later love poetry marked an important *metaphysical* shift of emphasis. Indeed, as a brief examination of both "Mnogim v otvet" and the poems to A.N.Gippius reveals, these works had *Solov'evian* subtexts which mark a *process* of development.

Only N.O. Lerner was to allude to the important fact that "Mnogim v otvet" had a prototype in A.K. Tolstoy's "Sleza drozhit v tvoem revnivom vzore":

И любим мы любовью раздробленной
И тихий шепот вербы над ручьем,
И милый девы взор, на нас склоненный,
И звездный блеск, и все красы вселенной,
И ничего мы вместе не сольем.[7]

Lerner failed to develop the implications of this observation. We know, however, that Oreus' espousal of A.K. Tolstoy's yearning for an unattainable universal love in "Mnogim v otvet" was in all probablility informed by his *Solov'evian* understanding of that

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[6]Bryusov, V. Ya., "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)" in *Rus. lit. XX v.*, vol. III, bk. viii, p. 157. The dedicatee of "Prazdnichnaya kantata" (December 1898, *Mid*, pp. 203-4/*Sip*, pp. 55-6) was A.N. Gippius (1872-1942), younger sister of Z.N. Gippius and second cousin of Vladimir Gippius. Other poems dedicated to her were"Pamyati vstrechi" (20 September 1898, *Mid*, p. 176/*Sip*, pp. 43-4) and "Volneniya" (2-13 February 1899, *Mid*, pp. 177-8/*Sip*, pp. 64-66) in MS., and "Otrechenie" (5 November 1899, *Sip*, p. 100) in published text. *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 175 and *Ln* 98 (i), p. 486 both appear to take the parenthesized "k ney" in the cycle "Blednaya vesna" (March-April 1899, *Mid*, pp. 185-7/*Sip*, pp. 77-80) as a further dedication. In an edition of *Mid* dedicated to A.N. Gippius by Oreus "Priznaki" (February 1899, *Mid*, p. 179/*Sip*, p. 66) and "Davno i nyne" (February 1899, *Mid*, pp. 180-81/*Sip*, pp. 67-8) were dated in pencil - suggesting a connection with her (see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 486).

Bryusov was dismissive of the relationship in "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", denying any mutual interests or reciprocity on the part of A.N. Gippius. We have scant evidence with which either to substantiate or counter this opinion (for the fullest published description of A.N. Gippius see: Pachmuss, T., *Intellect and Ideas in Action, Selected Correspondence of Zinaida Hippius*, Munchen, 1972, p. 518). It is possible that the Gippius 'ethos' in itself made A.N.G. attractive to Oreus (in his *Literaturnye vospominaniya*, P.P. Pertsov claimed that Oreus was subconsciously 'disturbed' by Z.N. Gippius' femininity: p. 245). Later information allows us to assume, however, that a combination of progressive education (A.N. Gippius was a trained medic) and profound religiousness (she published a study of Tikhon Zadonsky under the pseudonym A. Giz in 1927) might have made her a stimulating, indeed, challenging conversant for Oreus. Significantly, despite her life amongst the literati, unlike her sisters, Tatyana and Natalya, she never fell under the spell of Zinaida Nikolaevna's 'cause', evidently retaining an independent and Orthodox outlook which Oreus might have found to be a refreshing foil to his own spiritual maximalism.

[7]Tolstoy, A.K., *Sochineniya*, Vol. 1, p. 93. In MS. "Mnogim v otvet" took its epigraph from the poem: Но я любить могу лишь в просторе. (see *Sip*, p. 237) For Lerner's allusions to Tolstoy, see his "Iv. Konevskoy" in *Kniga o russkikh poetakh poslednego desyatiletiya*, p. 120.

poet. Indeed, the position that Oreus adopted in "Mnogim v otvet" certainly seems to echo Solov'ev's description of Tolstoy's approach to love in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo":

> Любовь есть сосредоточенное выражение - в личном живом сознании,- всемирной связи и высшего смысла бытия; чтобы быть верною этому своему значению, она должна быть единою, вечною и неразрывною <...> Действительные условия земного существования далеко не соответствуют этому высокому понятию любви; поэт не в силах примирить этого противоречия, но и не хочет ради него отказаться от своего идеализма, в котором - высшая правда. Отсюда глубокая грусть, которою отмечены все его любовные стихотворения, несмотря на общее преобладание доброго, или, как он выражается, *мажорного* тона в его поэзии.[8]

"Mnogim v otvet" thus evidently had a Solov'evian basis. Moreover, this would seem to have defined Oreus' perspective on love for some time. Indeed, taken out of context, the above passage evidently *appeared* to Oreus to concede that the contradiction between ideal and temporal love was *irresolvable*. Certainly the time lapse between "Mnogim v otvet" (July 1897) and the first of Oreus' later "love poems", "Pamyati vstrechi" (September 1898), further supports the view that he took Solov'ev's limited treatment of the seemingly unattainable love ideal in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" and "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" to be definitive.[9] "Pamyati vstrechi", moreover, indicated one who was still reluctant to accept his recent discovery that in Solov'evian philosophy love was in fact a *pivotal* and *active* principle. In "Pamyati vstrechi", Oreus was uncertain not only of reciprocity, but, more particularly, of *abandoning* himself to a *feeling* which threatened to consign his former ideas to the grave:

> Пред этой бледной, свежей силой
> Зеленых, как вода, очей
> Я трепетал, как пред могилой
> Моих решений и речей.[10]

Significantly, however, six days later Oreus wrote "Iz 'vechnykh svodov...' ", which marked a radical change of mind. In a striking reversal of the imagery used in "Pamyati vstrechi", Oreus now confessed that his metaphysical ideas were "sons of shadow" that he had encountered in the "vaults" of introspective reflection. Although he recognized that much that he had gleaned during his time in that "vault" was essential to his new understanding of life, he had always known that if he remained there indefinitely it would become his grave:

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[8]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 309.
[9]See Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva", *SELk*, pp. 291-92.
[10]20 September 1898, *Mid*, p. 176/*Sip*, p. 43.

Глядел в те дни я исподлобья.
Но не терял из виду свет.
Не уходил все глубже в гроб я:
Я помнил радости завет.

А все же мне встречались тени
Сыны: узнав их, я любил
Все муки вещих их видений
И ни на миг их не забыл.[11]

This poem, like "Voskresenie", Oreus' earlier pivotal poem of change, indicated that he had now absorbed and accepted a whole new dimension of Solov'evian philosophy.[12]

Indeed, the contrast between "Mnogim v otvet" and the poems of love which followed "Pamyati vstrechi" and "Iz 'vechnykh svodov'" in 1898-99 again illustrates how important the order in which Oreus read Solov'ev was in determining the course of his development. As we know, Oreus was aware that Solov'ev postulated a "theurgic" power in man which could actualize "Godmanhood", literally transfiguring reality. This had been a constant motif running throughout the Solov'evian works that he had read, and was argued with particular force in "Obshchiy smysl iskusstva" and at the conclusion of *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*. Nowhere, however, had Solov'ev undertaken *positively* to define the form this unprecedented theurgic art must assume. Oreus would only begin to realize that Solov'ev had in fact attempted such a definition upon reading the philosopher's articles "Zhiznennaya drama Platona"[13] and "Smysl lyubvi"[14] in 1898. These articles, which identified *love* as the *non plus ultra* of Solov'evian aesthetics, were the impetus for Oreus' new love poetry.

Solov'ev devoted his essay on Plato to putting this philosopher's dialogues in the context of his "life drama". Plato's early dualistic idealism derived, in Solov'ev's view, from his profoundly embittered reaction to the discrepancy between true moral order and a world which could condemn Socrates, his teacher and the epitome of righteousness. The first Platonic dialogues were therefore those which viewed the world as abiding in evil, the body as the dungeon of the spirit, society as the coffin of wisdom and truth, the life of the genuine philosopher as a continual dying, and contemplation of the Absolute as the

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[11]26 September 1898, *Mid*, p. 8/*Sip*, p. 44. The "eternal vaults" of the poem's title are in all probability those of Pushkin's "Brozhu li ya vdol' ulits shumnykh" (1829).
[12]That "Iz 'vechnykh svodov'" marked a turning point in Oreus' development is further indicated by its inclusion in the prologue of *Mid*, p. 8.
[13]Solov'ev, Vl., "Zhiznennaya drama Platona", *Ve*, 1898, No. 3-4. Oreus read the work in April significantly just as he completed the 'definitive' *Kraeugol'nye kamni*: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 54**.
[14]Oreus read "Smysl lyubvi", a series of articles in *Vfip*, 1892-4, No's. 14-17 and 25, in August 1898: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 56**.

only worthy way of life. However, this body of work was, Solov'ev observed, wholly incompatible with Plato's aspirations to transform the socio-political order of his time in such works as *The Republic*. How were these two contradictory perspectives to be reconciled? What principle interlinked them, turning Plato from the ideal and the abstract to reality? Solov'ev maintained that Eros, the subject of *Phaedrus* and *The Symposium*, was the bridging or intermediary force between these two extremes. Eros was held to visit a great gift upon the enamoured: a transfigurative sense of the adored object's absolute being. Although biographical details were unspecific, Solov'ev claimed that the above works indicated that Plato himself had undoubtedly experienced this transfigurative idealization of the beloved. In the great idealist, however, the creative erotic power, in itself neutral, was not harnessed by carnal drives, but sublimated. Indeed, Plato explored the implications of the erotic gift for the *rational* being and found that its product was the link between the ideal and temporal worlds - Beauty:

По определению Платона, истинное дело Эрота - *рождать в красоте*. Что же это значит?[15]

Significantly, Solov'ev proceeded to observe that having postulated a higher erotic creativity which is equally real as physical procreation, Plato left this concept of beauty essentially undefined. The Russian philosopher himself therefore attempted to explore its full meaning. Solov'ev focused upon Plato's choice of the word 'Eros' in his formulation of man's capacity to attain perfection, and not one of the other Greek words for 'love' that are free from ambiguous sexual connotations. This, Solov'ev maintained, was precisely because Plato demanded a property in erotic love which is absent in piety, philanthropy, patriotism, filial or familial love: love for *corporeality* (*telesnost'*). Why did the idealist Plato insist upon this? Were not evil and mortality seated in the Flesh? On the contrary, this love of corporeal being was essential precisely because the idealist now realized that Absolute Beauty, the positive integrity of parts and whole, *must integrate the physical world* to overcome *death*:

Так как Платон собственную задачу Эрота определяет как рождение *в красоте*, то ясно, что его задача не разрешается физическим рождением тел к смертной жизни - в чем нет красоты - и что он должен обращаться на возрождение, или воскресение, этой жизни к бессмертию.[16]

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[15]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 2, pp. 613.
[16]Ibid., p. 615.

The ultimate aesthetic or theurgic power to which Solov'ev had so frequently alluded was therefore evidently identified here as *erotic love*. Indeed, this was further suggested by his description of the final goal of erotic love as the highest of an ascending scale of five erotic 'paths' by which man proves himself not only to be more than beast, but more than man. The first two paths were 'accursed': the 'infernal' path and the 'animal' path, which many men continue blindly to follow, swept along by the instinct which harnesses the erotic power for the exclusive ends of the genus. The third path was worthy of humanity: marriage - the sanctification of the sexual-procreative relationship as a means to a still unattainable perfection. The fourth path was ascetic abstinence: the sublimation and preservation of the divine erotic power in its purity and integrity within human corporeality. However, this state - the monastic ideal - was, Solov'ev maintained, "angelic" and, invoking St. Paul, he asserted man's precedence over the angels as the potential agent of "Godmanhood". This, indeed, was the object of the fifth and final erotic path of a truly transfigurative or 'deifying' love. This path would effect a theurgic synthesis of male and female which would overcome their dichotomy in the procreative infinity of the genus. By following this path man would ultimately attain an inner state of "androgyny" ("*istinnyy androginizm*") recreating God's integral semblance in him.[17] This syzygy (Plato's beauty) could only be effected through the positive interaction of God and man. Such a divinization of corporeality presupposed the truly divine, transfigurative force (in Plato - Eros) that is present only in the Absolute in itself - God. This force would find its proper definition and application, however, only in the conscious agency of man, in whom the "second Absolute" had attained its true definition as a subject of unitotality.

Oreus' absorption of this advocation of *erotic* love as a potential means to effect theurgic transfiguration - as the future "art" - is illustrated by the modifications that he made to his reflections in "Styd pered mater'yu zemley".[18] The work which appeared under that title in *Mechty i dumy* was dated 1897, but was in fact a substantially modified and supplemented version of an original notebook sketch. Notably, in that original sketch, Oreus had registered the same early perplexity that his note on the "followers of Christ" of that period reflected: if beauty had emerged in nature, how was *man* to perfect or transfigure *himself*, the issue of the chaotic procreative process?

Не потому ли стыдится человек подробностей акта своего рождения на свет, что они напоминают ему, стройному, замкнутому в отчетливо-очерченные формы созданию, о тех темных, нечистых - по его представлениям - стихиях, похожих на ил, на смесь воды с землею <...>

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[17]See Genesis 1:27 and 5:1 to which Solov'ev alludes here. He also found the "androgynous" principle echoed in corrupted, mythical form in Aristophane's contribution in the *Symposium*.
[18]*Mid*, pp. 114-17.

Всегда необходимо сопутствует человеку этот «квас» греха, не может он обратиться в совершенное «безквасие» чистоты, в опреснок - по уподоблению апостола Павла?[19]

However, by the time that Oreus finally came to prepare the original sketch of 1897 for publication, in the summer of 1899, he had evidently overcome this sense of perplexity.[20] He omitted the above passage and added new ones in which he confidently defined man's creative 'task': it was the sublimation of the erotic force which at present perpetuates the infinity of the genus in order to create 'beauty':

Вся задача личной человеческой жизни в том, чтобы преодолеть единовластие движущегося бытия <...> *Эрос не любит своего убожества и безобразия; он любит лишь рождаемую им красоту.* И вечное право личности на <...> неблагодарность к своей же природе это—ее вера в ненужность таких форм движения и изменения, которые были бы насильственны, расторгали бы оболочки.[21]

This process of revision shows clearly that Oreus had come to view 'erotic love' as a creative or aesthetic ideal by mid 1899. However, this broad definition of man's creative task was in fact the ultimate issue of more specific developments in Oreus' thinking in the preceding months. Indeed, although he read "Zhiznennaya drama Platona" first, he was only to understand the full implications of the article in the wake of reading Solov'evs' "Smysl lyubvi" in August 1898.[22] "Smysl lyubvi" was the further elucidation not only of the metaphysical and universal implications of love, *but its direct meaning for the individual*. It is notable that Oreus' own personal feelings for A.N. Gippius were to emerge in the weeks after he read it.

The first article of "Smysl lyubvi" was devoted to disputing the identification of sexual love and procreation, to showing that these occur in inverse ratio to each other. On this basis Solov'ev turned, in the second article, to his contention that true sexual love is the highest flowering of *individual* life.

Significantly, in stating the case for this thesis, Solov'ev immediately readdressed difficulties that his *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* had identified but failed to resolve for

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[19]"Mysly VII", dated 14 July 1897, in *Z.k. No. 6*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 19, l. 34 ob.** The first sentence of the above appears, modified, in *Mid* (p. 115) and marks the end of the original sketch in the published version.

[20]For details of Oreus' preparation of *Mid* for publication, see letter to Bryusov of 23 June 1899: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 464.

[21]*Mid*, p. 116. Italics mine.

[22]This seems to be further reflected by the fact that Oreus actually turned to read Plato himself only in the summer of 1899, a year after reading "Zhiznennaya drama Platona": in July-August 1899 he read *The Symposium* and *Phaedrus* (the two works which Solov'ev considered Plato's 'best'), *Phaedo* and *Philebus*: see *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 78 ob.-79**.

Oreus and with which the poet had consequently struggled during the formulation of *Kraeugol'nye kamni*. Man's prerogative, Solov'ev maintained in "Smysl lyubvi", is reason. It allows him to transcend the limits of animal existence and, through religion and morality, science and art, to manifest himself as the apogee of the universal process. However, the philosopher continued, echoing his "Critique", a purely formal, dialectical conceptualization of unitotal truth is *not enough* to attain true individuality:

> ...для того чтобы индивидуальное существо нашло в истине - всеединстве - свое оправдание и утверждение, не достаточно с его стороны одного сознания истины - *оно должно быть в истине.*[23]

Unlike *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*, though, "Smysl lyubvi" notably did not turn to "mystical knowledge" here as a means to verify truth, but proceeded directly to *love* as the means to be "*in truth*" ("*byt' v istine*"). Significantly, this expression of unitotal being was the very same that Oreus used in the concluding stanza of "Slovo k Istine", which we cite again here:

> Так - только если Красота откроет
> Мне славу всех явлений и страстей,
> Все истины зараз и вроз построит,
> Тогда лишь буду в Истине *я всей.*[24]

Indeed, "Smysl lyubvi" identifies the Beauty of the final stanza of "Slovo k Istine" to be that which Solov'ev contended was attainable only in "true erotic love". In seeking to attain such Beauty Oreus showed that he had escaped his misplaced faith in "mystical knowledge" as the sole key to absolute being.

What property was it, however, that made Solov'ev accord love this power as the means for the individual to attain his true identity *in Truth*, in the Absolute that Oreus celebrated in "Slovo k Istine"? How did love satisfy Solov'ev's demand for theurgy at the end of *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*?

Firstly Solov'ev argued that, unlike rational consciousness or mystical intuition of truth, love compels the individual to recognize in his deepest *feelings* and vital *will* the absolute significance of "another". In this affirmation of the other he *actually* transfers the centre of his life beyond the confines of his *ego* - his perceived isolation in the universe- and positively defines his own absolute being:

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[23]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 504. Italics mine.
[24]*Mid*, p. 208/*Sip*, p. 83.

Истина, *как живая сила,* овладевающая внутренним существом человека и действительно выводящая его из ложного самоутверждения, называется любовью. Любовь, как действительное упразднение эгоизма, есть действительное оправдание и спасение индивидуальности.[25]

This capacity of love to overcome the ego in actuality was the basis for Solov'ev's further assertion that *sexual* love is the *highest* love. Egoism, he stressed, permeates our *whole* reality, is rooted at the very centre of being. If egoism is to be destroyed it must be counteracted by a love as concrete as it is. Solov'ev's reasoning here was that same which he discerned in Plato's interest in Eros, and not another form of love. He argued that the *absolute* interrelationship of lover and beloved in sexual love transcends that possible in other forms of love. If they temporarily neutralize egoism, they do not destroy it. Indeed, in remarks which must have had a particular resonance for Oreus, who had placed his faith in "mystical knowledge", Solov'ev argued that unqualified "mystical love" can engender a spiritual pride that serves to *compound* egoism. If ego is truly to be overcome, the philosopher contended, the object of love must be possessed of the same essential content and be as *concretely real* as the lover, while also being his "other".

Significantly, the power of sexual love to overcome the egoistic self was a central motif of Oreus' love poetry of 1898-99. Yearning for the idealized object of his love in "Vechernyaya dumka" (October 1898), Oreus concluded:

Тоскою неустанною,
Быть может, я возрос.[26]

In "Volneniya" (February 1898), he had to acknowledge that the object of his love was indeed at the core of his mystical intuition of absolute being, his "dream":

Пел я темный, светлый бред.
Широко раскрыв зеницы,
Уносяся за границы
Моря, и равнин, и гор,
Я и руки в ширь простер.
Вольно ветры обвевали,
Грустно липы мне кивали.
Я прошел за грань мечты,
Но и там таилась ты.[27]

Significantly, he concluded the poem:

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[25]Ibid., p. 505.
[26]October 1898, *Mid*, p. 174/*Sip*, p. 47.
[27]*Mid*, p. 177/*Sip*, p. 64.

Нет, один я - не все мирозданье
<...>
Один - я в пространстве пустом.[28]

Solov'ev's identification of love as the true means to overcome ego in the first part of "Smysl lyubvi" was, however, only the basis for his further exposition of the meaning of "true sexual love" there. In articles three and four of the tract he proceeded to explain how and why man must perfect his presently unsophisticated and ephemeral love relations in order to effect the process of *true* faith, *active* imagination and *real* creativity that is actually potential in sexual love.[29] Indeed, in Solov'ev's exposition of the process of realizing true love here, the terminology used to describe "mystical knowledge" in *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal* notably resurfaced. On this occasion, however, as their qualifying epithets suggest, "faith, imagination and creativity" did not describe a purely metaphysical process which the philosopher had to acknowledge to be incommensurate with the conditions of empirical reality. Applied to the processes of "true sexual love", this tripartite act was understood *genuinely* to potentialize the "object of true knowledge" in empirical reality. Here again the inadequacy of Oreus' subscription to mystical knowledge as the exclusive agency of "Godmanhood" was set in relief. Indeed, in "Smysl lyubvi" the philosopher repeated the view stated in "Zhiznennaya drama Platona" that "Godmanhood" is a state in which the "androgyny" of God's image is re-established in the individual through the perfect syzygy of male and female.[30]

Solov'ev held that if the true potential of sexual love is genuinely to be realized, then the "idealization" of the beloved must be recognized as *faith* in the interrelationship of *man and God*. Fundamentally love is the recognition of the absolute significance of the "other". However, in the phenomenal sphere that man inhabits, the beloved, like any other personality, is not absolute. Consequently absolute significance is attributed to her through faith.[31] What, though, are the actual implications of this faith in the absolute significance of an individual? To assert that she is absolute in her singularity would be logically absurd. *Faith in her absolute significance must therefore mean the affirmation of her in the absolute existence in God*. This relation to the other, in transposing her into the divine sphere, presupposes the affirmation of one's own absolute being in that sphere. Thus one can only truly acknowledge the unconditional significance of the other (without which true

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[28]February 1899, *Mid*, p. 178/*Sip*, pp. 65-6.
[29]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 517.
[30]See article three of "Smysl lyubvi": ibid., p. 513.
[31]Solov'ev notably referred again here to the Pauline definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "veshchey oblichenie nevidimykh".

love is impossible) by affirming the other in an *absolute*, God, which consequently means believing in God himself and one's own being in Him.

This faith in the *divine* union of oneself and one's "other" in God is the first step to *real* sexual syzygy, Solov'ev maintained. Indeed, this is effectively faith in the *reality* of the "idealized" form of the beloved that love yields. The "idealization" is not a subjective mirage, but the *true* identity of the beloved as revealed by the mystical "imaginative" faculty that Solov'ev had identified previously in *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*. The active intuition of the beloved's absolute significance in love is an intimation of that individual's true status in the Absolute Idea as the *subject of unitotality*.

In identifying the "idealization" of the beloved as an active intuition of her *unitotal essence*, Solov'ev effectively defined the theurgic task of "true sexual love", the "real creativity" that is man's ultimate goal:

> ...идеализация низшего существа есть вместе с тем начинающая реализация высшего, и в этом истина любовного пафоса. Полная же реализация, превращение индивидуального женского существа в неотделимый от своего лучезарного источника луч вечной Божественной женственности, будет действительным, не субъективным только, а и объективным воссоединением индивидуального человека с Богом, восстановлением в нем живого и бессмертного образа Божия.[32]

Here Solov'ev introduced the idea of the Absolute's "other", or the object of God's love, as the "Divine Feminine". Solov'ev maintained that in intuiting the beloved's absolute essence in her "idealized" form, man in fact intuits a manifestation or a "ray" of this "Divine Feminine" which he must recreate or realize permanently in reality. For if the "Divine Feminine" is perfect in God's "Idea", in the Absolute in itself, "she" remains imperfect in actuality, in the sphere of "becoming" - the "World Soul". "She" yearns for reunification with God, the philosopher contended, and *this is the meaning of love*. Indeed, if man is truly to become the subject of unitotality or "second absolute" that reason and religious knowledge reveal him to be potentially, then in his relations with woman, and by extension the universe of which she is the crowning manifestation, he must create in *actuality* the perfect "androgynous" harmony that is pre-existent in the Absolute Idea of itself and its "other" - the "Divine Feminine". This is the object of "real creativity", the "Beauty" to which Oreus appealed in "Slovo k Istine".

"True sexual love" is thus "ascending" and "descending". It is love of the ideal being (in essence the Eternal Feminine), the image of which it must *theurgically* translate into the conditions of the phenomenal world. It is also, however, love of the natural

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[32]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 534.

human being, the *real* or *corporeal* keystone of the *world-wide syzygy* demanded in the fifth article of "Smysl lyubvi", to which we will return subsequently.

In his poem "Volneniya", Oreus made it clear that he also understood love to be the creative force to effect a "living", "true" and "real" miracle, of which all his previous abstract metaphysical formulations and transient mystical insights had been but an empty conceptualization and premonition:

Я расточал блага своих мечтаний,
Я в тысячи лучей их разбивал.
Построил много радужных я зданий -
И ветер жизни в прах их развевал.
Теперь я слышу внятно - отовсюду
Стекаются былые чудеса
К живому, истому, земному чуду.[33]

"Prazdnichnaya kantata" (December-January 1899), which was dedicated to A.N. Gippius, envisaged the realization of the theurgic miracle of love. The poem reconciled pre-existent being with time and space in an ecstatic, bacchic dance of youth and maiden:

Века своего мы не скончаем:
Уж и ныне мы — предвечный род.
Но всегда грядущего мы чаем,
Времени мы слышим оборот.
Нам желанны времена и лета:
Ведь над их узлами мы парим,
И размахом птичьяго полета
Тягу мертвую смирим.[34]

The tripartite dynamics of "faith", "imagination" and "creativity" essential to "true sexual love" thus evidently underlay the transfigurative "miracle" that Oreus' love poetry anticipated. It certainly seems probable that Solov'ev's philosophy of love inspired the "idealizations" of the beloved which N.O. Lerner saw as a wholly *impersonal* embodiment of a pantheistic world-view with no erotic content. The idealized features of Iris or Eos in "Vechernyaya dumka",[35] the dryad of "Priznaki" and "Davno i nyne", the fusion of the beloved and spring in "Blednaya vesna": all these were symptomatic of an exploration of the "imaginative" process which Solov'ev described in "Smysl lyubvi".[36] As the

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[33]Ibid.
[34] *Mid*, p. 204/*Sip*, p. 54.
[35]Both deities are strongly associated with dew.
[36]Lerner was not incorrect to the extent that the apprehension of unitotality (the "Divine Feminine") in the idealized woman was *perforce* ultimately also that intuited on a macrocosmic scale in the emergence of Beauty in nature. The idealized wood nymph of Oreus' love poems "Davno i nyne" and "Priznaki", for example, was not unrelated to the tree-being envisaged in "Olitsetvoreniya sil" in 1897, written long

significantly entitled "Priznaki"[37] perhaps most clearly illustrates, these idealizations of the beloved were held to be "rays" of the pre-existent, unitotal essence of the beloved's material beauty. As Oreus asked, did not the idealized vision that he apprehended in his dream anticipate the harmony of spiritual *and* corporeal selves to be effected upon the reunification of God and "World Soul" through the ultimate transfiguration of earthly woman?

Я знаю - что бы мне ни снилось,
Все сообщится на яву,
Когда давно оно сроднилось
С чем я и стражду, и живу.

Давно я видел эти руки,
Движенья тела и очей.
Давно и смеха слышал звуки,
Но ныне он еще звончей.

<...>

Ужель, о дивная дриада,
Тобою все мне суждено -
Утеха мысленного взгляда
И буйной юности вино?[38]

In "Volneniya", the dream vision of the beloved was one in which all contraries were reconciled in absolute harmony:

Из великой страны, из глубокого сна
Возникают новые думы.
И уж новая даль мне все боле ясна,
Взволновалися юные шумы.

Ты встаешь надо мной, о высокая тень —
И играют сильные очи:
В них и смелый огонь, и свободная лень,
День открытый, и влажные ночи.[39]

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before Oreus subscribed to the philosophy of love. However, Lerner's denial of an erotic dimension altogether is clearly not justified. Notably, the related adoration of nature and woman in Solov'ev's poetry also occasioned confusion in critics (see Cioran, S.D., *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Knighthood of the Divine Sofia*, p. 61).

[37]Notably, Solov'ev had used this term in his discussion of the "faith", "imagination" and "creativity" integral to "mystical knowledge" in *Kritika otvlechennykh nachal*. See Solov'ev, Vl., *Sochineniya*, vol. 1, pp. 731 and above p. 156.

[38]*Mid*, p. 179/*Sip*, p. 66.

[39]*Mid*, p. 177/*Sip*, p. 65. Italics mine.

However, the *ultimate* inspiration and objective of sexual love in Oreus' Solv'evian erotic poetry is perhaps most openly identified in "Na son gryadushchiy" which, although it was undoubtedly related to the love poems, does not appear to be directly addressed to A.N. Gippius.[40] There Oreus' *hymn* is an invocation of a feminine form which, with her all-embracing gaze of blue and her golden hair, suggests the recurring vision of the "Divine Feminine" in Vl. Solov'ev's poetry.[41] Ultimately, therefore, the presence which inspired Oreus' erotic poetry was that which informed Aleksandr Blok's *Stikhi o Prekrasnoy Dame*. Indeed, P.P. Pertsov's view that, although Oreus' poetry set certain precedents for Blok, the absence of the erotic in it distinguished the two poets is not strictly justified. In fact, not only Blok, but the "second generation" of Russian symbolists in general were fundamentally inspired by the same Solov'evian philosophy of love and cult of the "Divine Feminine" that informed Oreus' love verse.

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[40]*Mid*, p. 175/*Sip*, p. 76. The poem was neither openly dedicated to Gippius nor marked in MS. to suggest that she was its subject.

[41]See, for example, Solov'ev's poem "Tri svidaniya" (*Ve*, 1898, No. 11. Read by Oreus in November 1898: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed. khr. 6, l. 58 ob.**). See also his "Bezkrylnyy dukh, zemleyu polonennyy" as an example of the inspiration that Solov'ev found in dream and nocturnal visions.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Solov'evian influence limited?

II

The eclipse of the love ideal

Быть может, я встречу весну,
Но с ней никогда не сольюсь.

I. Konevskoy. "Blednaya vesna".

In the preceding chapter we identified the emergence of a new, positive principle in Oreus' poetry, in which he appeared to find a Solov'evian answer to his doubts regarding the metaphysics of the Absolute. The philosophy of love offered a new creative ideal which clarified the place and purpose of the individual in the unitotal equation.

However, in the present chapter - the second to question the place of a positive metaphysics in Oreus' later poetry - we ask what the overall issue of his subscription to the philosophy of love was. The chapter traces Oreus' increasing disillusionment with what was a remote *ideal*. On this basis it seeks to establish that, although Oreus was reluctant to abandon this ideal, he was compelled to look for new means to attain the powers of "theurgic" transfiguration. The chapter proposes that his search resolved itself in an increasingly *solipsistic* theory of art, which, though it retained the trappings of Solov'evian thinking, diverged from the ethos of positive synthesis that informed that philosopher's work. This view seeks corroboration in Oreus' artistic theorisation of 1900-1901, in which any faith in the theurgic love ideal appears to have been totally effaced.

I

We have established the nature of the Solov'evian subtext which underlay Oreus' "love poetry". What, however, was the positive issue of his subscription to this new principle? It certainly did not produce a *direct* sense of resolution or fulfilment: the list of reasons that Solov'ev gave in "Smysl lyubvi" for the present remoteness of the ideal was a long one. Moreover, the frustration of Oreus' feelings for A.N. Gippius fuelled doubts that were evident even within the scope of the love poetry. "Prazdnichnaya kantata", a celebratory vision of *future* resolution, was alone among the love poems in being free from

doubt. Generally an interrogative tone, so untypical of Oreus' verse previously, characterized the love poems. In "Vechernyaya dumka" he asked:

> Придешь ли ты, желанная,
> Подательница рос?[1]

In "Volneniya" Oreus' attitude to his 'incarnate double' was ambiguous, that of one who not only experienced the hopes instilled by love, but who was also wearied by his enthralment by, and dependency upon, another person:

> О, доколе ж борьба будет длиться -
> Колебаться, сменясь торжеством?
> Где мне знать?[2]

Notably the epigraph to "Volneniya" ("*Lyubov', lyubov' - glasit predan'e...*") was the first line of F.I. Tyutchev's poem "Predopredelenie" which Solov'ev had used in "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" to illustrate the *imperfect* and *ambiguous* nature of sexual love in its present state.[3]

In "Priznaki", his faith wavering, Oreus had wondered whether his "idealization" was not merely a subjective phantasm:

> Но лишь о том ли я мечтаю -
> И оправдает ли она,
> Что бодро в ней предначертаю?
> Все-ль обоймет ея волна?[4]

"Blednaya vesna" (*March* 1899) was in fact Oreus' effective acknowledgement that *he* had *failed* the love ideal, although he was finally to "renounce" his love for A.N. Gippius only in November 1899, in the poem "Otrechenie". Indeed, "Blednaya vesna" was pivotal to a polemic of early 1899 in which Oreus was forced to defend his general metaphysics and found that he could not do so on the basis of the philosophy of love. This polemic, which belies Bryusov's claim that Oreus' verse was consistently written exclusively for himself,[5] is discernible in the uncharacteristically prolific and polyphonous

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[1]*Mid*, p. 174/*Sip*, p. 47.
[2]*Mid*, p. 178/*Sip*, p. 66.
[3] See Solov'ev, Vl. "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva", *SELk*, pp. 291-292.
[4]*Mid*, p. 179/*Sip*, p. 66.
[5]See *Sip*, p. xiii.

body of work that he produced during the winter period of February and March 1899, when student unrest forced the closure of the University of St. Petersburg.

Student militancy, which was initially provoked by a notice of 4 February that categorically prohibited civil disobedience on the university holiday four days later, escalated into clashes between students and police.[6] Oreus' response was "Zeitgedichte" (13-17 February 1899). In the work he disavowed any connection with his "peers"[7] misdirected energies, berating them for impulsive actions which were contrary to the true objective of the Absolute "world process" anticipated in the coming renewal of *spring*:

В море благом, живоносном
Вам не почить, не почить![8]

Significantly, the imagery here evidently alluded to lines in "Vesna", the poem by F.I. Tyutchev from which Oreus drew the epigraph of the second section of "Zeitgedichte". In "Vesna", Tyutchev celebrated spring's coming as a manifestation of "divine world-wide life":

Каким бы строгим испытаньям
Вы ни были подчинены,
Что устоит перед дыханьем
И первой встречею весны!
Весна—она о вас не знает,
О вас, о горе и о зле;
Бессмертьем взор ея сияет
И ни морщины на челе...
Своим законам лишь послушна,
В условный час слетает к нам,
Светла, блаженно-равнодушна,
Как подобает божествам.
<...>
Игра и жертва жизни частной,
Приди ж, отвергни чувств обман
И ринься, бодрый, самовластный,
В сей *животворный океан*!
Приди, струей его эфирной
Омой страдальческую грудь
И жизни божески-всемирной
Хотя на миг причастен будь![9]

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[6]For a graphic documentation of the unrest see *Studencheskoe dvizhenie 1899 goda. Sbornik pod redaktsiey V. Chertkova*, Izdanie 'Svobodnogo Slova', Maldon, England, 1900.

[7]Indeed, the "*grustnye, slabye deti*" of "Zeitgedichte" were undoubtedly related to the culturally myopic "peers" - "*bednye deti*" - of the poem "Sverstniki" (8 March 1899, *Mid*, p. 170/*Sip*, p. 74), among whom Oreus therefore evidently did not number himself.

[8]13-17 February 1899, *Sip*, p. 70. For the poem's failure to pass the censors and Oreus' attempt to have it published in *Severnye tsvety* see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 470 and 528.

It was precisely Oreus' confident appeal in "Zeitgedichte" to this vernal "life-giving ocean" that he would be forced to reassess radically in "Blednaya vesna", only a month later. There he acknowledged that if his peers' perspective on life was wrong, his position was profoundly flawed too. It was a concession to which he was driven by his acknowledgement that he could not fulfil the love ideal, the creative justification of his mystical insights.

The mystical stance that Oreus adopted in "Zeitgedichte" was undoubtedly attacked by fellow students.[10] Even in literary circles, however, he was called to account for his apparent disdain for immediate events. Bryusov commented:

> Zeitgedichte Я бы написал не так, ибо знаю больший смысл и в этих шумах бесследных. В жажде покоя, благого живоносного моря, Вы напрасно отрекаетесь от целой половины бытия.[11]

Vl. Gippius also appears to have taken issue with Oreus' attitude to current affairs.[12] Indeed, it was the third and fourth lines of Gippius' poem "I grust' i smekh - ravno naprasny" that Oreus used an as the epigraph to "Blednaya vesna". Notably, Gippius' poem contrasted strongly with the Tyutchevian God's-eye view of spring that Oreus had adopted in "Zeitgedichte":

И грусть, и смех - равно напрасны,
И слабость - жалобы мои:
Все в той же мудрости бесстрастной
Проходят жизни годы, дни...

И вот зима прошла бесследно,
Так равнодушно—холодна, -
Вернулась теплая весна
С улыбкой радостной и бледной...

И снова душу обману!
И снова будет небо нежно,
И сладостно и безнадежно -

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[9]Tyutchev, F.I., "Vesna" ("Kak ni gnetet ruka sud'biny"), *Pol. Sob. Soch.*, p. 96-7. My italics. For the epigraph that Oreus took from "Vesna" for "Zeitgedichte" see *Sip*, p. 69. My italics. Notably, Oreus refers to the same "*Zhivotvornyy okean*" in the evaluation of Tyutchev included in his essay of 1900, "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" (*Sip*, p. 202),

[10]Cf. the attacks on Aleksandr Blok for his aloofness during the unrest: Iezuitov, L.A./Skvortsov, N.V., "Aleksandr Blok v Peterburgskom universitete", *Ocherki po istorii Leningradskogo universiteta IV*, L., 1982, p. 55.

[11]Letter of 5 April 1899, received as Oreus wrote second part of "Blednaya vesna": *Ln* 98 (i), p. 456.

[12]Notably, Gippius was to reminisce that Oreus attended a university gathering with a copy of Goethe in hand: *Ln* (iv), p. 176/*Ln* 98 (i), p. 457.

Как в миновавшую весну![13]

Oreus deliberately answered his epigraph from this poem in the second section of "Blednaya vesna". In lines which mirrored Gippius', he defended his right to the "triumph" of a contemplative abstraction that surmounts the flux of time:

В прекрасном, бесплодном гадании
Проходят недвижные дни.[14]

However, in using the qualifying epithet "*besplodnyy*" here even as he defied Gippius, Oreus betrayed the profound tension and ambivalence which actually underlay his opinion of the mystical contemplative life in "Blednaya vesna". Gippius' poem had challenged him to *justify* his confidence in the mystical vision of spring in "Zeitgedichte". This justification now turned upon Oreus' belief in the theurgic "miracle" of love, and he was now compelled to accept that it was beyond his powers.

That this was the case is indicated by the fact that the ideal of "Blednaya vesna" was not Tyutchev's spring goddess - the perfect embodiment of eternity and flux underlying absolute universal life; the ideal was that of another poet whom Oreus had long admired, N.F. Shcherbina. In his poem "Vesenniy gimn", Shcherbina notably fused spring and his earthly beloved in an "idealized" image of the perfect harmony that Solov'ev considered to be the true objective of love:

Встретил я душу родную,
Тщетно исканную мной,
Встретил ее отлитую
В образ весны молодой...
Слился я и с ним.[15]

In "Blednaya Vesna", Oreus *exactly inverted* this vision of ideal resolution, which was so obviously attractive to one deeply immersed in the Solov'evian philosophy of love. He admitted that this ideal was beyond him:

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[13]Bestuzhev, Vl. (pseud. of Vl. Gippius), *Vozvrashchenie*, 1912, p. 98. The lines from the poem that Oreus used as an epigraph to "Blednaya vesna" are italicized. The fact that Gippius was incensed that Oreus cited lines from this unpublished poem as an epigraph perhaps also indicates that "Blednaya vesna" addressed a sensitive issue (see his letter to F. Sologub of 15 December 1899: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 494).

[14]*Mid*, p. 186/*Sip*, p. 78.

[15] Oreus was familiar with Shcherbina's poetry long before he wrote "Blednaya vesna". He recorded reading Shcherbina in late 1895: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 6 ob.** Furthermore, Oreus' article of 1900-1901, "Mirovozzrenie poezii N.F. Shcherbiny", (*Severnye tsvety na 1902*, pp. 213-14, alternatively the Berkeley reprint of *Mid*, pp. 239-40) notably concludes with "Vesenniy gimn", which suggests its abiding importance for him. Also see below, p. 248.

Быть может, я встречу весну,
Но с ней никогда не сольюсь.[16]

This was Oreus' confession that, unable to effect the love ideal, he could not in fact worship Tyutchev's vernal divinity with the assurance that he had felt when he wrote "Zeitgedichte". His beloved was as deceptive as the "*pale*" spring of Vl. Gippius' poem. She was, as the first stanza of the poem made clear, "orphaned" from eternity. She embodied the transience of a life which confounded the mystical visions of the contemplative individual in his introspective asylum-prison 'within'. Indeed, although Oreus assured his *untransfigured* beloved in the fourth section of "Blednaya vesna" that they would "meet again", this indefinite vision of future realization in the 'beyond' was insufficient to dispel the image of the mystic, powerlessly suspended between heaven and earth, with which the poem concluded:

Пугливый дух, усталый, неизвестный,
Забился над заглохшею водой.
Над ним высоко—светлый мир небесный.
Но вечен-ли он, светлый и простой?

Забытый дух, суровый и пугливый,
Ребенок, росший меж седых отцов,
Что ждет твои безмолвные порывы,
Ты выйдешь ли на волю из лесов?[17]

Was this "child" not in fact as helpless as his "peers" ("*sverstniki*") after all? It certainly seems that a parallel was now drawn between the powerlessness of the culturally-orphaned denizens of the city in the polemical poem "Sverstniki", and the formerly proud mystic-child of "Blednaya vesna" who was here admitted to be *helpless* despite his grounding in the faith of "grey fathers" ("*sedye otsy*").[18]

II

This conclusion to "Blednaya vesna" was certainly indicative of one who, inspite of the love ideal, still felt powerless to *act*. It was a confession of uncertainty which was to

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[16]*Mid*, p. 185/*Sip*, p. 78.
[17]*Mid*, p. 178/*Sip*, p. 80. Italics mine.
[18]Cf. "Sverstniki", *Mid*, p. 170/*Sip*, p. 74:
...не были сказки веков с малых лет нам родны —
Заветные сказки
Обителей отчих...

determine the tone of much of the poetry of 1899. It puts processes marked in other poems following "Zeitgedichte" in context, for example. It explains the mood of resignation in "Otgoloski" (February-March 1899),[19] in which Oreus withdrew from his "friends" into a world of reverie, the hilly terrain of which was immediately redolent of Salzburg and Thüringen where he had enjoyed his greatest *mystical* triumphs. The above interpretation of "Blednaya vesna" also allows us better to understand "Soglashenie",[20] the very title of which indicates its content. There the poet had attempted to persuade himself of his preparedness to forfeit the happiness of positive action and actualization to regain the "measured joy" and stasis of a macrocosmic mystical vision.

Oreus' uncertainty in "Blednaya vesna" is perhaps best typified in the question with which the poem concluded:

Ты выйдешь ли на волю из лесов?[21]

That this question in particular was to haunt Oreus in the months *after* "Blednaya vesna" is also indicated in his poetry. Oreus alluded here to the "forests" which he had celebrated as a nursery for mystical and metaphysical insight in his poem "Debri" (winter 1897-98) and article "Dve narodnye stikhii" (September 1897). He now wanted to escape the confines of these "forests" and to *act* upon the knowledge that the mystical insights that he had experienced there had afforded him, but this prospect now seemed impossible. Although "Slovo k Istine" (29 April 1899) was a strong call for unitotal Truth and its realization in a Beauty with which we have identified the theurgic love ideal, evidently it simply served to compound the poet's sense of his *own* weakness. Rather than answering the challenge that Oreus faced, the maximalism of this fresh statement of his idealist demands in defiance of his "peers", left him *himself* no alternative but to back down or to react against the unattainability of the ideal. Indeed, "Sobornaya duma" (March 1899) and "K inym sobrat'yam" (April-May 1899), in which Oreus falteringly attempted to continue the polemic with his "peers" by appealing to the power of mystical intuition and thought, suggest his readiness to accept the compromise that he had already formulated in "Soglashenie", and to back down. "Novyy den'"[22] also suggests this inclination to compromise. There Oreus symbolized a sense of cathartic purgation in the May storm: it emancipated the soul, ameliorated its "troubles" ("*volneniya*")[23] and brought calm skies and the promise of a new summer of contemplation in its wake.

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[19] February-March 1899, *Mid*, p. 163/*Sip*, p. 71.
[20]4 March 1899, *Mid*, p. 190/*Sip*, p. 73.
[21] *Mid*, p. 187/*Sip*, p. 80.
[22]May 1899, *Mid*, p. 202/*Sip*, p. 85.
[23] Possibly a reference to the love poem of that title: *Mid*, p. 177/*Sip*, p. 64.

However, any hope of reviving the mystical spirit of the two preceding summers during his sojourn in Finland in 1899 was in fact to be essentially frustrated, as "Kraynyaya duma" (10 July 1899) shows. The question that Oreus had posed himself at the end of "Blednaya vesna" continued to perplex him. Mysticism alone could not answer the doubts of "Nedoumenie" (June 1899).[24] "Kraynyaya duma" shows that although Oreus valued the contemplative life he still felt the need for 'action' that the love ideal had seemed to promise in the preceding winter. He alluded to the ideal in images reminiscent of the love poem, "Prazdnichnaya kantata":

Есть утешение большое -
Явленьем всяким пламенеть,
Все равнодушное, чужое
В себя принять, в себе воспеть

Но где ж надежды ликований,
Свободно—праздничных времен?
О ложь надежд и начинаний!
Грядущий день - нечуем он.[25]

"Kraynyaya duma" renewed the challenge to escape the "forests" of contemplation. However, as the frustration of the above quotation suggests, he still accepted that the love ideal was unattainable for *him*, for him it had been a "deception". This frustrating contradiction between the unattainability of the love ideal and the unrelenting need to *act* gave impetus in 1899 to an increasingly resonant class of poetry in which Oreus reacted violently against the imperfection of the world and humanity in an inspirational compact with elemental forces which *could* change reality.

In "Radonitsa" (May 1899), the poet identified himself with the elemental ferocity of vernal forces of renewal and resurrection and disassociated himself from a humanity which, locked in phenomenal being, was reminiscent of the *studenchestvo* of "Zeitgedichte":

Как тусклы те воззвания,
Те вопли скудоумия,
Те вопли человечества,
Гнетомого судьбой.
О замирайте, нищия.
Я вашего безумия,
Слепого упованья
Не обновлю собой.[26]

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[24]*Mid*, p. 195/*Sip*, p. 88.
[25]*Sip*, p. 92. Written in Nevvola, 10 July 1899 (for summer itinerary of that year, see *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 465-66). The "free, festive times" seem to refer to the christmas period of 1898-99, which "Prazdnichnaya kantata" testifies were the apogee of Oreus' hopes in connection with A.N. Gippius.

In "Son bor'by" (June 1899), Oreus envisaged joining forces with a wind that he had intuited in the mediumistic dream world of his eternal self, and destroying all:

И равнодушием, и горем упоенный,
И с ветром сладостным ликуя и скорбя,
Не постоял бы я ни перед чем смущенный,
Но, всей заботою земною возмущенный,
Я разорил бы все, распространив себя.[27]

In "Poryvy" (23 July 1899), the poet's desperate need for action provoked him to turn his back upon many of his metaphysical achievements of the past years. In the poem he acknowledged the *desirability* of attaining the true "freedom" of the unitotal ideal, but portrayed *himself* as enslaved by its unrealizability, re-interred in the "vault" from which he had presumed the love ideal to have released him in "Iz 'vechnykh svodov'". Indeed, he found himself again confessing that his ideals exceeded the power of his will to enact them, as he had done in *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya* before he discovered the love ideal. His only answer now was a desperate appeal to indiscriminately violent elemental forces that was ironically redolent of the call for spontaneous action that he had so resolutely dismissed in his essay of 1893, *Duma, sertse i razmakhi*:

Мыслей настойчивых воля
Скована крепко и слепо.
Нет, незавидна их доля,
Доля владетелей склепа.
Только в отчаяньи - благо
В дерзости - вольная сила.
<...>
В буре неистовой мучаться
В битве сплеча разгуляться:
Только в *размахе* - величье![28]

III

"Poryvy" was in fact the *last* and most radical of the series of poems in which Oreus cathartically explored and expurgated his frustrations with an imperfect world that made his metaphysical and theurgic ideals unrealizable. The implications of this violent

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[26]May 1899, *Sip*, p. 87.
[27]28 May 1899, not June as in *Sip* (see *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo Doma na 1977 god*, p. 87). *Mid*, p. 167/*Sip*, p. 89.
[28]23 July 1899, *Sip*, p. 94. My italics.

poem evidently made Oreus stop, think and formulate an *alternative* creative ideal - an attempt at an assertive answer to the confession of "Blednaya vesna". Indeed, the poems which Oreus now proceeded to write suggest that he had resolved no longer to react against his weaknesses, but rather to explore and exploit his *strengths* as an *artist*. He no longer looked outwards to elemental forces to inspire him, but inwards to his "metaphysical" self, which he affirmed as the subject of unitotality and, as such, the *solipsistic sovereign* of all that he experienced and surveyed.

Indeed, although it was a departure from the mood of stormy rebellion that pervaded the summer of 1899, the poem "Proyasnenie" of 23 August was not simply another bid to reassert the contemplative principle of previous years. In this work he actually asserted himself as *master* of his own personal universe of experience and creativity. It was a poem of self-divinization:

От дикой, жаркой качки лет
Разгорченный и разбитый,
Стою я на стезе забытой,
И мой волшебный мир, мне вслед,
Летит, по воздуху развитый.

Темнолазурные моря,
Недосягаемые скалы,
Златорумяная заря,
Что по горам меня искала,
И девы дивные дубрав
несутся, силы все собрав.

Из всех минувшего глубин,
Из области туманных дум
Выносит их на свет и шум.
Игра узорна. Дух един.
Созрела кровь. Созрел и ум.[29]

The first part of "Osennie golosa" (August 1899) reiterated this gentle assertion of the exhausted poet's right to asylum within his internalized world. However, the second part of the work (September 1899) notably marked Oreus' further exploration of the implications of this new solipsistic tendency and assertion of innate divinity. It hailed the poet's spirit as the autocratic sovereign of a world which was in fact his own creation. Indeed, all the forces that had formerly reduced him to futile yearning and aspiration were now subsumed as an extension of his fully empowered *self*:

Властителен, как царь, строитель славных зданий,
<...>

[29]*Sip*, p. 97. The images in the second stanza are redolent of the summers of 1897-98.

Ты - в мире демонов, зловонных и холодных,
И в их руках теперь - тесняща́я судьба.
Но сущий - ты один, создатель чар природных
И тех же демонов, чтоб с ними шла борьба.[30]

Notably, in the wake of these poems, the love ideal ceased to feature explicitly in the poetical theorization which increasingly occupied Oreus in 1900-1901, or the poetry that he produced in connection with it. Indeed, Oreus' writings on art of 1900 could be construed as lending weight to the view that it was precisely the solipsistic self-affirmation of "Osennie Golosa" that had eclipsed the love ideal as the active principle of his metaphysics.

Oreus was exhilarated by the precise balance of personal and universal integrity, of action and stasis, attained within the scope of a piano recital by Joseph Hofmann on 14 December 1899:

При исполнении «Симфонических студий» Шумана твердое самообладание и властность Гофмана проявили себя в широкой и могучей глубине страстных порывов мечты и прозрения. Пластика и явственность его звукового начертания распространили вдали свелтых раздолий житейского стремления глубокий и вещий сумрак. И вот под дыханием этой таинственности мира звучат эти то столь томительные, то столь стремительные периоды страстного мечтания и искания. Но в каждом течении и порыве под руками Гофмана - разительная уверенность мужества.[31].

This note on Hofmann's performance was writtten two months after "Osennie golosa II" and a month after "Otrechenie" (5 November 1899), the poem in which Oreus renounced his love for A.N. Gippius. Indeed, the note suggests that at the turn of the century Oreus was now ready to re-emerge from the artistic crisis precipitated by his maximalist subscription to the love ideal, and to re-embrace artistic 'intuition' as his creative principle. Oreus' systematic attempts to define the nature and function of poetry in 1900 certainly indicate a new hope in it as the closest attainable approximation to the transfigurative power to which he aspired.

Oreus' essay *K svobodnomu ucheniyu prekrasnogo* indicates his transposition of an active or *moral* emphasis to art. In the essay he identified poetry as being the means to overcome the very limitations of the will that had frustrated him in *Kraeugol'nye kamni*

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[30]Ibid., p. 99.

[31]"Vpechatleniya v mire musyki i teatra": *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 86-85 ob.** The works of Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Wagner feature most prominently in Oreus' "impressions" of performances both public and private (fragments of which are cited by N.L. Stepanov: *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 186). Oreus' attraction to music is also evidenced in his poems "Bayreuth" and "Florestano Kallio" (dedicated to his friend A.F. Kal' (1878-1948) whose musicality is apparent in the private recital he organized on 29 January 1898: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 65**, his sobriquet - Schumann's pseudonym, and his later service as I.F. Stravinsky's personal secretary).

moego miroponimaniya and, more recently, the poem "Poryvy". Genuine poetry, he maintained, is superior to the mechanical processes of "mental book-keeping" - the sobriety of rational consciousness; it is the *one* transfigurative medium in which man truly finds freedom, transcending the laws of necessity to which he is subject in his phenomenal or "animal" existence.

Notably, in advocating poetry as volitional free play, Oreus now emphasized *process* rather than *objective*, a reversal of the maximalist stance which had occasioned such friction and disappointment in the preceding year's subscription to the ideal. He evidently considered that this renewed exploration of the potential of poetry licensed an honourable disentanglement from his previous, excessive insistence upon the *literal* transfiguration of reality. Indeed, the guerdon of poetry, Oreus now held, was to be found precisely in its projection into the realm of *possibility*. Poetry was an infinitely empowering expansion of the poet's threshold of sensibility and comprehension through the sublimation of his basic drives:

> Как бы ни направлялась воля поэта, в словесном изображении ее ему не подобает сосредоточиваться всецело на окончательной цели своих желаний и действий и избирать для достижения ее путь наименьшей затраты энергии. Нет, центр тяжести своего душевного состояния ему подобает заложить в самое стремление, и разливаться, распускаться, расцветать ощущением и воображением в этом душевном движении. Самый извилистый и сложный путь к цели пусть будет дорог ему за те богатые цветы, которые раскрывают из него. Так в выражении самой настоятельной воли поэт становится свободен от нее и сосредоточивается на ее же созерцании, т.е. воображении, возлелеянии, возрощении своего волевого состояния. Так, не отрешаясь от целей поэт становится выше определенных целей, он открывает прелесть и в состоянии, предшествующем достижению цели..[32]

The shift of emphasis to an unqualified faith in poetry is also reflected in Oreus' letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of 5 June 1900. There, although Oreus continued to find that branches of contemporary scientific knowledge corroborated his poetic vision,[33] as he had in *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*, he now confidently asserted that in the final analysis science is of purely incidental interest to the true poet. The poet is possessed of the limitless knowledge and power that his mystical-imaginative faculty uniquely confers upon him and has no need of "facts":

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[32]*Stikhotvoreniya (iz sbornika "Mechty i dumy", 1900 g.). Rukopis' N.Ya. Bryusovoy*: **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 2, l. 59**, where the piece is undated. However, it is coupled with the sketch *K kharakteristike Shelli*, the original of which is included in the archive together with articles of *1900-1901* (**f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 16**).

[33] In particular, Carl Du prel's scientific study of paranormal phenomena: see, *Pis'ma <...> Bilibinu, A.Ya.*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 17, l. 13 ob.**

Пренебрежение к «фактам» <...> - лучший признак самобытного и верящего в свое чуяние созерцателя и умозрителя <...> Для таких деятелей вся эта возня с «фактами», с тем, что «делалось» где-то и когда-то - мелкие дрязги. Для всех таких лиц гораздо много значительнее то, что «делается» в них самих, а еще более, что они хотят и надеются ощущать и сделать.[34]

A letter from Oreus to N.M. Sokolov of December 1900 further confirms that Oreus now asserted the tripartite act of "mystical knowledge" - of "faith", "imagination" and "creativity" - as a 'mode' for living:

Предметы со мной - в сопряжении, я с ними - координаты, определяющие положение некоторого единого бытия. Итак, подобает жить в мире, как в своем воображении, изображении, выражении, отражении.[35]

Notably Sokolov in turn wrote a letter to Bryusov after Oreus' death in which he identified the deceased's incomplete article of 1900, "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike", as an expression of this primacy that poetry seemed to enjoy in his system towards the end of his life:

Из бесед со *всеми* друзьями Ореуса я вынес подтверждение тому, что центром интересов покойного друга было поэтическое творчество в широчайшем смысле слова, что особенно резко выразилось в его предсмертном письме к Семенову и обьединении всех его интересов в неоконченной работе о лирике наших поэтов первой половины века.[36]

Certainly "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" might be construed as shedding light upon own Oreus' poetic development during 1899-1900.

Oreus identified two poles in Russian mystical poetry in the article. On the one hand, there was the *contemplative* branch represented by Fet, Baratynsky and F.I. Tyutchev, whose poetry Oreus saw as the best of this type of mysticism, it being a perfect intuition of the unitotal Absolute. On the other hand, there was Pushkin, whose world-view was centred in the opposite pole of action and strong volition. The mystical moments in his poetry were profound but essentially incidental. His nature was too protean to devote itself to unravelling their meaning:

В то время как Тютчев всегда ощущал вечное среди движения, в каждом его моменте, для Пушкина самое вечное было как бы одним из моментов движения.[37]

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[34]*Pis'ma <...> Bilibinu, A.Ya.*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 17, l. 13 ob.- 14**.
[35]*Pis'ma <...> Sokolovu*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 22, l.3**.
[36]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 520.
[37]*Sip*, p. 208.

Notably, however, "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" also included an analysis of a mystical poet who seemed to *marry* the antithetical, but equally indispensable, principles represented by Tyutchev and Pushkin: A.V. Kol'tsov. Moreover, Oreus himself evidently identified with what he perceived as Kol'tsov's attempt to reconcile action and the passivity of mysticism. Significantly, he discerned in Kol'tsov the same spirit of stormy 'rebellion' which we have shown emerged in his own work in 1899. Oreus maintained that Kol'tsov had been deeply enamoured with the physical world but, precisely for that reason, also became locked into a furiously rebellious struggle against its imperfection. However, Oreus continued, perhaps echoing his own experience, the poet had *had* to recognize that given unconditional rein, *unmediated*, the *active* force of will was ultimately futile in itself:

«Что мне делать», вопрошал и возглашал властительный дух поэта, «с буйной волей, с грешной мыслью, с пылкой страстью?»[38]

Oreus identified Kol'tsov's salvation as the *contemplative* aspect of his nature. He stressed, however, that *in contrast to the contemplatives*, in Kol'tsov this intuition of the individual's unity with the universe did not precipitate an abandonment of will, a swing to passivity, *but an intensified assertion of the power innate in him*. Kol'tsov mystically sublimated his desire for action and transfiguration in a process of poetic self-divinization:

В своем прозрачно явственном и неотступном стремлении «перестроить всю природу» он приходит сперва к широчайшей и опустошающей иронии над всякой такой попыткой человека к примирению с не от его рук возникшим, которая оправдывается полным удовлетворением от красоты мироздания. Раз с демонической усмешкой он уличил эту мирную сделку в бессилии и немощи раба, невольника времени-пространства, - происходит роковой переход к сознанию условий, без которых делу пересоздания не быть. Да будет человек - «бездна сил, идей», «все, один и всюду» - одним словом «бог!» Но уж если человек помыслил всеединое существо, то, что есть, и все множество, и только одно, как же и ему самому не быть это же существо? Ведь когда он не есть оно, тогда всего во всеединстве нет, оно уже не все. Так, произволив быть бог, человек помышлением совершает круг, узнает, что как раз если он человек, он не может не быть и бог: «все, что есть, все божье, и премудрость наша - божья».[39]

Significantly, in Oreus' opinion the outcome of this reasoned self-divinization was Kol'tsov's assertion of a poetic sovereignty not dissimilar to that which he himself affirmed in his own poem, "Osennie golosa II", as an alternative to the unrealizable love ideal:

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[38]Ibid., p. 213.
[39]Ibid., pp. 214-15.

...лицо <...> не желает более быть ничем из всего, что вне его; оно оставаясь единственно само собой, своей единицей, произволяет быть вездесуще, вечно и всемогуще. *И ему сообщается то понимание, что таково оно более всего тогда, когда оно вполне и единственно поэт. Для поэта нет никакой власти у мира над ним. Могущество творческого воображения и самовнушения, художественного и мыслительного, безпредельно.*[40]

Notably, shortly before his death in 1901, Oreus appeared to echo "Osennie golosa II" and this Kol'tsovian formula again in his *final* reflections on poetry to be published: "Nauka i poeziya":

Кто же является императором, властителем и повелителем над мертвым материалом внешнего мира, а не регистратором его выбросков? Кто говорит миру «да будет», «быть по сему», кто вдыхает «душу живу» в его комья глины, лепя и воображая их по своему образу и подобию? Не поэт ли <...>?[41]

This final statement in "Nauka i poeziya", seeming confirmation that after "Blednaya vesna" Oreus adopted a new creative ideal and subscribed to it to the end of his life, again begs the question of whether the contemporary critics were not in fact *ultimately* justified in neglecting "Konevskoy's" metaphysical development and the place of the love ideal in it. Has the analysis in this chapter not shown that Bryusov was correct after all to claim that Oreus' "first and last love" was to pass without appreciable influence upon him? Although the evident 'poeticization' of Oreus' personal philosophy had its basis in Solov'evian "mystical knowledge", did not the disproportionate emphasis that he placed upon that knowledge again far exceed the relevance that the Russian philosopher accorded to it, departing from the essential objective of his system: true *transfigurative* synthesis? In sum, was not Oreus' metaphysics overwhelmed by his celebration of poetic inspiration and creative license?

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[40]Ibid. Italics mine.
[41]"Nauka i poeziya", *Sip*, p. 231.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Positive continuity

II

'True love' or 'true patriotism'? A Solov'evian dialectic

...гордые люди идут вам на смену:
Не мечут они возмущенную пену,
Не лезут на стену,
И внутрь обращен у них взор.
Что чуют они, то в себя принимают:
В себе им простор.

I. Konevskoy. "K sluzhitelyam".

Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen of this study now continue to pursue the case *against* the thesis that Oreus' pursuit of a positive, all-embracing metaphysical credo lost momentum in the last two years of his life. The chapters propose that in order to understand Oreus' later development it is in fact necessary to acknowledge that another previously unrecognized Solov'evian ideal runs throughout his later poetry of 1899-1901. This ideal, the chapters argue, was pivotal to a final stage in the *ultimately positive* dialectical process of Oreus' Solov'evian development.

The present chapter firstly concentrates upon identifying the ideal as that which Solov'ev termed "true patriotism" - the vision of a perfect cultural syzygy of individual and society. The *particular* significance that Solov'ev accorded the *poet* as the prophetic instigator of this positive cultural process is also identified.

The analysis continues to show how although Oreus experimented with these secondary themes from early 1898 they would in fact particularly emerge in his poetry of *1899*, when he asserted "true patriotism" as an *alternative to the theurgic love ideal*. The chapter explores how, as a *reaction* against the love ideal, Oreus' vision of cultural transfiguration championed the "mystical knowledge" of the poet as the *only* power capable of producing a unitotal society of true individuals. The study then proceeds to argue that Oreus' undue claims that poetry alone would effect this theurgic change resulted in him cornering himself into advocating a paradoxical future collective of individually enlightened poet-solipsists. It was this, the chapter concludes, that actually emerged from the polyphony of 1899 in "Osennie golosa II" and its assertion of poetic sovereignty.

Chapter Seventeen proceeds to contend, however, that this poem was in fact a *dead end* rather than a definitive basis for the future. The chapter reveals that paradoxically Oreus' final poem of *love*, "Otrechenie" (November 5 1899), which followed shortly after "Osennie golosa II", was definitive. Despite its title, this poem confirmed the fact that the love ideal remained a point of reference for Oreus and that it compelled him to redefine his cultural vision of the individual within its terms. Indeed, reassessment of the poem shows that it was an *answer* to the solipsistic trend that is apparent in "Osennie golosa II". The analysis shows that although Oreus acknowledged *himself* to be unable to effect the love ideal in "Otrechenie", in the process he also reaffirmed it as the *only* genuine theurgic power. In doing this he discovered and reconciled himself to the true relationship between the poet, "true patriotism" and theurgic love in the Solov'evian aesthetic. He freed the poet from theurgic pretensions and came to understand the full implications of the Solov'evian vision of the poet as a "prophet" of cosmological and cultural change *in the service* of the love ideal. It was an understanding of the poet as prophet which, the chapter finds, Solov'ev's article "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" fortuitously helped Oreus to reach. Indeed, the definition of the "poet-prophet" in that article is shown to underlie and positively explain Oreus' general poetic theorization of 1900-1901 and, in particular, his later references to the poet's "sovereignty". This interpretation of Oreus' later Solov'evian development is corroborated by an analysis of Oreus' neglected poems of historical and cultural vision of 1900-1901 which confirm that he ended his life as a poet-prophet of Solov'evian "true patriotism".

I

On 12 October 1899 the poet A.A. Lang wrote a letter to Oreus in which he gave his impressions of their first meeting, in Moscow, a month earlier:

Познакомившись лично с Вами, я убедился, что Вы так же, как и я, свято и мощно верите в поэзию <...> Как я уже Вам говорил в нашей беседе, творчество Ваше идет совершенно обособленным путем: *в нем оживает варяг, непреклонный господин северных морей, но не в древней физической, мускульной силе, а одухотворенный грядущими веками, стоящий на той ступени нашего сушествования, когда человек перестает быть человеком и делается «полудухом»*. Вот это-то предчаяние в Ваших стихах так близко, так любимо моему сердцу. И я убежден, что *лишь в этом может заключаться момент будущего развития поэзии.*[1]

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[1]Yampol'sky, I.G., "Pis'ma A. Miropol'skogo k I. Konevskomu", *Pamyatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiya*, 1988, p. 23. Italics mine. See also p. 21 for details of Oreus' visit to Moscow of September 1899. Italics mine.

The evident content of the "conversation" to which Lang referred here suggests that the two poets had discussed a distinct sub-genre of Oreus' poetry that has been generally neglected, but was actually to assume increasing importance in 1899. This genre had its basis in the Solov'evian ideal of historical and cultural progress and the poet's pivotal role in effecting it.

Lang's reference to the "Varangian" spirit that Oreus had revived in his poetry indicates where our discussion of his treatment of this cultural ideal should begin, as it alludes to his first attempt to explore it in verse, "S Konevtsa" (spring 1898):

Я—варяг из-за синего моря,
Но усвоил протяжный язык,
Что, степному раздолию вторя,
Разметавшейся негой велик.

И велик тот язык, и обилен:
Что ни слово—увалов размах,
А за слогом, что в слове усилен,
Вьются всплески и в смежных слогах.

Легкокрыло той речи паренье,
И ясна ее смелая ширь,
А беспутное с Богом боренье
В ней смиряет простой монастырь.

Но над этою ширию ровной
Примощусь на уступе скалы,
Уцепившися с яростью кровной
За корявые сосен стволы.

Чудо—озеро, хмуро седое,
Пусть у ног ее бьется, шумит,
А за ним бытие молодое
Русь в безпечные дали стремит.

И не дамся я тихой истоме,
Только очи вперю я в простор.
Все, что есть в необъятном объеме—
Все впитает мой впившийся взор.

И в луче я все солнце постигну,
А в просветах берез - неба зрак.
На уступе устой свой воздвигну,
Я из-за моря хмурый варяг.[2]

The *immediate* inspiration for "S Konevtsa" was actually the first lecture of Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, which Oreus read

[2]*Mid*, p. 57/*Sip*, p. 37.

directly before writing the poem.[3] In "The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism: Scandanavian Mythology", Carlyle significantly attributed Odin's divinity to primeval wonder at this heroic mortal's exploits as a catalyst of cultural enlightenment. Indeed, Carlyle depicted Odin as being distinct among the warrior class as the originator of the *written word* and *poetry*:

> Odin's *Runes* are a significant feature of him. Runes, and the miracles of 'magic' he worked by them, make a great feature in tradition. Runes are the Scandinavian Alphabet; suppose Odin to have been the inventor of Letters, as well as 'magic,' among that people! It is the greatest invention man has ever made, this of marking-down the unseen thought that is in him by written characters. It is a kind of second speech, almost miraculous as the first <...> If Odin brought letters among his people, he might work magic enough! <...> Snorro tells us <...> that Odin invented Poetry; the music of human speech, as well as that miraculous runic marking of it. Transport yourselves into the early childhood of nations; the first beautiful morning-light of our Europe when all yet lay in fresh young radiance as of a great sunrise, and our Europe was first beginning to think, to be! Wonder, hope; infinite radiance of hope and wonder, as of a young child's thoughts, in the hearts of these strong men! Strong sons of Nature; and here was not only a wild Captain and Fighter; discerning with his wild flashing eyes what to do, with his wild lion-heart daring and doing it; but a poet too, all that we mean by a poet, Prophet, great devout Thinker and Inventor, - as the truly Great Man ever is <...> This Odin, in his rude semi-articulate way, had a word to speak. A great heart laid open to take in this great Universe, and man's life here, and utter a great word about it <...> He worked so, in that obscure element. But he was a *light* kindled in it; a light of Intellect, rude Nobleness of heart, the only kind of lights we have yet; a Hero, as I say: and he had to shine there, and make his obscure element a little lighter, - as is still the task of us all.[4]

Indeed, Carlyle considered that Odin's task of enlightening the world was still relevant and still essentially the preserve of *poets*. He apprised a fundamental truth in the primitive Norse receptivity to the universe that had been stifled by the religious and scientific dogma of his day, and he exhorted his readers to rediscover this 'wonderment' in poetry:

> We do not worship in that way now: but is it not reckoned still a merit, proof of what we call a 'poetic nature', that we recognise how every object has a divine beauty in it; how every object still verily is 'a window through which we may look into infinitude itself'? He that can discern the loveliness of things, we call him Poet, Painter, Man of Genius, gifted, lovable.[5]

Oreus' Norse *poet-warrior* of "S Konevtsa" undoubtedly embodied the general properties that Carlyle attributed both to Odin as a heroic cultural innovator and to the poets throughout the ages who succeeded him. However, as we shall see, Carlyle's vision of Odin was in fact only the *final* prompt for Oreus to explore and celebrate his own

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[3]Oreus read *On Heroes* in January 1898: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 51**.
[4]Carlyle, T., *Sartor Resartus. On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, Dent, 1926, pp. 264-5.
[5]Ibid., pp. 246-7.

Scando-slavonic background. The broad ideas that this heroic figure epitomised in Carlyle's lecture were already familiar to Oreus from the writings of Vladimir Solov'ev.

On a general level we know that Solov'ev too celebrated the vision of poets such as F.I. Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy as being free from, and a valuable challenge to, the cultural myopia of a modern scientific life. Moreover, the philosopher-poet himself championed this vein of atavistic sincerity- a fresh eye upon the universe. Indeed, the ray in which the poet-warrior of Oreus' "S Konevtsa" apprehends the sun was in all probability not only inspired by Carlyle's "window through which we look into infinitude itself". The image was also redolent of Solov'ev's "Oko vechnosti", in which the philosopher apprised infinity in a single star.[6]

The Varangian's contemplation of nature in "S Konevtsa" is, however, incidental to the *historical* ethos which he embodies. This in particular confirms the distinctly Solov'evian character of the poem. This historical ethos reflects Solov'ev's definition of the "poet-patriot". Solov'ev explored this concept with perhaps greatest clarity in his article on A.K. Tolstoy, "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", which we know made a profound impression on Oreus in 1895. There Solov'ev defined "patriotism" not as an unconditional celebration or defence of nationality, but in terms which reflected his unitotal metaphysics - as a free synthesis of whole and parts, of individual and society:

Истинный патриотизм заставляет желать своему народу <...> наибольшего достоинства, наибольшего приближения к правде и совершенству, т.е. к подлинному, безусловному благу. Это благо, согласно миросозерцанию нашего поэта, определяется окончательно как единство в свободной полноте живых сил. Свободное достижение такого совершенного состояния есть смысл человеческого существования.

Significantly, Solov'ev proceeded to identify A.K. Tolstoy's "true patriotism" in that poet's championing the principle of individuality in the face of Slavonic 'impersonalism':

У русского народа есть важные добродетели преимущественно перед народами Запада, - это именно те, которые общи нам с близким нам Востоком: созерцательность, покорность, терпение. Этими добродетелями долго держалась наша духовная метрополия - Византия, однако они не могли спасти ее. Значит, одних этих восточных свойств и преимуществ самих по себе - мало. Они не могут уберечь великую нацию, если к ним не присоединится тот другой элемент, который, конечно, не чужд и России, как стране европейской и христианской, но по историческим условиям имел доселе у нас (как и в Византии) лишь слабое развитие - я разумею *сознание безусловного человеческого достоинства, принцип самостоятельной и самодеятельной личности.* Поэт, которого мы теперь помянули, был один из очень редких

[6] Oreus read "Oko vechnosti" in the March edition of *Knizhka nedeli*, 1897, and listed it "NB": *Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 29 ob.**

у нас носителей этого истинно—человеческого жизненного начала, в развитии которого главное условие будущности каждого народа.[7]

This emphasis upon a patriotism of true individuality not only accorded generally with Oreus' own early interest in Christian individuality and Dostoevsky's insistence upon a society of enlightened individuals. Oreus echoed Solov'ev's above-cited reflections on national character in his essay of 1897, "Dve narodnye stikhii", which we have already briefly examined as an expression of his metaphysical 'faith'. In that work, we recall, Oreus favourably contrasted what he discerned as a heightened sense of self in the Teutonic people with Slavonic self-effacement. That theoretical exposition of his ideas on nationality was to be a preliminary sketch for "S Konevtsa" in which Oreus attempted to adopt the mantle of Solov'evian "*poet*-patriot" fully for the first time.

In translating the patriotic ideal into verse, moreover, Oreus showed that he had also absorbed Solov'ev's observation in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" that the poet's patriotic verse exemplified what we might term "prophetic atavism". The author idealized the exploits of his nation's past in order to inspire cultural progression in the present and future:

Как патриот-поэт Толстой был вправе избрать не историческую, а пророческую точку зрения. Он не остановливался на материальных необходимостях и условиях прошедшего, а мерил его *сверху* - нравственными потребностями.[8]

It was thus that in "S Konevtsa" Oreus embodied his patriotic vision of Russia's new metaphysical enlightenment in the figure of the Varangian poet-warrior which was inspired by Carlyle's Odin and his own Scandinavian ancestry. Historically the Varangians had been a dynamic ruling power in Russia who had introduced a new order to disparate Slavonic culture. The Varangian of "S Konevtsa" embodied the Teutonic spirit of individuality and metaphysical understanding that Oreus anticipated would bring about new and meaningful cultural change in Russia. Indeed, the poet-warrior of the poem is depicted as one who has mastered and is ready to impart a new message in the monastically tamed language of the Russo-byzantine cultural landscape over which he towers.

Shortly after "S Konevtsa" Oreus was to employ the atavistic idiom again to promote the freedom and power that he believed "mystical knowledge" of unitotality to accord the individual. In "V rody i rody" he was to represent this mystical understanding

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[7]Solov'ev, Vl., "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 317.
[8]Ibid., p. 315.

in the magical powers of the world of prince Igor and the *byliny*, which he wished to summon up in Russia anew:

> Где вы, колена с соколиным оком,
> Которым проницалась даль небес.[9]

However, it is notable that Oreus was abruptly to abandon his experiment in "prophetic atavism" and "true patriotism" in 1898. It seems probable that he suddenly felt that the poems were compromised by the same contradiction that we identified earlier in the metaphysical faith of the Teutonic forest dwellers of "Dve narodnye stikhii": his metaphysics was purely *formal*, he did not have the *active* or *creative* means to realize his ideal. Indeed, Oreus' work on *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya* no doubt compounded his sense that any celebration of man as the *agency* of universal transfiguration at this stage was premature. The poet-warrior of "S Konevtsa" was a brilliant metaphysician and dialectician, but he was ignorant of *how* to transfigure the *moral* complexion of his culture directly and actively. The miraculous vision guiding the heroes of "V rody i rody" in the desert was as insubstantial a basis for *action* as the unqualified dialectic of the Absolute.

Oreus' interest in "true patriotism" was further displaced by his subscription to the love ideal, the seeming resolution of his problems in *Kraeugol'nye kamni moego miroponimaniya*. It is all the more important then to recognize that this interest *was* to re-emerge in 1899, precisely at the time he became disillusioned by the love ideal. Indeed, he asserted "true patriotism" and the power of the poet to effect it as an *alternative* theurgic principle.

II

Notably, when at the height of Oreus' intellectual and emotional enthralment by the theurgic ideal of "true sexual love" the heroic principle *did* find renewed expression in "V rody i rody II" (January 1899), the Wagneresque knights of that poem did not embody the promise of ideal self-deliverance. The order that these knights snatch from the jaws of chaotic forces was deliberately stressed as being *ephemeral*, their achievements - cyclical:

> Там под скалами крутого Рифея,
> Много людей удалых.

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[9]*Mid*, p. 61/*Sip*, p. 37.

Рвут они жемчуг из пасти у змея,
У карликов злых.

После же выйдут в загорныя степи
С пробылью ценной в руках.
Воздвигнут они свой храм благолепий
На зыбких песках.

Храм пошатнется, и дальше направят
Витязи вольный свой бег.
Так они всей своей жизнью славят
Тебя, человек![10]

This was not the heroism of the poet-*progenitor* of truths, allegedly capable of transfiguring reality, but heroism deriving from an unflagging sense of *duty* in the struggle for an unattainable ideal. This dutiful faith also underlay the defiant disdain of mortality in "Prezrenie" (February 1899) and "Iz daleka" (February 1899), a variation on the same theme, which was redolent of V. Vasnetsov's *Posle poboishcha Igorya Svyatoslavicha s polovtsami*:

Здраствуй, ночь слепая и глухая!
Рыхло, сыро сыплется песок...
Любо жить под ним мне, издыхая.
О курган мой, гордо ты высок![11]

Oreus' final admission in "Blednaya vesna" (March 1899) that it was folly automatically to equate the theurgic love ideal with its realization might have been expected to give impetus to this atavistic ideal of the *dutiful* but relatively disempowered hero. Indeed, such defiance of the unattainability of the love ideal accorded well with the elemental rebellion against the world's imperfection with which Oreus identified during the following months in such poems as "Radonitsa" and "Poryvy". That, however, he did not in fact pursue this application of prophetic atavism any further, but instead abruptly renewed his idealization of the atavistic hero as a font of active *theurgic* power, indicates his growing inclination to affirm Solov'ev's "true patriotism" as an *alternative* to love.

The above-cited letter from A.A. Lang to Oreus of 12 October 1899 seems to be symptomatic of this shift of emphasis. It found systematic expression, however, in the modifications that Oreus made to "Dve narodnye stikhii" in mid-late 1899 for publication in *Mechty i dumy*. Indeed, the section of that essay that he added in 1899 indicates that

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[10]*Mid*, p 166/*Sip*, p. 57.
[11]*Mid*, p. 165/*Sip*, p. 62. The poem is dedicated to the aspirant artist Ivan Bilibin, who was strongly influenced by an exhibition of V. Vasnetsov's work in early 1899 (see *I.Ya. Bilibin. Stat'i. Pis'ma. Vospominaniya o khudozhnike*, p. 8) which Oreus also attended (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 88**). Also indicative of the interest in Vasnetsov within Oreus' circle at that time was his friend P.P. Konradi's article on him: "V.M. Vasnetsov", *Zhivopisnoe obozrenie*, 1899, No. 12.

even as he championed the theurgic power of Eros in another revised sketch of 1897, "Styd pered mater'yu zemley", he was devising alternative strategies to answer his needs for an *immediate* source of action.

The earlier pages of "Dve narodnye stikhii" of 1897 had been a static definition of the Slavonic and Teutonic national ethos. Notably, in the addendum of 1899 the emphasis immediately shifted to the *fluidity* of cultural *change*:

> Так было до сих пор в существовании двух великих племен. Что *будет* с ними - может быть, конечно, прямо обратно.[12]

Significantly Oreus now affirmed the powerful but *impracticable* "mystical knowledge" with which he had identified the Teutonic principle in the earlier section of the essay as the active *means* to attain positive cultural transfiguration. He now identified "mystical knowledge" of the unitotal Absolute as the key to "true patriotism", as his definition of culture as a proportional relationship of whole and constituent parts intimated:

> Народный характер лишен всяких неизменных форм, очертаний, его описывающих: это нечто как сырой состав из всех свойств, присущих всякому человечеству на той или иной ступени культуры, и из которого лепить можно все, что угодно. То неуловимое, что составляет ему одному присущий аромат, его особенность, может сводиться лишь к некоторой поистине неиспытуемой пропорции во внутреннем смешении его составных частей.[13]

Oreus now maintained that the unitotal relationship between individual and whole intuited in "mystical knowledge" could *in itself* be introduced into Slavonic culture to balance the disharmony between individual and whole within it. It was a proposition notably accompanied by a striking return to his previous, original use of "prophetic atavism":

> Можно предвидеть, что ничто не помешает возникнуть в среде русского же славянства такому мировоззрению, которое будет диаметрально противно преобладавшей в нем доселе самозабвенной покойности и покорности <...> распространится неусыпно предусматривающее и хитроумно действующее настроение: «оборотливый» Вольга Святославич возьмет верх над «угрязшим» в земле Святогором и неповоротливым Микулой.[14]

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[12] *Mid*, p. 120/*Sip*, p. 156.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 122/158.

Oreus invested his hope in Volga Svyatoslavich (alternatively, Volkh Vseslavich), the individualistic *bogatyr-magician* of the early Russian epos, using him as an atavistic expression of the innate divinity attainable to the *individual* through "mystical knowledge".

Notably, magic was also the atavistic symbol of "mystical knowledge" as a means to effect cultural change in "Prizyv" (3 May 1899) and "Slovo zaklyatiya" (June 1899), poems inspired by the Russian epos and, more particularly, the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*.[15] "Slovo zaklyatiya" in particular focused upon the incantatory "word of origin" in *Kalevala* as a deliverance from evil and chaotic forces. Below the poem Oreus noted:

В финских народных поверьях заговорное слово побеждает чары стихий тем, что раскрывает их природу, происхождение. Таковы все заговоры Калевалы.[16]

The concluding stanza of "Slovo zaklyatiya" in particular helps to elucidate that this atavistic, magical metaphor for "mystical knowledge" that Oreus now used in his advocation of "true patriotism" *retained* a Solov'evian basis:

О слово вещее, слово - сила,
О мысли членораздельный звук!
Ты всю вселенную допросило.
Познанье - мощь наших слабых рук.
Из тьмы былого
Спасло нас слово.[17]

In the "word of origin" Oreus celebrated the power of language as a channel for, and building block of, knowledge, just as Carlyle had in Odin's "runes". Notably, in "Smysl lyubvi", Solov'ev had also explored the power conferred upon man by language, which he defined as a "divine gift" in the terms of his system. It is language, the philosopher held, that actually empowers man to *communicate* the rational concepts

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[15]Oreus read the *Kalevala* from April to June 1899: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 78**. The entry in *ES* on the *Kalevala* (Vol. 14, bk. 27, p. 11) gives a succinct list of the supernatural powers possessed by its denizens, who, it also notes, are not simply a metaphor for collective or national consciousness, but, not unlike Vol'ga, distinctly *individual*:
Типы богатырей находятся в связи с древними языческими воззрениями финнов: они совершает подвиги не столько при помощи физической силы, сколько по средством заговоров, как шамани. Они могут принимать разный вид, оборачивать других людей в животных, переноситься чудесным образом с места на место, вызывать атмосферические явления - морозы, туманы и прочь.
[16]*Mid*, p.182/*Sip*, p. 242.
[17]*Mid*, p. 182/*Sip*, p. 91. See also "Slovo" in "Mysly i zamechaniya", *Sip*, pp. 226-7 which complements this stanza.

which transcend subjectivity and immediate temporal-spacial conditions that are fundamental to the social, artistic and scientific transfiguration of reality.[18]

However, if Oreus' new advocacy of language as a tool of "mystical knowledge" with which to effect cultural or "patriotic" change was in itself not at variance with Solov'evian thought, the *precedence* that he evidently accorded to the "magical" powers of language in 1899 was. Indeed, disillusioned by the remoteness of the love ideal, Oreus now came to advocate poetic language, the adjunct of "mystical knowledge", as the *one* true theurgic force.

That Oreus placed these inordinate hopes in the fusion of "mystical knowledge" and the power of poetic language is ironically evidenced in the *tensions* which quickly emerged in his atavistic works. His stance was obviously a vulnerable one. Poetry's 'magic' could act indirectly in external reality through the vicarious agency of others it inspired. In itself, however, poetry could *never* effect the definitive perfection that was reserved for truly *ego-negating* love.

The poet-hero of "Slovo zaklyatiya" was accordingly quickly reduced to the crest-fallen figure of "Pesn' izgnannika" (18 July 1899), which also freely played on motifs from the *Kalevala*. Oreus identified himself there with Lemminkäinen, the reckless adventurer-*sorceror* of the *Kalevala*, and with the *failure* of this hero's incantatory powers to protect him in his quest in the underworld - evidently a metaphor for Oreus' life in Petersburg - where evil forces tear him apart:

Все - похвальба была пустая:
Не удалец я, не герой.
И самого река густая
Сманила в топь глуби сырой:

Нечистыя впилися силы
И в грудь, и в плечи мне, и в лик.
И истерзали жизни жилы,
И вещий окоснел язык.[19]

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[18]For Solov'ev on language in "Smysl lyubvi", see *Soch.*, Vol. 2, pp. 514-15. See also the fuller exposition of his theory of the integrity of rational thought, language and *action* in his article "Dostovernost' razum", which Oreus read on its appearance in *Vfip* in May-June 1898 (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 55 ob.**). That it was Solov'ev's thought which underlay this atavistic interest in language as magic is corroborated by passages from Oreus' letter to Bryusov of 2 October 1900, which gives an important later assessment of the philosopher. There he is described as a Finnish magician:

В новом европейском мире ему ближе всего скандинавские повольники, финские колдуны. германские умозрители (как хороша его баллада про Колдун-камень!)

Oreus also alludes to Solov'ev's understanding of reason and language as properties that confirm man to be a denizen not only of the material world but the "celestial" dimension of the Absolute in itself:

Это небесное царство - слава разума, слава целесообразного, зоркого замысла, слава Слова. которая осияет все безличное, безоблачное, безмерное.
(*Ln* 98 (i), pp. 512-13)

Significantly Lemminkäinen's resurrection in the *Kalevala* was wholly dependent upon maternal *love*.

However, despite this frustrated concession to the power of love, Oreus did not immediately desist in his bid to assert the parity or primacy of poetry as a medium of universal transfiguration. He proceeded to assert the power of poetic inspiration or "imagination" to transfigure the *inner* life of the individual poet. He contemplated the possibility that "true patriotism" could be effected through such an inner poeticization of reality. His poem "Stansy lichnosti" (August 1899) bears testimony to the inner debate for and against this commitment to the theurgic power of poetic inspiration.

In the first part of the poem he lamented the fact that although the "spirit of beauty" inspired a vision of perfection within the poet, its realization demanded *action*. Poetry was only capable of translating this inspired vision into "semblances and shadows of being":

> ...до сих пор я бьюсь средь красок,
> Подобий, теней бытия,[20]

However, in the second part of the poem, by contrast, he eschewed conventional notions of action and contemplated the possibility of a hero-poet who could wage the battle for absolute perfection literally within and through the sphere of creative inspiration:

> И так, удары направляя,
> В душе восторженно вонму,
> Какою роскошью сияя,
> Они гремят мечтанью моему.[21]

It was on the basis of this debate that Oreus went a step further in his claims for the magic of poetic inspiration as a means to transfigure cultural reality. Indeed, the very solipsistic principle which was identified in the preceding chapter in such examples of Oreus' poetry of late 1899 as "Osenniye golosa II" was in fact symptomatic of this process. The ideal of the solipsist "poet-tsar" was in fact an extension of Oreus' bid to overcome failure and disillusionment with theurgic love by asserting himself as a "poet-patriot". Significantly the poet-solipsist of "Osennie golosa II" was *not* alone. The poem

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[19]*Sip*, p. 93. For Lemminkäinen's deluded descent into the underworld to slay the swan of Tuonela, see *Kalevala*, runos 14-15.
[20]*Sip*, pp. 95-96.
[21]Ibid., p. 97.

envisaged *others*, similarly empowered with the magic power to transcend "reality" and transfigure their *inner* worlds:

> А тут же, близ меня - я знаю - есть собратья
> Которым нем юдоли покаянный плач.
> Он небылица: в нас ведь - бытия заклятье.
> Из смертной сей земли вперед! Наш свет горяч.[22]

"K sluzhitelyam", Oreus' next poem (1 October 1899), confirms that the solipsistic self-divinization of "Osennie golosa II" was the issue of his poetic "patriotism". "K sluzhitelyam" anticipated a future *race* or *culture* of solipsistic individuals:

> ...гордые люди идут вам на смену:
> Не мечут они возмущенную пену,
> Не лезут на стену,
> И внутрь обращен у них взор.
> Что чуют они, то в себя принимают:
> В себе им простор.[23]

Significantly "K sluzhitelyam" also gives us strong grounds to suggest that Oreus' analysis of A.V. Kol'tsov's poetry in "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" (1900) was in fact an extension of the thinking behind his own bid to assert solipsistic mysticism as the principle of "true patriotism". We recall that in "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" Oreus stressed what he perceived to be Kol'tsov's dismissal of *passive* contemplation and assertion of his poetic sovereignty over that which he intuited. Notably, in "K sluzhitelyam", Oreus rebuked *himself* for his own appeal to passive contemplation in his polemic with his "peers" during the student disturbances of early 1899. Then Oreus had distanced himself from the fray and, contemplating life, had announced in "Na raspev":

> Я - *служитель* жизни <...>
> Жизни я служу, а существам не верен.[24]

By contrast, in October, in "K *sluzhitelyam*", he responded to himself and mystics in general:

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[22]Ibid., p. 99
[23]Ibid., p. 99-100.
[24]*Mid*, p. 200/*Sip*, p. 70. My italics.

Вы взором тонули в безбрежных просторах,
Себя не поняв в сокрушенных укорах
Себе и сопутникам дней.[25]

Oreus confidently acknowledged that unqualified contemplation of perfection was as ineffectual in the face of life's imperfection as the directionless action of his student "peers". He now championed the same brand of poetic self-divinization that he would identify with Kol'tsov in the name of "true patriotism".

Indeed, on the one hand, in the course of this chapter we have established that the aesthetic principle of self-divinisation which replaced the theurgic love ideal in Oreus' thinking in late 1899 in fact itself had a Solov'evian basis: "true patriotism". On the other hand, however, we have also had to concede that Oreus attributed a primacy to the cultural or "patriotic" importance of individuality which *contradicted* Solov'ev's emphasis upon the positive transfiguration of reality attainable exclusively through theurgic love. In order to prosecute to its end our argument that Oreus' development was one shaped by his indefatigable need for a *positive* credo, we must now ask whether he reconciled the "patriotic" and "erotic" Solov'evian principles of "true patriotism" and "true sexual love", and, if so, how. Clearly, in doing this it is imperative that we now turn to Oreus' last "love poem", "Otrechenie" (November 1899). We must ask ourselves: did this poem not mark an unequivocal renunciation of love as its simple title suggests? Our analysis of "Otrechenie" in Chapter Seventeen will attempt to show that it did not.

[25]*Sip*, p. 99.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Positive continuity
III
Reconciliation of principles: the emergence of the Solov'evian poet-prophet

Ты прав - не века сын, я чую лишь отзвучья
На мертвую тоску иль на живую страсть.
Нет, сын цветущего, как сад, благополучья
Судьбам неведомым обрек себя на часть.

I. Konevskoy. "Ty prav - ne veka syn..."

*

О племя оборотней чудных,
Всему чужих, всему родных,
Как часто, средь мгновений скудных,
Я бредил о житьях иных —

О днях таинственной свободы
И в горних, там, и под землей,
И к вам, прельстители природы,
Стремился дух ничтожный мой.[1]

Oreus' above-cited poem, "Prizyv", was a definitive moment in his development. He chose this "atavistic" poem, which was not a "call" to the mythical past of the Russo-Finnish epos, of course, but to the *future* self-divinization of man, to *conclude* the prologue to *Mechty i dumy*. Notably it followed, and thus by implication *qualified*, the poem there in which Oreus had marked his discovery of the *love ideal*, "Iz 'vechnykh svodov...'". This chapter will attempt to show, however, that the precise nature in which "Prizyv" qualified "Iz 'vechnykh svodov...'" *changed* positively in the course of 1899-1900. Oreus' poem "Otrechenie", the "renunciation" of his love for A.N. Gippius, is pivotal to our understanding this process of change. The poem is the basis for our *reinterpretation* of Oreus' new poetic aesthetic of 1900-1901.

I

[1] "Prizyv", 3 May 1899, *Mid*, p. 9/*Sip*, p. 85.

In order to understand the full meaning of "Otrechenie", which belies the apparent obviousness of this poem's title, it is necessary firstly to draw attention to the context of the work. Oreus' letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of *June* 1899 seems to have definitively confirmed the doubts that the poet had already voiced in "Blednaya vesna" regarding the hopes that he had attached to his relations with A.N. Gippius.[2] If the exchanges between them alluded to in "Otrechenie" had therefore occurred *at least* four months earlier, then the question arises as to why this poem was only written in November. Was the poem not perhaps the by-product of more complex processes which followed in the wake of "Blednaya vesna" and the letter to Bilibin? To answer this question we must look firstly not to "Otrechenie" itself, but to certain poems preceding it.

In the period between "Blednaya vesna" and "Otrechenie" Oreus wrote two poems which marked his continuing preoccupation with the rationale of Solov'ev's definition of truth in "Smysl lyubvi". "Spor" (April 1898) reflected the philosopher's arguments in "Smysl lyubvi" that *corporeality* was essential to the definitive incarnation of absolute truth; that hopes in the immortality of the soul, the "angelic" self of sexual asceticism and so called "spiritual love" were all ultimately denials of the truth, being capitulations to death.[3]

Indeed, "Spor" notably echoed one of Oreus' own love poems of February 1899, "Davno i nyne". There the poet had imagined himself to be entranced by the plaintive pipe of a tree nymph, the "idealization" of his beloved, and had *run* towards the sound:

> ...жалобный звук протянул
> Неведомо кто на свирели.
> И дрогнуло сердце невольно.
> <...>
> Пустился бежать я тревожно
> На *звук* по откосу холма.[4]

In "Spor" Oreus alluded to this sound again and intimated that *corporeality* was essential if the path of "true sexual love" - the call of the dryad's pipe - was to be followed. In an apostrophe to his own body Oreus declared:

> Без тебя *безжизненно—волен,*
> Без тебя торжественно—уныл,
> *...как образу в тебе я рад,*
> *Как я к звуку дальнему стремлюсь!*[5]

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[2]See *Ln* 98 (i), p. 486.
[3] See Solov'ev, Vl. S., "Smysl lyubvi", *Soch.*, Vol. 2, pp. 519, 528-9.
[4]*Mid*, p. 180/*Sip*, p. 67. My italics.
[5]*Mid*, p. 206/*Sip*, p. 83. My italics.

"Genius" (10 June 1899) was again resonant with the ideas from "Smysl lyubvi". The poet negated a corporeality which at present shackles man inexorably in the service of "Aphrodite Pandemos" - the power of the genus. However, this negation was not absolute. He echoed the philosopher's assertion in "Smysl lyubvi" that man, possessed of absolute Truth in consciousness, can also possess it *in fact* without transformation or transcendence of his physicality:

Не хочу небывалого, нового существования.
Я влюблен и в земные породы, и в зелень дерев.[6]

Notably the poem concluded with the ideal vision of the poet positively empowered to transfigure "Aphrodite Pandemos" - the "bondmaid" of bad infinity.[7]

"Otrechenie" was also one of these poems that reflected that the logic of "Smysl lyubvi" had set an ideal standard for Oreus which continued to challenge him even after he had retracted his excessive claims for the love ideal. However, unlike in "Spor" and "Genius", in "Otrechenie" Oreus did not simply question his general recourse to "mystical knowledge" as an alternative to the love ideal. In "Otrechenie" he questioned and rejected the specific *solipsistic* formula that, as a "poet-patriot", he had devised on the basis of "mystical knowledge".

Indeed, "Blagodarnost'" (17 October 1899), the poem which immediately preceded "Otrechenie", intimates that the poet's reason had risen up against and subdued the disproportionate pretensions of his will and personality to have found absolute power in solipsistic self-divinization. The poet recounts how he had been compelled to revisit the "sepulchre" of *reason* that he had abandoned on first embracing the creative ideal in "Iz 'vechnykh svodov...'", and to rethink all the ensuing developments:

Мне вас ли не благодарить,
О демоны мятежных размышлений!
Сумели вы мне волю, личность покорить,
Отвергнув блага все, со днями примирить,
Найти в себе убежище томлений.

И вот, после того, что узнавал я тьму,

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[6]10 June 1899, *Mid*, p. 205/*Sip*, p. 89. See Solov'ev, Vl. S., "Smysl lyubvi", *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 502.
[7]It is worth noting here that the above interpretation of these poems, like that of "V krovi moey - velikoe boren'e" in Chapter Thirteen, obviously counters A. Smirnov's contention in "Poet bezplotiya" that Oreus unequivocally rejected the life of the "Flesh". Indeed, Bryusov used "Spor" in "Mudroe ditya" precisely to counter Z.N. Gippius' argument that Decadence was ultimately world-denying (*Sip*, pp. xvi-xvii), although he did not, of course, explore the *full* metaphysical implications of the poem.

И мертвым холодом на грудь мою дохнуло,
Я доверялся вновь лукавому уму.
И кровь застывшую опять бежать тянуло,
И жар присасывался к сердцу моему.[8]

"Otrechenie" (November 5 1899), which we introduce in full below, expressed the modified course of action that the logical deliberation described in "Blagodarnost'" yielded:

Да, все бегут часы, но уж не так, как прежде.
И светы радуют, и волны дум растут;
Но места нет в душе единственной надежде:
Восторги первой страсти не взойдут.

Ты там же все вдали, о легкая, как пламя,
И мощная, как плоть густых, сырых дубрав.
С тобой расстались мы широкими словами,
И мысли зов и воли суд мой прав.

Я не создатель, нет - я только страстный голос.
Могу я жаром обаятельным дохнуть.
Но жизнь моя, увы! на части раскололась,
И иногда не дышит грудь ни чуть.[9]

This poem was undoubtedly a systematic "renunciation". However, it can be argued that it did not renounce the love ideal *per se*, but only the possibility of Oreus' *personally* realizing it. The very intensity of the final stanza confutes the view that Oreus had actually renounced the ideal here *per se*. Indeed, the stanza suggests that this poem marked his *rediscovery* of the love ideal's *definitive* importance for him. In the final stanza Oreus significantly disqualified his own recent claim to be a "creator" ("*sozdatel'*") of absolute perfection in "Osennie golosa II". He recognized that he would only be truly worthy of this distinction if he could transfigure reality *in fact* - a property exclusive to ego-transcending love.

Oreus' awareness that he himself could not fulfil this ideal had, he now confessed, "shattered" his life and left him "scarcely breathing". "Otrechenie" was not wholly devoid of consolation, however. The poem also evidenced new conviction, presumably founded upon the reasoning of "Blagodarnost'" which had, we recall, set the poet's heart beating anew. The parting from his beloved, in whom he had invested false hopes, was, he confidently claimed, *justified*:

С тобой расстались мы широкими словами,

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[8]*Sip*, p. 100. Italics mine.
[9]Ibid., p. 101.

И мысли зов и воли суд мой прав.[10]

What was the basis for this confident reaffirmation of the love ideal on the one hand *and* personal retraction from it on the other? It was obviously not the unqualified self-divinization of "Osennie golosa II" and "K sluzhitelyam" which he disavowed in the final stanza of "Otrechenie".

We find the answer to our question in the opening passages from the fifth article of Solov'ev's "Smysl lyubvi" of which the reference to the "call of thought" and "judgement of will" in "Otrechenie" was certainly redolent, if not a direct allusion. There Solov'ev addressed the problem of the *present impossibility of fulfilling the love ideal*:

Невольное и непосредственное чувство открывает нам смысл любви как высшего проявления индивидуальной жизни, находящей в соединении с другим существом свою собственную бесконечность. Не довольно ли этого мгновенного откровения? <...> *сознание истины и воля жизни* решительно на этом помириться не могут. Бесконечность только мгновенная есть противоречие нестерпимое для *ума*, блаженство только в прошедшем есть страдание для *воли* <...> Если то, что потеряно, было истинным, тогда *задача сознания и воли* не в том, чтобы принять потерю за окончательную, *а в том, чтобы понять и устранить ее причины.*[11]

Oreus' confidence in the "call of thought" and "judgement of will" in "Otrechenie" marked his commitment as a poet to the fulfilment of the "task of consciousness and will" as defined in "Smysl lyubvi" which challenged the vision of future perfection in his solipsistic poems. There, as we know, poetic self-divinization enjoyed unqualified primacy as an *alternative* to the love ideal. The logic of the "task of consciousness and will" set out in "Smysl lyubvi" showed that this was a fundamental misunderstanding and misapplication of the individual principle that was central to Solov'ev's "true patriotism". Unqualified poetic self-divinization was a capitulation, an abrogation of the responsibilities incumbent upon a cultural collective of truly free individuals. The goal of such a society was actively to understand and overcome the objective reasons for the present failure of the love ideal and to provide that ideal with the conditions for its realization in fact. In "Smysl lyubvi" Solov'ev certainly allowed that the apprehension and affirmation of man's higher or divine self was essential to the realization of the unitotal idea:

Всеединая идея может окончательно реализоваться или воплотиться только в полноте совершенных индивидуальностей.[12]

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[10]Ibid. Italics mine.
[11]Solov'ev, Vl., "Smysl lyubvi", *Soch.*, Vol. 2, pp. 535-6.
[12]Ibid., p. 540.

However, the assertion of that individuality in itself was not the *moral* and *creative* feat presupposed for the realization of the unitotal idea. As Solov'ev made clear in his exploration of the "task of consciousness and will" in the final article of "Smysl lyubvi" even the mutual affirmation of absolute individuality by a pair of lovers was of limited value if they remained disengaged from the *objective universe* and the its need for positive transfiguration:

> Действительно спастись, т.е. возродить и увековечить свою индивидуальную жизнь в истинной любви, единичный человек может только сообща или вместе с всеми. Он имеет право и обязанность отстаивать свою индивидуальность от дурного закона общей жизни, но не отделять свое благо от истинного блага всех живущих <...> Наше перерождение неразрывно связано с перерождением вселенной, с преобразованием ее форм пространства и времени. *Истинная жизнь индивидуальности* в ее полном и безусловном значении осуществляется и увековечивается только в соответствующем развитии всемирной жизни, в котором *мы можем и должны участвовать но которое не нами создается*. Наше личное дело, *поскольку оно истинно*, есть общее дело всего мира - реализация и индивидуализация всеединой идеи и одухотворение материи. Оно подготовляется космическим процессом в природном мире, продолжается и совершается историческим процессом в человечестве.[13]

"Otrechenie" marked Oreus' admission of the illogicality of his assertion of poetical self-divinization as the *moral* basis for constructive cultural transfiguration. Essentially he had accepted the limitations of *poetry*; that poetic genius was a *means* to a *universal* and *objective* end, not an end in itself as he had claimed on asserting it as an alternative to love. He had realized that the maximalist solipsism of poetic self-divinization was a moral *cul-de-sac*. However, the particular importance of the "task of consciousness and will" which we identified Oreus as accepting in "Otrechenie" was that it allowed him to retract his claims for poetic self-divinization in a *positive* fashion. The acceptance that the poetic intuition of the ideal did not equate with its realization did not discredit poetry but rather *redefined* its function within the terms of the love ideal. Indeed, the "task of consciousness and will" would free Oreus from the untenable obligation of matching the love aesthetic that he had made incumbent upon poetry. No longer burdened by impossible demands, the "poet-patriot" could now accept his true stature and definition as the *agency* of love rather than its rival and realize that the true power and value of his words was their unique capacity to inspire the moral ideal in *others* to be enacted in the *objective* world.

II

[13]Ibid., p. 538, 540. Italics mine.

Oreus was almost immediately to find a positive model for the redefinition of the poet to which he had embryonically commited himself in "Otrechenie". This was the ideal of the poet in Vl. Solov'ev's article "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" which coincidentally appeared and Oreus read at precisely this time in *Vestnik evropy*.[14] Certainly the analysis of the poet's true role in this article as a "prophet of love" elucidates the *positive meaning* of much of Oreus' later poetic theorization, revealing it to be the thought of one who had accepted the "task of consciousness and will".

In approaching this article it is imperative firstly to stress that its subject was not Pushkin's poetry *per se*. Regardless of Oreus' intense admiration for Pushkin's poetry, as "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" corroborates, it could not exercise an appreciable or sustained influence upon him as a *thinker*. However, as its title intimates, "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" used Pushkin's poetry as a platform for broader discussion. Solov'ev maintained that the rare verses in which Pushkin treated his craft were of particular value as expressions of the *essential* meaning of poetry in general. Significantly, he identified Pushkin's most perfect intuition of the nature of poetry in his poem "Prorok".[15]

It is notable that in identifying the prophet of Pushkin's work, Solov'ev firstly moved emphatically to disassociate him from historical and scriptural prophets - the concept of the prophet as a medium for *exclusively* external impressions visited upon him at the whim of *extraneous* forces. Pushkin's prophet was a proper definition of the *poet* as *prophet*. Indeed, Solov'ev's analysis of this prophet's vision clearly echoed his views on Tyutchev and A.K. Tolstoy: it was a mystical revelation of the universal integrity of which the poet-prophet is intrinsically a part, the disclosure of his true, unitotal selfhood. Pushkin's "six-winged seraph" - the genius of pure Beauty according to Solov'ev - does not reveal unprecedented miracles and mysteries to come, but amplifies the prophet's awareness of that which *is* eternally:

> «На перепутье» <...> явился многокрылый дух вечной свободной поэзии <...> новых чувств не дает гений поэту; он только усиливает, возводит на высшую ступень прежние чувства, делает поэта более зорким и более чутким. И что же он воспринимает этою новою чуткостью? Опять-таки ничего небывалого; повышенные, перерожденные чувства не помогают ему сочинять то, чего нет, вздумывать что-нибудь новое, а только помогают ему лучше видеть и слышать то, что всегда есть.[16]

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[14]Solov'ev, Vl., "Znachehie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina", *Ve,* 1899, pp. 660-711. Recorded as read by Oreus: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 82 ob.**

[15] Oreus' knew the poem well. He used a line from it as an epigraph to his poem "More zhiteyskoe" in 1898: See *Sip*, p. 239.

[16] Solov'ev, Vl.S., "Znachehie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina", *SELk*, p. 419.

It is notable that the concepts of "poet" and "prophet" became interchangeable in Oreus' later poetic theorization too. Moreover, his definition of the "prophet" there accorded with Solov'ev's analysis of the prophet figure in Pushkin's poem. Indeed, that Oreus in fact had the Solov'evian concept of the poet-prophet in mind when he wrote "Nauka i poeziya" (1901) explains why, having asserted the poet's sovereignty there, he immediately proceeded to the question of the historical prophet's *true* identity and power:

Правда, что пророк, если он утверждает, что он орудие, сосуд внешней божественной власти, конечно, <...> есть душевная tabula rasa <...> Но, к счастью, эта мысль не лишает меня уважения и к великим пророкам, если разуметь под ними проповедников нравственных и предсказателей-прозорливцев; к счастью, их единственный недостаток был в том, что они не признали своей силы за свою, провозгласили себя мертвыми проводами, тогда как сами были носителями и составами волшебных чудотворных мощей; недоразумение понятное, раз человек всегда бывает слишком ошеломлен разницей между своим повседневным состоянием и сознанием великого восторга, вдохновения и прозрения; и до того доходит, что ему начинает казаться, - ах, уж это и не я сам.[17]

Notably, N.M. Sokolov recommended to Bryusov that, together with "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike", Oreus' last extant letter, written several days before he died to S.P. Semenov, was also a good basis for understanding his later writings on poetry.[18] Significantly, in that letter Oreus again paralleled poets (whom he described in familiar atavistic terms as "enchanters" - "*zaklinateli*") and prophets, as redefined by Solov'ev:

В последней беседе с вами я <...> сделал к концу указание на тип заклинателей - врачебных ли, ремесленных ли, ратных, или мечтательных - все это издревле действовало в великих людях воедино, - чтобы особенно явственно и ярко оттенить против вашего примера тайновидцев, объявляющихся носителями и посланниками чужой воли, чужого духа, <ukazanie na> таких лиц, которые с особенной сознательностью выступали в качестве борьцов со всякими чужими судьбами и влияниями, во всеоружии *своего воображения и замысла* этих предметов <...> *большую часть пророков*, считаю, конечно, такими же творцами, которые только вследствие особенного побуждения вынесли из себя вон центр тяжести своего действия.[19]

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[17]*Sip*, p. 232.

[18]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 520. See also above, p. 194.

[19]From a copy by N.M. Sokolov of an unsent, incomplete letter written in Nyslott, 21 June 1901: *Pis'ma* <...> *Semenovu*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 21, l. 23**. Italics mine. Notably, Oreus proceeded to compare the "poet-prophet" and the scientist in this letter as he had done in "Nauka i poeziya". Again the Solov'evian definiton of the prophet as mystic is apparent:

...«ученый» воспринимает внешние вещи в пустые клетки своего познания, и так они и остаются для него мертвой буквой. Напротив того, во всяком «откровении» пророка не может не быть проникновения в самую внутреннюю сердцевину, в самые недра внешнего предмета, раз у него идет истинное кровное и задушевное сообщение с этим предметом.
(Ibid., **l. 23-24**.)

Oreus' later definition of the poet was therefore evidently informed by the Solov'evian concept of the poet-prophet. What, however, was the nature and the objective of this poet-prophet's mystical insight? Did it endow the "*zaklinateli*" whom Oreus had set in opposition to the love ideal in 1899 with a positive role in relation to it?

In fact Solov'ev's systematic exploration in "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" of the properties that the six-winged seraph instils in Pushkin's *prorok* must have seemed highly pertinent to Oreus. Indeed, the philosopher's analysis of the gradations of poetic perfection that he considered to be represented by these properties appeared to confirm that "Otrechenie" did mark the resumption of Oreus' *positive* Solov'evian development. In examining the implications of the prophet's heightened sensibilities in "Prorok", Solov'ev turned to the seraph's violent extraction of his tongue and its replacement with a "sting" and asked what the meaning of this act was. The philospher found justification for the seraph's act in the concluding half of "Prorok", in which he considered the prophet's vision of absolute Beauty to be identified with absolute Truth and Goodness. The tongue is extracted, Solov'ev therefore contended, as a sign of the *moral* essence of absolute Beauty. The seraph of poetic genius demands that the poet-prophet's intuited vision of universal Beauty convey the *absolute Truth* invested in it. Nor, however, will the seraph tolerate a contemplative passivity, which in abstraction belittles the poet. The "sinful", "idle" and "perfidious" tongue of human passions and weaknesses had thus to be replaced in the genuine poet by the concentrated "serpent's sting" of divine wisdom of which poetic language is the medium. Oreus' own recent advocacy of the "magical" intuition of poetry seemed to be in part vindicated here; notably, however, so too were the doubts that had resulted in his effective acknowledgement in "Otrechenie" that in itself this "magical wisdom" was *insufficient* to qualify him as a genuine poet. Indeed, in Solov'ev's reading of "Prorok" the ultimate meaning of the seraph's transfiguration of the prophet's senses and communicative faculties was held to be revealed only in the final, fatal extraction of his heart, and its replacement by a burning coal. This fire, Solov'ev argued, was crucial if the poet's vision of Beauty and proclamation of Truth were to *scorch the hearts of people* as the God of Pushkin's prophet exhorted him to do. The coal was the fire of "*divine love*" which completes the "*fatally life-giving*" (i.e. ego-transcending) process of true poetic inspiration and *alone* defines poetry as a *heroic* deed ("*podvig*"):

> Мы по справедливости преклоняемся перед человеком, мужественно и мудро свидетельствующим о жизненной правде, мы охотно признаем такого человека исповедником и пророком правды; но если скажем, что в этом - весь идеал совершенства, *вся* красота, то в таком утверждении не будет ни правды, ни мудрости, ни мужества. *Есть* еще высшая ступень пророческого, т.е. идеального—поэтического, служения. Мудрое и бесстрашное слово правды есть <...> действие и подвиг, но еще не совершенное действие, не высший подвиг <...> Дело высшей правды *объявляется словом* правды, но *совершается огнем любви* <...> у

избранника одно средство - слово. Но для того, чтобы слово правды, исходящее из жала мудрости, не язвило только, а жгло сердца людей, нужно, чтобы само это жало было разожжено сердечным огнем любви.[20]

These words had a clear relevance for one such as Oreus who had attempted to assert the "mystical knowledge" of his atavistic poet-magician as an *alternative* moral and creative ideal to love.

Notably, moreover, Solov'ev's analysis did not conclude here and it had further relevance for Oreus. He proceeded to show in "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" that "Prorok" embodied an ideal which was not only at variance with Pushkin's personality, but transcended the achievements of *any* living poet. Accordingly, while the ideal of the poet-prophet remained an abiding presence in all Pushkin's other poems on poetry, it receded from direct view as they confronted complicated questions of the poet-prophet's "down-going".

This section of Solov'ev's analysis of the meaning of poetry in his article is germane to our understanding precisely how Oreus would approach fulfilling the "task of consciousness and will" that he had tentatively accepted in "Otrechenie". Certainly the terms in which Solov'ev explored the nature of the poet-prophet's proper relationship with, and obligations to, the "crowd" allow us to suggest that the "sovereignty" which Oreus attributed to the poet in his later poetic theorization was *no longer* the solipsistic imperiousness of "Osennie golosa II".

Solov'ev maintained that in Pushkin's later poems, "Poet" (1827) and "Chern'" (1828), the ideal poet-prophet of "Prorok" has descended from his "poetical Sinai" and serves society as a "high priest". However, in both works he reacts against the misconceptions that his performance of this office has encouraged in the "crowd". Indeed, Solov'ev interpreted the poet's renewed yearning to return to the wilderness in "Poet" as the result of his despair on re-entering society that he is unequal to realizing the *absolute* ideal visited upon him in "Prorok" and of his consequent frustration with the satisfaction that the "crowd" derives from his fallibility. The "crowd" deludes itself that, as the priest is reduced to its level in his *personal* failings, the *suprapersonal* ideal with which he alone is truly inspired is equally a commonplace. The predicament of the poet-prophet which Solov'ev identified in this analysis must have seemed familiar to Oreus whose 'polemic' of 1899 had left his ideals similarly compromised by the demands of the "crowd". Notably, moreover, Solov'ev's analysis of the poet-prophet's extrication of himself from this problem must have struck Oreus forcibly.

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[20]Solov'ev, Vl., "Znachehie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina", *SELk*, p. 427.

Solov'ev proceeded to demonstrate that Pushkin's poem "Poetu" (1830) marked his inspired realization that the *genuine poet-prophet's* true powers lie *within* him regardless of his milieu; that he exercises his *full* power precisely when he accepts his absolute autocracy within his inner poetical domain, its complete inviolability:

Ты царь: живи один. Дорогою свободной
Иди, куда влечет тебя свободный ум,
Усовершенствуя плоды любимых дум,
Не требуя наград за подвиг благородный.

The poetic *podvig* is, the philosopher contended, accomplished *within* and is impervious to external approbation or censure. Significantly, however, as the above citation from "Poetu" intimates, Solov'ev did not advocate the inner sovereignty of the poet for its own sake here, as Oreus had done in his solipsistic poems. Solov'ev advocated it as the basis for accomplishing the poetic *podvig* in the name of *love*. Indeed, it was precisely this inner sovereignty that Solov'ev judged to be essential to the poet's final *reconciliation* with the "crowd" in Pushkin's poem "Pamyatnik" (1836).

It was Solov'ev's opinion that the poet's confidence in the inviolability of his inner vision allowed him to disengage from the futile polemic of "Chern'" and to dismiss the crowd's "childish raillery" in "Pamyatnik". The poem envisaged a positive, if still imperfect, *posthumous* relationship between the poet-prophet and the people. Although Pushkin knew that he could not meet the ideal of "Prorok" in his lifetime, he looked to the *future* and saw a *nation* unified in its receptivity to him as the very *poet whose inspirational integrity had remained uncompromised by immediate extraneous demands and interests*. Indeed, these future people find that *their* demands that poetry bring some practical benefit *are* satisfied by the *moral* content which is always intrinsic to all such truly *pure* poetry. The poet-prophet's task is to remain true, regardless of his circumstances, to the unalloyed inspiration that will lead to this future convergence of interests between poet and people:

Веленью Божию, о муза, будь послушна:
Обиды не страшась, не требуя венца,
Хвалу и клевету приемли равнодушно
И не оспоривай глупца.

According to Solov'ev this vision of poetry's power to effect future cultural change, the poet's true guerdon in "Pamyatnik", marked Pushkin's realization of the genuine *practical* meaning of his craft:

> Это стихотворение есть не поэтическое, а практическое (в хорошем смысле слова) credo Пушкина, - непостыдное соглашение его с потомством.[21]

This was precisely the balance of inspiration and action that Oreus had so long sought to attain. It was this balance which was to find reflection in his later poetical theorization. Indeed, the self-affirmation and exclusive "sovereignty" of the artist which Oreus celebrated in "Nauka i poeziya", elevating him above the humdrum world of the scientific "collegiate registrar", was not an assertion of the *unqualified* "sovereignty" over a solipsistic universe of "Osennie golosa II". It was in fact a metaphor for the very qualities essential to the poet-prophet if he was to *serve* society in the *unique* way in which he alone in the human hierarchy was empowered to do. The "poet-sovereign" of "Nauka i poeziya" was the poet-autocrat of Pushkin's poem "Poetu", which Solov'ev identified as the essential basis for the compact with futurity in "Pamyatnik". It was precisely for the sake of this cultural compact, the poetic *podvig*, that Oreus defended the same artistic autonomy and integrity in "K delu o poete i narode"[22] and the inspirational free play of pure poetry in *K svobodnomu ucheniyu prekrasnogo*.[23] This cultural context also qualifies the meaning of Oreus' exhortation to live life "as in the imagination" in his letter to N.M. Sokolov of December 1900.[24] That it was the ideal of the poet-prophet's cultural task that Oreus had in mind in his last year finds corroboration if we look again at the letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of 5 June 1900 which we cited in Chapter Fifteen. There, in advocating the vision of those who eschew scientific "facts" for "self-revelation", Oreus in fact equated their disclosure of true selfhood with the intrinsic unitotal *divinity* of Solov'evian "mystical knowledge":

> Таковы были и суть, и будут все создатели тайнозрительных, сверхсознательных и сверхприродных миросозерцаний, союзов с божеством - **religionum**: им нет дела до тех дел, которые бывают или были где-то и когда-то. Они уверены в том одном, что в своем естестве сознают. События и явления представляют для них большую пригодность лишь как подобия, как образы их собственных мечтаний и замыслов.[25]

Does our analysis in the present chapter not now allow us to suggest that Oreus had in mind the very "divinity" to which Pushkin's poet-prophet had urged his muse to pay heed ("*Velen'yu bozhiyu, o muza, bud' poslushna*") in "Pamyatnik", his celebration of the

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[21]Ibid., p. 439.
[22]*Sip*, pp. 222-25, where, notably, Oreus refers to Pushkin's "Chern'".
[23] See above, p. 192.
[24] See above, p. 194.
[25]*Pis'ma <...> Bilibina, A.Ya.*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 17, l. 14**. Cf. above, p. 193.

poet's power to change cultural reality? Certainly Oreus went on in his letter to exhort Bilibin to abandon reading one catalyst of cultural change, Marx, for another, in his view much worthier: the *Russian poets*. Indeed, he observed, it was of a poet, Tyutchev, of whom the majority of cultured Russians were in his opinion unforgivably ignorant, that the following quatrain had been written:

> Вот наш патент на благородство:
> Его вручает нам поэт.
> Здесь духа мощного господство,
> Здесь утонченной жизни цвет.[26]

Oreus' plans for "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" were also perhaps indicative of his commitment to the ideal of the poet-prophet as a positive cultural force in 1900-1901. Significantly, "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike", with its emphasis upon the self-divinization of A.V. Kol'tsov, was in fact only a *preliminary* for an unrealized study of *A.K. Tolstoy*. Oreus wrote to Bryusov on 20 November 1900:

> В нынешнем же году я хотел заканчивать характеристику творчества *А. Толстого* <...> Для него у меня сделано много набросков, отделаны окончательно вступительные части (*где речь о мировоззрении Тютчева, Пушкина, Баратынского, Кольцова, Фета, как о фазисах мысли, предварительных для философии Толстого*), но это, сравнительно, конечно, очень немного, и в разработке даже основных понятий характеристики можно предвидеть много существенных преобразований и новых оборотов.[27]

It seems highly probable that this plan to identify A.K. Tolstoy's philosophy as the *fruition* of the Russian poetic tradition described in "Misticheskoe chuvstvo v russkoy lirike" marked the fact that Oreus had finally come to understand the proper *interrelationship* of "true patriotism", love and poetry that Solov'ev *actually* set out in "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo". Indeed, let us look again at this article which, as we recall, had in fact inspired Oreus, *when still unversed in the full Solov'evian aesthetic of love*, to explore the love ideal (in "Mnogim v otvet") and the patriotic principle (in "S Konevtsa") *separately*.

In "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo" Solov'ev had in fact defined the place and purpose of the individual in the universe in terms not dissimilar to those which he used in his formulation of the "task of consciousness and will" in the fifth article of "Smysl lyubvi":

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[26]Ibid., **l. 14 ob.** Oreus quotes Fet's "Na knizhke stikhotvoreniy Tyutcheva" which Solov'ev cited in the introduction to the original variant of "Poeziya F.I. Tyutcheva" (*Ve*, 1895, No. 4).
[27]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 518. Italics mine.

Человек есть, во-первых, самостоятельная особь, или индивидуальность, и, во-вторых, нераздельная часть всемирного целого. Соответственно этому единственный человек может не только совершенствовать самого себя (а чрез это косвенно и окружающую среду), но и прямо содействовать общему прогрессу того целого, к которому он принадлежит, сознательно ставя его предметом своей деятельности.[28]

The philosopher had then identified sexual love as the natural condition of such positive individuality:

Естественное условие для самосовершенствования есть половая *любовь*, восполняющая человеческую индивидуальность.[29]

However, the "true patriotism" of the poet-prophet of "Pamyatnik" was shown to be the *precondition* for the realization of the universal transfiguration to be effected by love:

...реальное побуждение к участию в деле общего процесса есть *патриотизм* <...> т.е. чувство солидарности с известным собирательным целым <...> в благе которого *исторически* воплощается для отдельного человека благо всемирное.[30]

It was this understanding of the patriotic principle, qualified by his understanding and acceptance of the precedence of the love ideal, that Oreus came to comprehend and affirm in the final year of his life.

However, this concept of the patriotic poet-prophet which we have proposed Oreus came to adopt in the course of 1900-1901 was a *formal* construct. On concluding "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" Solov'ev noted:

Этим достаточно определяется *значение* поэзии, но не содержание ее. Чтобы ближе узнать это содержание, всего лучше последовательно пройти через весь ряд Пушкинских творений.[31]

Similarly, in order to understand how the concept of the poet-prophet was *actually* relevant to Oreus' personal development as a poet it is necessary to turn to his *poetry* of 1900-1901. The first thing to note in doing so is that Oreus' planned study of A.K. Tolstoy, together with the majority of his later poetic theorization, was to come only

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[28] Solov'ev, Vl. S., "Poeziya gr. A.K. Tolstogo", *SELk*, p. 308.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Solov'ev, Vl., "Znachehie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina", *SELk*, p. 440.

several months *after* he wrote "Otrechenie" and accordingly his modified concept of patriotic poetry did not filter into his own verse immediately. Indeed, it is to the process of *transition* that followed "Otrechenie" that we must turn now.

III

The first works that Oreus wrote after reading "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" in fact indicate that initially the article constituted an *ultimatum* for him, challenging him to prove in practice his tentative acceptance in "Otrechenie" of the poet's *subordination* to the remote love ideal and *indirect* role in the process of its realization. He vacillated, asking with renewed vigour in "Otkuda sily voli strannye" (December 1899) whether there really was not in fact a more direct and literal means to satisfy the 'eternal self's' volition to thwart the genus' monopoly over true love and preclusion of universal syzygy.[32] In "Grani poeta" (23 December 1899), he reacted against the poet in him for empowering him with an *inner* vision of unitotal perfection when he was cruelly incapable of changing things theurgically in reality:

В чем же свободу искать,
Личной твердыни исход?
Вечной гордыни запрет,
Как мне себя выпускать?

Сладость мне только в бою,
Только в усилии сил.
Зреть самобытность свою -
Дух лишь об этом просил.

<...>

Да, я один на двоих:
Кто же придет выручать?[33]

The tensions underlying Oreus' attitude to poetry were further marked in his letter to Bryusov of 11 March 1900.[34] On the one hand, in this letter Oreus discussed poetry in general in a way which suggests a renewed interest in perfecting the balance between the poet's individual and universal vision:

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[32]See *Sip*, p. 102.
[33]*Sip*, p. 103.
[34]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 485.

Да, все более исполняюсь сознания, что цвет поэзии есть зодчество вымысла, которое вмещало бы в себе и ваяние личных воль и живопись безвольного созерцания.[35]

In marked contrast, however, on the other hand Oreus also disclosed in this letter that for him *personally* it was still impossible to see poetry as anything other than of secondary importance, a shadow of true theurgy.

In response to Bryusov's requests for new poetry Oreus claimed that throughout the winter he had been deprived of his two main sources of inspiration: nature and his *love* of the preceding year. Now, however, in the wake of "Otrechenie", he awaited the approaching summer with impatience. He intended to lose himself anew in balmful visions of perfection intuited in *nature*:

В нынешнее же городское пребывание у меня нет за собой плодотворящего действия летних дней <...> Всего жду от «радуги и пламени лета» (как поэт смерти в этих словах изъявил все силы лета в полях и лесах): только сквозь эту красоту, как он, надеюсь увидеть снова «образ иной красоты, неизменно—спокойной».[36]

In expressing this hope in the way he did, however, Oreus in fact indirectly disclosed the sense of dissatisfaction and disappointment with poetry that persisted after his renewed acceptance of the demands of the love ideal in "Otrechenie". It is not unimportant that the "poet of death" to whom Oreus referred, Golenishchev-Kutuzov, was awarded that appellation by Vladimir Solov'ev.[37] While Solov'ev undoubtedly valued Kutuzov's contribution to Russian poetry, he notably defined its buddhistic ethos as "despairing". Oreus' allusion to Kutuzov here strongly suggests that in taking tentative steps back to contemplative poetry he was still profoundly haunted by a sense of personal inadequacy. Despite the assurances of "Znachenie poezii v proizvedeniyakh Pushkina" that the poet-prophet was the paramount *agency* of love, in the literal terms of the Solov'evian ideal of transfigurative love this desire to lose himself in the contemplation of nature seemed to be a capitulation. Indeed, almost in dispute with himself, he proceeded to reveal a sense of guilt in his evident endeavour to justify himself. With an allusion to "Otkuda sily voli strannye", he confessed that he could not bridge the gulf between his 'eternal' and phenomenal being, that he was exhausted and it was only thus that he *resorted* to the role of poet-prophet:

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[35]Ibid.
[36]Ibid.
[37]See ibid., p. 486.

Не в силах жить больше «силами воли», которые «не от живых плотей»: если от своих «плотей» не жить, то в животворном действии отраженных проявлений их тем более нужды <...> теперь *только* созерцанию и восторгу иных душ могу предавиться беззаветно.[38]

This was no unequivocal endorsement of the power of the poet-prophet in the service of love.

IV

In fact, Oreus' *positive* acceptance of the role of poet-prophet began properly only with his trip to Finland of May-June 1900. Notably, the choice of this setting for his "recovery" had a particular significance for Oreus as his letter to S.P. Semenov of 4 May 1900 makes clear:

Через несколько недел еду с отцом в Финляндию, на берег Саймы в излюбленный Вл. Соловьевым пансион Раухха.[39]

Oreus evidently made a 'pilgrimage' specifically in order to catch the spirit of *Solov'ev's* muse. As he would inform Bryusov in his letter of 2 October 1900, lake Saimaa was the inspiration for Solov'evian poems of *universal love*.[40] He intended to test his own poetic capacity to act as the agency of this love. Certainly this perspective on Oreus' Finnish sojourn allows us to identify the otherwise mysterious infant-god of his poem "Vzryvy vod" as *Eros*:

И в бор пушистый, в бор корнистый
Меня привел *младенец-бог.*
И там распелся голосистый
Широколенистый порог.[41]

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[38]Ibid., p. 485. Oreus appears to have voiced his continuing perplexity with the dichotomous self to A.A. Lang at this time. See Lang's answer of 24 March 1900: Yampol'sky, I.G., "Pis'ma A. Miropol'skogo k I. Konevskomu", *Pamyati kul'tury. Novye otkrytiya*, 1988, p. 26.

[39]*Pis'ma <...> Semenovu, S.P.*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 21, l. 20**. See also the account of Solov'ev's later years by Oreus' *friend* S. Makovsky in *Na Parnase "Serebryanogo veka"*, (p. 37). There Makovsky describes how at 18 he made Solov'ev's acquaintance while summering at the Pension Rauch in 1895 at the same time as the philosopher. Makovsky undoubtedly discussed the time that he spent in Solov'ev's company there with Oreus.

[40]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 512.

[41]30 May 1900, *Sip*, p. 111. Notably, "Vzryvy vod" was inspired by the waterfall Imatra - eponymous subject of one of Solov'ev's Finnish poems.

Creatively transported in this poem by the "World Soul's" vital beauty, Oreus had forgotten his disaffected view of poetry as a last resort for one who had conceded his incapacity to act. He was *personally* absorbed by the power of poetic inspiration as an *active* force revealing a preludial vision of *universal love* - the harmony of that which eternally *is* - in the imperfect domain of the "World Soul".

Notably, Oreus sent "Vzryvy vod" to Bryusov in a letter of 1 June in which he announced his "recovery" and made a significant allusion to "Blednaya vesna", the pivotal poem of 1899 in which he had confessed his profound disenchantment with the contemplative ideal:

> Я же прихожу в себя на по-прежнему милом мне граните. Нельзя сказать, чтобы это была та из местностей края финнов, которая являла бы всю полноту его хвойного леса: преобладание единственно соснового и березового мелколесья делает ощутительнее недостаток Финляндии в земледельческих или пастушеских просторах, которые стали мне теперь не менее родственны, чем «дебри» (*«ты выйдешь ли на волю из лесов?»*): здесь зрение отчасти вознаграждается за отсутствие земного горизонта довольно широкими далями, какие открываются значительными, но незаметными возвышениями почвы. Но что бы то ни было, возмещает близость Иматры и явное присутствие причудливейшего из озер: в неисчислимых и пластически—отчетливых узорах его берегов и островков, и стройных и сомкнутых стенах их лесов - вся исключительная природа Суоми, которая таит под покровом однообразия самые изощренные и твердые измышления. Закаты и белые ночи над этими как бы искуственными водоемами и островами - вполне единоличная тревожно—сказочная окраска.[42]

Oreus' use here of the image of escaping the "forests" from "Blednaya vesna" in fact marked a subtle but extremely important shift of emphasis in his thinking. He now introduced it into a discussion of the freedom and action that he accepted to be possible *within* the terms of the poetic-contemplative life. He found freedom from the "forests" in the *intuition* of the Absolute in the vistas and reservoirs of the landscape of Suomi. Moreover, he accepted that this intuition, individual poetic creativity, was in itself *action*. Indeed, in a poem which appeared to mirror this Finnish landscape, "Vot opyat' uzh vy obyali, o vesenniya dali" (spring 1900), Oreus notably eschewed the doubts in the contemplative life to which he had succumbed in the previous year after the criticism of his own aloof, mystical stance in "Zeitgedichte". Although he clearly remembered the 'polemic', he now paid no heed to the "crowd's" calls to account of 1899 and he plunged unrepentantly into the "life-giving ocean" of Tyutchev's vision of eternal spring:

> Вот опять уж вы объяли, о весенные дали.
> Сердца бедного занывающую грусть.
> Ах, что раньше вы мне дали, что раньше подсказали.
> Я ведь знаю уж давно наизусть.

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[42] *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 502-3. The italicized text is the concluding line of "Blednaya vesna".

Что ж, прости - скажу истоме; как в святом водоеме,
В лучезарных искупаюся струях.
В жизни сдавленном объеме, в этом замкнутом доме
Буду жить я, как в волшебных краях.[43]

This poem was Oreus' answer to "Blednaya vesna". As the presence of Eros in "Vzryvy vod" suggests, he had accepted that poetry, wielded by the true poet-prophet, was not merely a formal expression of "universal love", but a vital force promoting its future realization.

Notably, in his poem "Vskhlipyvaniya" (8 June 1900), Oreus appeared to allude to the metaphor of escape from the "forest" again. There, moreover, he reintroduced atavistic motifs which indicated a re-emerging interest in portraying the poet as a visionary "magician", but on new terms - accountable to the Absolute or God. The poet evoked an image of himself as a disillusioned 'pilgrim' who praises Jumala, the god of the heavens in the *Kalevala*, for a barely discernible, but promising revelation of the country beyond the "forest" of introspection in which he is presently lost:

По тропам и по омутам,
По лядинам я брел.
Пробирался я к дрому там -
Ничего не обрел.
<...>
Смерть мне! сердце подумало,
Здесь, где камни и хлябь...
Смилосердился Юмала:
Где-то тронулась рябь.[44]

By the time that Oreus wrote "Zatish'e" eight days later (16 June 1900), his poetic vision had expanded panoramically as his confidence and conviction in his newly defined role grew. Notably, that vision incorporated a *human* dimension: the poet alluded to the Chinese expedition of 1900:

В странах безвестных, небывалых
Идет война, гуляет мор -
Страстей, страданий, страхов шалых,
Любви и гнева древний спор.[45]

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[43]*Sip*, p. 110.
[44]*Sip*, p. 111.
[45]*Sip*, p. 112. It seems possible that the "stones" referred to here alluded to those of Solov'ev's Finnish poem, "Koldun-kamen'", which Oreus admired profoundly (see *Ln* 98 (i), pp. 512-13).

This was the first poetic intimation that, having put the poet's role and potential in perspective, Oreus now found himself able to resume writing as a poet-patriot on new terms. He was no longer concerned with the poetic self-divinization of other individuals, but rather applied *his* mystical insight to intuiting the transfiguration of the topographical and cultural landscape of the world at large that others would effect. In "V ezde", written three months later in the environs of lake Seliger (8 September 1900), the poet-prophet's vision was that of the world as it eternally *is*. The vision was not the purely internalized intuition of ultimate perfection that Oreus had advocated as the solipsist's prerogative. The poet-prophet projected himself into a future in which distinct topographical, national and historical boundaries that *seem* in themselves so insuperable in the present would become positive integral facets of the same unitotal perfection. Notably, Oreus here reintroduced the juxtaposition of the "forest" and the "steppe" which he had first used to describe the Slavonic and Teutonic cultural principles in "Dve narodnye stikhii". He anticipated the positive fusion of these principles in a harmonious world to be inhabited by theurgic "free creators" for whom the plough , symbol of man's battle to control nature, has become redundant:

Размеры дальних расстояний,
Мне зрим ваш белоснежный смысл.
Вы совершенней изваяний,
Простор и время, беги числ!

Летят пробеги и прогоны.
За стрелкой часа дух следит.
Над родниками тайг—иконы,
И пахарь пашню бороздит.

Пускай леса порою тощи,
Мелеет полный гул дубрав—
В пустынях разрастутся рощи,
Земля насытит вволю нрав.

Величье дебрей самородных
Восстанет в рощенной красе,
И глас живой творцов свободных
Подтянет плугу и косе.[46]

"V ezde" indicated that Oreus had now returned to motifs and ideas that he had explored in his addendum to "Dve narodnye stikhii" of the *previous* year.[47] The poem

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[46]*Sip*, p. 113.

[47]Oreus' letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of 5 June 1900 anticipated this development. In it Oreus expounded a theory of language and nationality which essentially echoed the addendum to "Dve narodnye stikhii" of 1899. Cf. *Mid*, pp. 120-123/*Sip*, pp. 156-9 and *Pis'ma* <...> *Bilibinu, A.Ya.*, **f. 259, op.3, ed.khr. 17,** l. 9-**11 ob.** The views expressed in the letter have an additional interest, however, as they illustrate the degree to which Oreus had *personalized* them by 1900, indicating the processes of his development. See, for example, the citation in *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 177).

"Starshie bogatyri" (October 1900) certainly marked the complete re-emergence of the "prophetic atavism" which had typified Oreus' patriotic or cultural vision in that essay. The poem panned in from the wider landscape of "V ezde" and focussed upon the specific historical forces at work in it. These Oreus embodied in the very *bogatyri* that he had identified a year earlier in the revised "Dve narodnye stikhii".[48] Evidently he now felt able to renew his earlier exploration and advocation of the heroic principle which had led him into the *cul-de-sac* of championing the *solipsistic* poet-magician the year before because he had retracted from the excessive claims that he had then made for "mystical knowledge" and the "word". The *bogatyri* of "Starshie bogatyri" certainly had a *positive* metaphysical, cosmological and cultural context. Svyatogor and Volkh were now depicted as embodiments of the "sacred dream":

> И в годы серые бессилия простого
> Вы мне встречались на распутиях души,
> Столпы громадные *Мечтания святого*![49]

In the first part of the poem, in Svyatogor, Oreus evoked the chaotic, titanic struggle of the elemental forces of the *cosmological* process. The "mountain king", was a bastion towering over the monotonous nihility of the steppe and sky and a poignant reminder of the positive power of universal "becoming" in the earth. Man was not only the extension of this creativity, however, shackled by natural necessity to a life of tillage. He was potentially its agent and master. This Oreus proceeded to explore in his atavistic embodiment of the individual with universal vision: the Varangian wizard Volkh, a shape-shifter who knows the secrets of the universe of which he is part. The solution to the *Russian* riddle, Oreus intimated, lay in the reawakening of Volkh's spirit in modernity in order that it might make the huge but benighted and misapplied power of the peasant *bogatyr*, Mikula, obsolete. As in "V ezde", Oreus foresaw the superfluousness of the "plough" in a world transfigured through Volkh's insight into the unitotal essence of things:

> К чему тогда соха? Присошек пусть сверкал,
> Пусть дело не твое тягаться с тяготою -
> Над Русью власть Восторг Души тебе сниска.л.[50]

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[48] See *Mid*, p. 122/*Sip*, p. 158.

[49] *Sip*, p. 114. Italics mine. For J.D. Grossman's analysis of "Starshie bogatyri", see her "Ivan Konevskoi: *Bogatyr* of Russian Symbolism" in *The Silver Age in Russian Literature. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress of Soviet and East European Studies*, pp. 1-10.

[50] *Sip*, p. 116. This "Ecstasy" ("*Vostorg*") was in all probability the same property that Oreus identified in "Dve narodnye stikhii" in the "*vostorg i isstuplenie*" of the starets Zosima's vision of universal integrity,

In "Varyagi", also an "atavistic" work of this late period (autumn 1900). Oreus explored his Scando-Slavic genealogy. The poem evoked the proud individualism of the Vikings, Swedish imperial prowess and its degeneration and eclipse by the Russian expansionism of Peter the Great. Oreus' blood contained a mixture of these national principles and he was proud of the path that his antecedents had trodden. However, although he invoked his ancestors' spirit for its bravery, he was not satisfied with the hereditary process *per se*. His concluding admission in "Varyagi" of his own mortality, of a unitotality attainable only in death, was a prophetic exhortation to others to prosecute the task of cultural and universal syzygy to its end.

It is, however, perhaps the two poems of the *city* that Oreus wrote during this late period that particularly confirm that he now understood his role to be that of the poet-prophet of positive cultural syzygy. These poems, "Veduny" (9 August 1900) and "Sreda" (winter 1900-1901), explored atavistic motifs in a distinctly *modern* cultural context which Oreus had previously eschewed.

In a letter to Bryusov of 28 August *1899*, a year before he came to write "Veduny", Oreus had acknowledged the "prophetic" power of the *urban* drama and poetry of the Belgian Modernist, Emile Verhaeren. Notably, Oreus' interpretation of Verhaeren's poem "Les Idées" had a distinctly *Solov'evian* air, making reference to divine Beauty and its objective manifestation in cosmological and historical processes:

> Кто бы мог подумать, что этот исступленный и ожесточенный созерцатель современных равнин, городов, размышлений и томлений завершит целый период своего вдохновения таким пророчеством! <...> завет его благости <...> в заключительном аккорде поэмы Города, в оде об Идеях, парящих над ним. Она указывает на Силу и Правду-Любовь, действующие совместо под верховным правлением божественной Красоты, как на движущие нашей жизнью стихии <...> красота <...> распространена им теперь из области исключительно художественной на всю культурную деятельность века.[51]

At the time that Oreus wrote this letter, however, he was evidently so preoccupied with his pursuit of a solipsistic theurgy that he neglected the possibility of *himself* looking *outwards* and exploring the urban milieu around him from the perspective of the modern prophet exemplified in E. Verhaeren. It was this exploration that it would notably and suddenly occur to him tentatively to undertake in "Veduny", which he wrote on his return

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which he contrasted with the *negatory* selflessness of Orthodoxy and Tolstoyan moral faith: *Mid*, p. 121/*Sip*, p. 157.

[51]*Ln* 98 (i), pp. 467-8. Notably, Oreus translated Verhaeren's *Les Idées* on 24 May 1899 (*Z.k. No. 10*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 28, l. 15-18**) on reading it (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l.** 77).

to St. Petersburg from Finland in the summer of 1900, a year later.[52] Significantly, the poet did not seek mystically to escape the city's confines in "Veduny" as previously. He intuited and joined mysterious, magical presences, "sorcerors", which, like Verhaeren's eternal "ideas", hovered above the city, guiding it towards positive cultural transfiguration, inspiring industry and craft within it:

Мы (veduny) пройдем над коснеющим городом плавной стопой,
Как пары, мы пройдем над немыми, глухими домами.
Он навек ли кирпичный, булыжный застой?
Нет ли тайной и точной беседы меж ними и нами?

Да, их строили мертвые люди, с пустою душой.
Но забились сердца за тупыми, слепыми стенами.
Исполинская заводь, запруда, о город большой,
Испаряется песнь над зловонными мути волнами.

Если там, за лампадой, убогое сердце горит,
И его не принять ли нам в веденье наше с приветом?

<...>

Пусть грохочуть подводы, повозки по злым мостовым,
Пусть светильные газы бегут неживой вереницей -
Вещуны улетят в небеса по трубам дымовым,
Чтоб витать и гадать над мечтами, судьбами столицы.[53]

In "Sreda", Oreus again used the city as a basis for prophesying cultural change. Moreover, although this piece likewise reflected Verhaeran's insights into urban modernity, it also evidently had a distinctly Solov'evian subtext. The simple title of "Sreda" is not unimportant. In the final article of "Smysl lyubvi", which we identified as informing Oreus' pivotal poem "Otrechenie", Solov'ev argued that the "task of consciousness and will" in the name of true syzygistic love must transfigure the *environment* (*sreda*):

Если корень ложного существования состоит в непроницаемости, т.е. во взаимном исключении существ друг другом, то истинная жизнь есть то, чтобы жить в другом, как в себе, и-ти находить в другом положительное и безусловное восполнение своего существа. Основанием и типом этой истинной жизни остается и всегда останется любовь половая, или супружеская. Но ее собственное осуществление невозможно, как мы видели, без соответствующего преобразования всей *внешней среды*, т.е. *интеграция жизни индивидуальной необходимо требует такой же интеграции в сферах жизни общественной и всемирной*.[54]

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[52]It was an abrupt shift of perspective, suggesting just how rapidly his realization of the implications of the "poet-prophet" for *himself* gave him a new sense of meaning and purpose. In his letter to A.Ya. Bilibin of 5 June 1900 he had *unequivocally* attacked the city as uninhabitable for one of his sensibilities. See *Ln* 92 (iv), p. 176/ *Ln* 98 (i), p. 503.

[53]*Sip*, p. 112.

[54]Solov'ev, Vl., *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 544. Italics mine.

Moreover, Solov'ev's description of the ideal means of effecting such change in the environment corresponded with the message of a poet-prophet of "true patriotism":

...связь активного человеческого начала (личного) с воплощенною в социальном духовно—телесном организме всеединою идеей должна быть живым *сизическим* отношением. Не подчиняться своей общественной сфере и не господствовать над нею, а быть с нею в любовном взаимодействии, служить для нее деятельным, оплодотворяющим началом движения и находить в ней полноту жизненных условий и возможностей - таково отношение истинной человеческой индивидуальности не только к своей ближайшей социальной среде, к своему народу, но и ко всему человечеству.[55]

Oreus' vision of his environment in "Sreda", of St. Petersburg, was precisely that of a historical crossroads and confluence of nationalities where the transfigurative processes of the Idea were palpably concentrated in a knot of suffering, catastrophic change and enlightened renewal. Its issue, moreover, was new, free forms of being which transcend genealogical boundaries:

Над породой свершилась победа;
Здесь ее не слагали века:
Сын Руси забывает здесь деда,
А у Шведа по Руси тоска.[56]

This vision of cultural syzygy was indicative of a poet who had made a compact with futurity in a bid to aid the realization of the cherished ideals that he defined succinctly in an appropriately entitled note of 1900, "Zavet russkomu cheloveku":

Русский человек так заворожен и заражен своими необъятными, неоглядными степями, и дебрями, и реками что ему не поверить, чтобы в человеческой личности, единице заключалась мировое величие <...> Да будет же первое и главное дело его отныне - сознать раз навсегда, что ничто - пространство, время, объем, размер, масса, количество, число, что нет великого и нет малого. Да учится он всякую величину презирать, и да почтет и почтит, как единое нечто, единое сущее, единую истину, красу и радость - качества, свойства, особенности, характеры, роды, виды, образы, все эти составные стихии естества жизни, которые свободны и друг от друга и каждая от себя самой <...> *то что есть, это не единство пустоты и безобличия, это единство полноты и разноличия, живое всеединство.*[57]

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[55]Ibid., p. 545.
[56]*Sip*, p. 120.
[57]Ibid., pp. 227-28.

It was with this vision in view that in his penultimate poem, "K P.P. Konradi" (7 April 1901), Oreus made it clear to his friend that he was now reconciled to play the role of poet-prophet:

Ты прав - не века сын, я чую лишь отзвучья
На мертвую тоску иль на живую страсть.
Нет, сын цветущего, как сад, благополучья
Судьбам неведомым обрек себя на часть.[58]

This, then, was the context in which Oreus wrote his final poem, "Solntse na vershine machty", discovered in his notebook on the banks of the river Aa in which he drowned on 8 July 1901:

Солнце на вершине мачты.
Мы за ним летим.
Ветр, заливистый трубач ты,
Ветра мы хотим.[59]

Notably, in Valery Bryusov's opinion, it was to be considered a bitter irony that only in this, Oreus' *last* poem, did he re-emerge from philosophical entanglement and rediscover something of the spontaneous creativity, happiness and promise of former summers amid nature.[60] By contrast, a critic such as A. Smirnov in all probability considered this final poem simply to corroborate the view that Oreus' later poetry was turning in ever diminishing circles of contemplative abstraction and had no future.

However, as the above analysis suggests, this last natural-philosophical poem had a distinct Solov'evian *context* within a highly complex, dialectical poetic development. It was written by a poet who could neither unconditionally regress to being the innocent wayfarer of 1897, nor, intellectually bankrupt, simply recycle old themes.

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[58]7 April 1901. Ibid., p. 121.
[59]Ibid.
[60]For these details of Bryusov's reaction to Oreus' death, recalled by his sister, see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 553.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
Godman or Übermensch?
The question of Nietzschean influence

Кто мы? неведомой породы переходы.

I. Konevskoy. "Kto my?..."

In his significantly extended, heavily revised article on Konevskoy of 1917 Bryusov advanced the following thesis:

Сильное впечатление произвела на Коневского идея сверхчеловека Ницше. «Кто мы? - неведомой природы переходы», говорит Коневской, и также посвящает ряд стихотворных раздумий, чтобы показать, что человек - только переходная стадия между низшим организмом и грядущим высшим <...> В связи с этим (и, в сущности, тоже как повторение идеи Ницше) стоит у Коневского отрицание «истины». Человек - переходная стадия; его интеллект - не совершенен <...> человеческая истина может быть только частичной истиной.[1]

We turn to this emphatic assertion of Nietzschean influence in conclusion precisely because it constitutes the most exacting test for the whole ethos of this thesis. An analysis of the validity of Bryusov's claim that a philosophy with which Solov'ev polemicized was of *definitive* importance to Oreus will either fundamentally compromise or conclusively affirm our argument that the Russian philosopher's "unitotal" vision was the constant lode star of the poet "Ivan Konevskoy".

I

There is certainly a strong case for the assertion of *a* Nietzschean influence upon Oreus that demands to be answered. In a letter to Bryusov of April 1899, having commented upon works by Nietzsche that he had been translating, Oreus noted:

...афористическое стихотворение "An Hafis" я избрал даже эпиграфом ко всему VIII отделу своей поэзии, обнимающему собою весь период с прошлой осени (1898 г.) <...> :

Bist Alles und Keins, bist Schenke und Wein,
Bist Phönix, Berg und Maus,
Fällst ewiglich in dich hinein,
Fliegst ewig aus dir hinaus.
Bist aller Höhen Versunkenheit,

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[1]Bryusov, V.Ya., "Ivan Konevskoy (1877-1901)", in *Rus. Lit. XX v.*, Vol. 3. bk. viii, p. 161. Bryusov misquotes "Kto my?..."

Bist aller Tiefen Schein,
Bist aller Trunknen Trunkenheit,
Wozu, wozu dir -- Wein?[2]

In fact this citation was not only to be the epigraph of a section of *Mechty i dumy*, but to the *whole* collection. As Oreus' letter to Bryusov suggests, however, it more specifically typified an interest in the Nietzschean dialectic of power which manifested itself from late 1898 onwards. This initially influenced the poetry of that period in works embodying the Dionysian-Apollonian dualism that Nietzsche explored in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Notably, while these works recognized the interdependency of the two principles, they stressed the triumph of Apollonian order in its dialectical interplay with the intoxicating Dionysian revelation of formless power. In "Peregar" (November-December 1898), at a Dionysian feast Oreus anticipated the rising of the sun, with which Nietzsche identified Apollo in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

Если нет на свете славы,
Верь, что свет взойдет.[3]

In "K plastiku" (4-9 December 1898), he aspired to a Hellenistic vision of the consummated Apollonian ideal:

Сама себя снедающая сила,
Не знаю я спокойных колоннад,
Где уж не раз душа твоя вкусила
Дыханье вечно истинных отрад.[4]

Notably, however, the emphasis of Oreus' Nietzschean works was suddenly to shift to the Dionysian end of the spectrum of the German philosopher's aesthetic values, which he maintained to be the essential prerequisite for the perfection of Apollonian genius. Moreover, this apparent *volte-face* significantly corresponded with the search for *action* that resulted from Oreus' increasing disappointment with the love ideal.

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[2]*Ln* 98 (i), p. 459. For Oreus' own prose translation of the citation, see p. 461. Oreus read "An Hafis" in the Nietzsche anthology of 1898, *Gedichte und Sprüche* (p. 121), which he purchased in Heidelberg in the summer of that year (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 55**). This *poetical* introduction to Nietzsche in the original evidently cut a swathe through the critical clamour surrounding the more antagonistic and sensationalist aspects of his work, and inspired Oreus to read *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in December 1898 (*Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 72 ob.**).

[3]*Mid*, p. 168/*Sip*, p. 52.

[4]*Mid*, p. 196/*Sip*, p. 53. The epigraph to the poem was from Nietzsche's "Aus hohen Bergen" which Oreus first read in *Gedichte i Sprüche* (p. 125), but also concluded *Beyond Good and Evil*.

"Prazdnichnaya kantata", its epigraph drawn from the "The Intoxicated Song" in *Zarathustra*, was a Dionysian bachanalia in which Oreus identified a potential means to thwart mortality:

Други, быстрей!
Девы и юноши, в пляске кружитесь!
Если порой вы и на земь ложитесь,
Киньтесь тем радостней в волны морей.
Мы - у священных дверей.
Дружно ломитесь, плотнее дружитесь.
И все смелей, все отчаянней мчитесь
Стаями вольных зверей.[5]

"Prazdnichnaya kantata" was still a love poem. Oreus' next Nietzschean poem, "Variatsii na 'Pominki' Kol'tsova" (2 February 1899), was not. The power of the rebellious youth regaled in Dionysian ivy garlands whom Oreus extolled there for their inexhaustible vitality was *innate* in them:

И все превозмог чудной юности бог,
И в прахе - наш век прожитой.

Победная страсть над пустыней взошла.
Мы все затаили в сердцах.
И знаем - страданьям не будет числа,
Но все мы - в плющевых венцах.[6]

The rising sun of Apollonian genius was now evidently deemed secondary to this superfluity of innate power, its issue rather than its essential qualification:

Так встретим мы утро под пение чаш,
Таинственной жизни нагую зарю.
И жизнь не страшна, если пыл этот - наш:
Угроза он Року - царю.[7]

In Oreus' next poem, "Iz drugogo mira" (February 1899), the tolling midday bell which transcends the understanding of the wise (and therefore Apollonian) man was redolent of the twelve transfigurative peals that mark Zarathustra's resurrection and affirmation of *life* in "The Second Dance Song" in *Zarathustra*.

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[5]*Mid*, p. 203/*Sip*, p. 55.
[6]*Mid*, p. 198/*Sip*, p. 63.
[7]Ibid. Notably, in *Mid* the poem was juxtaposed with the Apollonian "K Plastiku".

This spirit of affirmation undoubtedly contributed to the knot of tension which underlay the clash of mystical contemplation and the need for action in "Blednaya vesna". Indeed, Oreus appealed again to Zarathustran "overcoming" at the time that he wrote that despondent work in an apparent attempt to reconcile contemplative passivity and the urge to act. In "Sobornaya duma" (March 1899) he elaborated the theme of Nietzsche's "An Hafis", claiming that, like Zarathustra in "At Noontide", the fulfilled man has no need of various intoxicants to transport him beyond his empirical self. He eschewed crude, illusory and destructive intoxication for the true Dionysian power to experience the eternity abiding *within* - a well spring of creativity:

Что ж делать? ужели проклясть исступленье?
Чем к жизни любовь утолим?
Любя ее, как допустить истребленье
Минут ея Временем злым?

<...>

О вникните... нас со дня на день колышит
И тихий, и быстрый поток.
Но внутренний мир - он собою лишь дышит,
Всем полон, а сам одинок.

<...>

Строители - мы.[8]

This sublimation of latent emotional energy, the apogee of Zarathustran influence upon Oreus, reverberated throughout his ensuing attempts to define the poet's primacy and right to a solipsistic vision of inner universality.

It was, however, *Beyond Good and Evil*, the aphoristic exegesis of the *moral* implications of Zarathustra's prophetic vision, that inspired Oreus' most overt Nietzschean works of 1901, "Gnomy", "Prisloviya" and "Kto my? nevedomoy porody perekhody". "Gnomy" and "Prisloviya" attacked modern man for his failure to equate "happiness" with the will to power, rather than "pleasure" - an absence of physical or spiritual suffering. This was an abrogation of the stature that the true Dionysiac *amor fati* could offer man:

Себя мы нудим к радости летучей,
Чутьем лукавой гордости влекомы:
С тем, чтоб отвыкнуть от тоски плакучей,

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[8]*Sip*, pp. 81-2.

Забыть наш рок, заранее знакомый.

<...>

Стыдитесь говорить: нельзя! взывайте: можно!

<...>

«Все может быть!» И так быть всемогущ могу я,
«Нельзя не быть» - то для невольников закон.[9]

A Dionysian "festival" of true freedom and creativity was pivotal to the promise of "Kto my?":

И вот влечет и нас свет праздничной свободы.[10]

This, then, was the Nietzschean vein in Oreus' poetry, culminating in these powerful poems of 1900. What, however, were the implications of this clearly maturing interest in the Dionysian philosopher? To answer this question it is imperative to examine closely *Oreus'* own *interpretation* of Nietzsche's philosophy, which Bryusov clearly identified as a basis for asserting his friend's progression from metaphysics to unqualified aesthetic dynamism. It is necessary to explore what Oreus meant when, in "Gnomy", he proclaimed:

«Навеки» - это смерть, а власть - «все до поры!»
Ведь непреложное так пусто и ничтожно,
Вне всякой вольности и роскоши игры.

<...>

Люблю я Истину, но так же мило Мненье,
И вечность хороша, лишь если время есть.
Под каждым Мнением заложено Сомненье,
Как заповедный клад: то личной воли честь.[11]

Was this not, as Bryusov argued, the position of one who had converted to the later, purely Dionysian philosophy of the will to power? Had Oreus not submitted to the power of a philosophy which, subsuming reason as an incidental feature of its sublimational aesthetic, was popularly held to offer the freedom of an uncompromised monistic *irrationalism*, a dialectic of volitional dynamism? Was not *Beyond Good and*

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[9]*Sip*, pp. 107-8. For the Nietzschean background to "Gnomy", see *Sip*, p. 243 and *Ln* 98 (i), p. 478.
[10]*Sip*, p. 109.
[11]*Sip*, p. 108.

Evil (the inspiration for "Kto my?", the poem which Bryusov identified as the explanation for *all* Oreus' works on the destiny of man) a book written by a philosopher who embodied Truth as a wanton sphinx at its beginning and unequivocally extolled Dionysus at its end?

In fact a closer reading of Oreus' Nietzschean poems in association with his occasional, unpublished writings *on* Nietzsche reveals that he made *no* concessions to unqualified irrationalism for all the attraction that he felt to the doctrine of will to power. Long before Oreus read *Beyond Good and Evil* he had presumed what Nietzsche *actually* revealed at its conclusion: that the Dionysus of this book bore only a superficial resemblance to the antithesis of Apollo of *The Birth of Tragedy*; this Dionysus was a *philosopher*.[12] Indeed, Oreus understood the subsumption of the Apollonian within the Dionysian doctrine of the will to power in *Zarathustra* and Nietzsche's later works revealed him to be a *dialectical monist* with a positive cosmological vision of being.[13] If Nietzsche continued to peddle his advocacy of the "untrue" and revelled in the tension created by his loyalty to the ambiguous figure of Dionysus, then these iconoclastic tendencies were not to be considered unconditionally negative, but to be understood in terms of the philosopher's increasingly *positive* system.

II

Significantly, Oreus' earliest recorded view of Nietzsche of any length was *unequivocally* critical. This opinion appeared in reflections on Germany's slide into Prussian militarism that were inspired by Oreus' brief stay in Berlin in the summer of 1897. Notably these reflections focused upon Nietzschean atavism. However, this was no celebration of healthy Norse valour or the unsullied vision of primitivistic pantheism, but of the spirit of the *landsknecht*, the surfeit of instinctive energy driving the venal Cesare Borgia:

> В глубочайшем родстве с <...> духом Берлина, растлевающим и всю современную Германию, стоит увлечение ее вообще и молодого Берлина в особенности нравственной проповедью Ницше. Та ведь мечтает о водворении в целом мире того же безшабашного военного авантюризма - кулачного права, которое является закваской берлинского населения. Она ставит себе идеалом

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[12]See *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 295.

[13]A view not entirely unfavoured today. See, in particular, Walter Kaufmann's contention that although there were profound differences in emphasis between Hegel and Nietzsche, the former's absolute, the *formal* basis for Solov'ev's, was much closer to the *monistic* will to power than Schopenhauer's monism of will: Kaufmann, W., "Sublimation, *Geist*, and Eros", *Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 235-46.

величайшего в истории изверга - кондотьера, атамана наемных дружин, Цезаря Борджиа, и это вполне естественно приходится по нутру сыновьям поклонников «юнкерского» величия - Бисмарков и Вильгельмов I, еще маскировавших свои грубые ландскнехтские души под разными изречениями «sprüche» лютеранского благочестия вроде «für Gott, Kaiser u. Vaterland». Да, нравственная проповедь Ницше - самое яркое проявление дикого атавизма, военной одичалости, воцарившейся в современной Германии после военных торжеств 1870 года.[14]

Oreus had not in fact read Nietzsche at this point. This view of his philosophy was formed on the basis of received ideas, in particular the critical reaction of *Akim Volynsky*.[15] On personal acquaintance with Nietzsche's philosophy Oreus was to modify his opinion of it substantially. Even so, however, he did not relax that critical acumen which Volynsky's writings had generally fostered in him. His opinion of *Zarathustra* was far from unreservedly positive as his letter to A. Ya. Bilibin of July (-August) *1899* testifies:

Предупреждаю тебя, что, если станешь знакомиться с «Заратустрой» в полном объеме немного в нем найдешь мест, достойных сравнения с известными тебе двумя главами IV части. Большая даже часть всего остального несравненно ниже, да и как все вообще творчество Ницше, по моему, открывает лишь как бы вовсе мимоходом и нечаянно величавые мировые горизонты, так как общее течение его - не только бестолковое, т.е. без всякой гармонии в распределении частей, но, хуже всего, вращающееся то и дело в круге крайне необщих и каких-то прикладных точек зрения и закипающее самыми площадными выходками, которые так и просятся в уста пошляков.

Благодаря всяким таким дешево запоминающимся словечкам имя и учение Ницше уже и теперь делается достоянием и катахизмом многих членов толпы. Его провозглашают учителем деятельности, на что он к сожаления и бил, и не без греха театральной позы (уж один его широковещательный припев: Also Sprach Zarathustra и подделку под мессианской тон, столь не подходящий к его бессвязности и неровности, не могу ему простить), и однако менее всего он им был и может сделаться, мечтатель о неисполнимом и невыразимом, всегда впадавший в грубые промахи, когда свой сон «сверхчеловечества» хотел обратить в нечто, преобразующее современную внешнюю, общественную действительность.[16]

Clearly, then, even at the time Oreus wrote his series of "Zarathustran" poems his attitude to Nietzsche was still the highly discretionary approval of one who evidently held his own position to be *superior*. We can establish from exactly *what* perspective Oreus was judging Nietzsche's work if we focus upon the redeeming sections of

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[14]*Z.k. No. 8*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 20, l. 2 ob.-3**.
[15]For reference to Cesare Borgia in Volynsky's critique of *The Antichrist*, see "Literaturnye zametki", *Sv*, No. 10, 1896, otdel I, pp. 248-55. See also "Apollon i Dionis", *Sv*, No. 11, 1896, otdel I, pp. 232-255 (both recorded read: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 20**). Other early reading on Nietzsche included Solov'ev's "Pervyy shag k polozhitel'noy estetike"; Lou Andreas-Salomé, "Fridrikh Nitsshe v svoikh proizvedeniyakh", *Sv* No. 3, 1896 (read March 1896: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 10**); Preobrazhensky, V.P., "Fridrikh Nitsshe", Grot, N.Ya., "Nravstvennye idealy nashego vremeni (Fridrikh Nitsshe i Lev Tolstoy)" and Astaf'ev, P.E., "Genezis nravstvennogo ideala dekadenta", all three of which appeared in *Vfip* bk 1 (16), 1893 (also read March 1896, *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 10**).
[16]*Pis'ma <...> Bilibinu, A.Ya.*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 17, l. 7**.

Zarathustra which he recommended to Bilibin. Although Oreus did not specifically identify which passages from Part Four of *Zarathustra* he had in mind in his letter to Bilibin, he did indicate which they were in a letter to Bryusov:

Из Ницше переведено мною два наиболее гениальных образца его лирики, затерянных в хламе IV-ой части «Заратустры»: "Mittags" и "Das trunkne Lied".[17]

"At Noontide" and "The Intoxicated Song", in which Oreus identified the definitive expression of themes in *Zarathustra* that appealed to him, concerned the 'self-overcoming' of the *Übermensch* and the accompanying credo of "*eternal recurrence*". The exact implications of what Nietzsche meant by "eternal recurrence", a corollary of the *amor fati*, remain obscure.[18] He never *systematically* expounded the "doctrine" that he so lyrically voiced in *Zarathustra*, and of which he swore himself to be the devoted teacher at the conclusion of *Twilight of the Idols*. Its undispelled obfuscation has popularly been seen to contrast unfavourably with the acute psychological insights that inform the concept of the *Übermensch*, and these two affiliated teachings have been disassociated, the "recurrence" neglected. Why Oreus, by contrast, focused precisely upon the eternal recurrence as the definitive moment of Nietzsche's principally existential aesthetic of the will to power is intimated in the language in which it is couched in the chapters he admired. In "At Noontide" Zarathustra intuits eternity in a dream and wonders at his relationship with the universe and how it shall be resolved:

...who are you then, O my soul? (and at this point he started, for a ray of sunlight had glanced down from the sky on to his face.)

O sky above me, <...> are you watching me? Are you listening to my strange soul?

When will you drink this drop of dew that has fallen upon all earthly things - when will you drink this strange soul

- when, well of eternity! serene and terrible noontide abyss! when will you drink my soul back into yourself?[19]

Zarathustra's subsequent appeal to the doctrine of "eternal recurrence" - the apotheosis of life affirmation - in "The Intoxicated Song" suggests an answer to these questions in terms clearly arresting for one with Oreus' *Solov'evian* background:

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[17]Letter to Bryusov of April 1899: *Ln* 98 (i), p. 459, where other select translations from Nietzshe are also listed. See also the more extensive list of passages from *Zarathustra* of particular interest which Oreus drafted on listing it read: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 72 ob.**

[18]For a comprehensive discussion of "eternal recurrence", see Kaufmann, *Nietzsche. Philosopher. Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 305-333.

[19]Nietzsche, F., *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, translated with an introduction by R.J. Hollingdale, Penguin, 1974, p. 289.

Joy <...> does not want heirs or children, joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same <...> *All things are chained and entwined together, all things are in love;*

if ever you wanted one moment twice, if ever you said: 'You please me, happiness, instant, moment!' then you wanted *everything* to return!

you wanted everything anew, everything eternal, everything chained, entwined together, everything in love, O that is how you *loved* the world,

you everlasting men, loved it eternally and for all time: and you say even to woe: 'Go, but return!' *For all joy wants - eternity!*

<...>

all joy wants itself, therefore it also wants heart's agony! O happiness! O pain! Oh break, heart! You higher men, learn this, learn that joy wants eternity,

joy wants the eternity of all things, *wants deep, deep, deep eternity!*[20]

Indeed, in a more explicit exposition of the same idea in an earlier chapter, "The Seven Seals (or: The Song of Yes and Amen)", Oreus read:

> Oh how should I not lust for eternity and the wedding ring of rings - the Ring of Recurrence!
>
> Never yet did I find the woman by whom I wanted children, unless it be this woman, whom I love: for I love you, O Eternity!
>
> *For I love you, O Eternity!*[21]

"Joy" - life lived fully, overcoming ego - was a creative Eros, ultimately attaining a *universal love* in the "recurrence" in which *everything* was eternally and unconditionally interlinked. Was this formula associating creativity and the absolute ideal not familiar? Indeed, could not the "woman" of "The Seven Seals" be more particularly construed as being Nietzsche's personal revelation of the "Divine" or "Eternal Feminine", God's "other"? It seems that Oreus took his devotion to "her", or universal love, to be an acknowledgement that the aesthetic dialectic of the will to power in fact had a definite *metaphysical context*. Was not the inevitable corollary of Nietzsche's assertion that the Dionysian will to power was *monistic* his realization that it could only be the extension of an Absolute in relation to itself in a state of "becoming"? A monistic force could positively overcome *itself* without logical contradiction only if it had the dialectical dynamics of the Absolute principle. Oreus' choice of passages from *Zarathustra* was determined by the echoes he found in them of his Solov'evian metaphysics of the Absolute and its corresponding aesthetic of erotic love.

This interpretation of Oreus' Nietzscheanism can be corroborated by even a cursory review of his "Zarathustran" poems. Indeed, if read from this perspective certain

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[20]Ibid., pp. 331-2. Italics mine. Oreus took the concluding line of the above as an epigraph to "Prazdnichnaya kantata".

[21]Ibid., p. 244. The chapter was one of those Oreus marked "N.B." on reading *Zarathustra*: *Spkis*, f. 259, **op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 72 ob**.

ostensible thematic inconsistencies in these poems can be immediately dispelled. The works no longer represent an abrupt, seemingly inexplicable shift of emphasis, antithetical to the Apollonian principle. The *monistic* Dionysian will to power *positively* subsumed it as its zenith. Thus the fact that "Prazdnichnaya kantata", with its epigraph from "The Intoxicated Song", was also a Solov'evian love poem dedicated to A.N. Gippius becomes wholly admissible. The *divine* nature of the Zarathustran bell tolling in "Iz drugogo mira" puts the task of the higher men of "Variatsii na 'Pominki' Kol'tsova" and the intuition of eternity in "Sobornaya duma" in context.

However, it is in Oreus' systematic reflections on *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which his Solov'evian inclination to positive synthesis took precedency over his Volynskian instinct to deconstruct, that his metaphysical contextualization of Nietzsche finds its clearest expression. Notably these reflections were written in the wake of Solov'ev's article, "Ideya sverkhcheloveka" (1899).

In this article, Solov'ev distinguished the doctrine of the *Übermensch* from Marxist and Tolstoyan teaching as a valuable basis for a debate on the *future* of man with the Nietzscheans of *Mir iskusstva*:

> Не следует ли радоваться уже и простому факту, что <...> забвение и <...> малодушное примирение с действительностью приходит к концу, что раздаются, хотя бы и голословные пока, заявлении: «*я* сверхчеловек», «мы сверхчеловеки». Такие заявления, сначала возбуждающие досаду, в сущности должны радовать уже потому, что они открывают возможность интересного разговора, чего никак нельзя сказать о некоторых иных точках зрения.[22]

Solov'ev approached the question of the Nietzschean "*sverkhchelovek*" with his customary objective: to assimilate abstract principles that were in themselves erroneous and misleading within the terms of his positive system:

> Я думаю, нет спора, что всякое заблуждение - по крайней мере всякое заблуждение, о котором стоит говорить, - содержит в себе несомненную истину и есть лишь более или менее глубокое искажение этой истины; ею оно держится, ею привлекательно, ею опасно, и чрез нее же только может оно быть как следует понятно, оценено и окончательно опровергнуто.[23]

However, Solov'ev abruptly discontinued this "conversation" with the Nietzscheans, perhaps unconvinced that they had the philosophical credentials to engage in meaningful debate, perhaps troubled at the prospect of associating himself any further

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[22]Solov'ev, Vl., "Ideya sverkhcheloveka", *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 634. Oreus read the article on its appearance in *Mi*, 1899, No. 9 where it was intended to initiate a debate with the "Nietzschean" coterie running the journal: *Spkis*, **f. 259, op.1, ed.khr. 6, l. 76 ob.**

[23]Solov'ev, Vl., "Ideya sverkhcheloveka", *Soch.*, Vol. 2, p. 628.

with the idea of the *Übermensch*, which could be confused with his "Godmanhood". Oreus, however, saw the possibility of continuing the argument and satisfactorily resolving it in favour of Solov'ev by focussing upon what he saw as Nietzsche's own acknowledgement of man's need for a positive metaphysics - the doctrine of "eternal recurrence". It was thus that Oreus wrote *K delu svobody i mogushchestva. Na myśl' Nitsshe o 'vole k mogushchestvu' (Jenseits von Gut u. Böse)*. Indeed, this sketch confirms that far from being the negation of his Solov'evian affiliations, Oreus' "Nietzscheanism", was the crowning moment of their positive influence. Oreus went *beyond* Solov'ev here in the prosecution of his duties as an adherent of synthesis. It was Oreus' thesis that Nietzsche's nihilistic mockery of man's endeavours to entrap and possess the sphinx-like Truth of *Beyond Good and Evil* was implicitly qualified by his own doctrine of the will to power. The monistic dialectic of the will to power was perforce *ultimately* the will to an unconditional (and thus unitotal) *Truth*:

> Способность или - то же - возможность быть все, точнее отсутствие невозможности быть чем бы то ни было - вот полнота того могущества, к которому - согласно Ницше - идет воля жизни, бытия. Могущество это, истинно, больше, чем просто жизнь, потому что жизнь обозначает всегда лишь состояние, настоящее вне будущего и бывшего: могущество же есть и состояние в настоящем, и возможность пребывать в будущем, и в бывшем, значит - пребывать всегда, всюду.
>
> *Поэтому вполне всуе тем же умом отвергнута была воля к истине.* Истина - это же есть то, что есть все, всегда, всюду, поэтому - и есть, и не есть. Итак, Истина есть неограниченное ничем, бесконечное и вечное могущество <...> Только Истина дает именно то могущество быть и не быть все, именно потому что в это слово вложено бытие ничем не ограниченное. Поэтому вполне противно воле к могуществу увлечение «ложью» жизни, которому отдается Ницше: ведь это есть преданность тому, что не может быть все, всегда и всюду <...> Возможность, могущество «не быть» всегда просто могущество «быть» что то не то, что мы можем быть, ощущать <...> Всякое изменение, отрицание чего бы то ни было есть только потому, что «я» не могу видеть иного в том, что стало после того, что было, не могу не различать «одного» от «другого». Еслиб я мог чувствовать, что все одно, не было бы никакого изменения, т.е. отрицания чего бы то ни было, то есть ничто не объявлялось бы, не оказалось бы как «ложь». Полное отрицание «лжи» т.е. изменения, перемены, смены движения произошло бы, конечно, из большего могущества.
>
> Но этого могущества самого не было бы, не было бы возможности сознать: все, одно, если б не было сознания «другое», «многое». Итак, могущество сознать или быть одно есть также могущество быть многое, быть взаимно ограничивающееся, быть перестающее и настающее. Итак, это и есть - всемогущество.[24]

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[24]*K delu svobody i mogushchestva*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9, l. 30**. Italics mine. Oreus appears to have read *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* during two visits to Bryusov in Moscow in September 1899 and January 1900 (see Bryusov, *Dnevniki*, p. 76, 80). These were the dates given on the MS., which was also marked "Moscow". It seems probable, therefore, that Bryusov *was* aware of Oreus' qualified opinion of this work and, to keep his ideal of the dynamic Oreus intact, elected to omit it from his analysis of the poet's 'Nietzscheanism', perhaps considering it to be the issue of the doctrinaire youthfulness he noted in Oreus during that September visit.

In Oreus' opinion the ultimate implication of Nietzsche's philosophy, if properly understood, was "unitotality".[25] Indeed, it was precisely this view that underlay Oreus' pithy description of Nietzsche in a draft foreword of about this time for his translations:

> Безумный порох, прожженный шатун, [босомыга?] всю жизнь свою погорелец и поджигатель, в тайниках своего сердца таящий мечту о воздушнолегкой и непоколебимо стойкой изящной и гармонической жизни, белеющей чистыми мраморами и осененной тонкими и бледными оливами.[26]

Oreus' "Nietzschean" poems of 1900 can also be reinterpreted in the light of K *delu svobody i mogushchestva*, and their arguments clearly be shown to be in phase with his Solov'evian credo. In "Prisloviya" and the first part of "Gnomy", "Vechnye muki", Oreus focussed upon the true role and nobility of suffering in Nietzsche's dialectic of the will to power.[27] "Vechnye muki" echoes Nietzsche's attack upon the moral "castration" of asceticism, *arbitrarily* deemed to be the *highest* manifestation of "suffering" by conventional morality. This part of the poem also alludes to Nietzsche's critique of that morality's indulgent pity for the "herd's" weakness and desire for a "pleasure" which retards its understanding of the true "happiness" of the will to power. In this "Vechnye muki" in no sense contradicts the general ethos of the truly *exacting*, universe-affirming "erotic paths" which Solov'ev exhorted man to pursue in his article on Plato and in "Smysl lyubvi" - a step beyond asceticism.

In the second section of "Gnomy", "Bytie i edinitsa", Oreus echoed Nietzsche's unmasking of the "will to non-knowledge" and the *Deus ex nihilo* behind whom man has historically hidden, paralyzed by his fear of pessimism:

> Нет, не было у смертных большей веры,
> Чем Бог, что все творит из ничего.[28]

Nietzsche contended that the non-knowledge of conventional morality is a compact with ignorance which perpetuates the deception of inexplicably antithetical values, obscuring the possibility that these might be but degrees of the *same* force - will to power.[29] The zealous Socratic exposure of "blind faith" was, of course, also a

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[25]It is perhaps not unimportant in this connection that Oreus was prompted to draft his most comprehensive exposition of the metaphysics of the Absolute since 1897 precisely in January 1900: *Bytie velikogo 'Ya'*, **f. 259, op. 3, ed.khr. 9**.

[26]*Z.k. No. 11*, **f. 259, op. 1, ed.khr. 29, l. 1**.

[27]See, for example, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 55-6, 202, 225, 270 and 293.

[28]*Sip*, p. 107.

[29]See *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 2, 24 and 59.

technique used consistently by *Solov'ev*. Indeed, *his* call for progressive creativity and the usurpation of arbitrary values was also wholly compatible with the final section of this "Nietzschean" poem, "V nebyvaloe". When this section of "Gnomy" is qualified by the positive Solov'evian stance that Oreus adopted in *K delu svobody i mogushchestva*, its otherwise problematic celebration of Nietzsche's rebellious disregard for "Truth"[30] is resolved. Solov'ev's campaign for the absolute self-perfection of man shared the Nietzschean zeal in the face of shibboleths and "Rubicons" that Oreus displayed in "V nebyvaloe". Indeed, Solov'ev held that it was man's highest obligation perpetually and painfully to recreate himself. Only then would he perfect the values of the universal body worthy of his true dignity - *the church*:

> На чем же утолится наша жажда полного доверия, беззаветной преданности, окончательного успокоения? Не на ней ли, на <...> родной и сверхродной, исторической и сверхисторической, вселенской церкви? Но хорошо ли с нашей стороны смотреть на нее только как на успокоение, - этой Избраннице приносить одну леность ума и воли, усыпление совести, и на таком плохом даре основывать наше соединение с нею? И разве она в самом деле примет от нас этой дар? На что он ей? Не примут ли его под ее именем другие, которые имеют интерес в том, чтобы атрофировался наш разум и оглохла наша совесть? *Нет, никогда не будет и не должно быть успокоения человеческому духу в этом мире. Нет, не может и не должно быть такого авторитета, который заменил бы наш разум и совесть и сделал бы ненужным свободное исследование. Церковь <...> должна быть для нас внутреннею силою неустанного движения к вечной цели, а не подушкою успокоения.*[31]

On the one hand, this passage by Solov'ev suggests why Oreus felt himself licenced to champion *Nietzsche's* critique of conventional values without contradiction: an uncompromising battle for the precept *est Deus in nobis* was common to both these philosopher-poets. Yet, on the other hand, the passage also reminds us of the Solov'evian emphasis upon the absolute synthesis of man's interests in a truly universal "church" which was pivotal to Oreus' interpretation and acceptance of Nietzscheanism.

III

In this concluding chapter of the thesis we have again attempted to show that I.I. Oreus consistently subscribed to a positive metaphysical ideal throughout his life, and that recognition of this fact is essential if his true identity is to be understood. Before finally resting our case here, however, it seems only appropriate to turn to one of Oreus'

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[30]See *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorisms 42, 210-13, 227, 231, 289.

[31]Solov'ev, Vl., "Mitskevich", *SELk*, p. 379. My italics. Oreus read the article in early 1899 when it was published in *Mi*, No. 5: *Spkis*, **f.259, op. 1, ed.khr. 6, l. 74 ob**.

last essays of any length to be published, "Mirovozzrenie poezii N.F. Shcherbiny", to see whether the ideas it contains correspond with the identity that we have reconstructed in the course of this work. Certainly familiar motifs reverberate in the *concluding* passage of the article, where Oreus praised the poem "Vesenniy gimn", as Shcherbina's highest achievement:

> В ликовании весеннего расцвета, и точно так же в блаженном союзе четы <...> совершается <...> великое и горнее откровение единого божественного духа, которым составляется и слагается стройность мироздания. Эта жизнь весны и любви есть и окончательное и нескончаемое обоготворение человеческого лица, приобщение его к лику и ладу мировой Красоты (Космоса). <...> прославление единичного образца женской красоты, сосредоточение всего многообразия в нем одном <...> Эта жизнь сулит и обетует во сне не снившиеся дали и горизонты впереди, еще и еще, и оттого не менее уже исполнена, совершенна, довольна и вольна. В этом восторге, вдохновении и блаженстве—обеты и возможности невообразимых новообразов, и установленный устав, строй, венценосный, златоглавый храм. Такой гимн вешней и всевышней жизни был, есть и будет во всем творчестве поэта: он—средоточие его света и огня.[32]

Here, in clear references to the Absolute and the theurgic power of love, was a final affirmation not only of Oreus' abiding subscription to these ideals, but also of his strong affiliation with that tradition of Russian *poet-thinkers* which included such figures as Shcherbina, F.I. Tyutchev, A.K. Tolstoy and, in his own day, Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev.

However, in "Mirovozzrenie poezii N.F. Shcherbiny", Oreus also notably dwelt upon that poet's intuitive sense of the "negative pole" of infinity - the chaotic flux of phenomenal being. This was, of course, symptomatic of his preoccupation with the "abyss" of which his generation, the generation of modernity, was acutely conscious. Indeed, to use the terminology of Aleksandr Blok's paper of 1910, "O sovremennom sostoyanii russkogo simvolizma", ten years before it was written Oreus was profoundly aware of the need to address and experience the "antithesis" as well as to celebrate the ideal "thesis". It was thus that in one of his last poems, "Sreda", he had recognized that the future of man did not lie in regaining the romantic pastoral idyll in which his father's generation sought solace, but in traversing the bleak urban landscape of Emile Verhaeren's modern vision:

> От казны, от торгов, от заводов,
> Не от благ, что из почвы идут...
> Так кончаются лица народов -

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[32]Konevskoy, I., "Mirovozzrenie poezii N.F. Shcherbiny", *Severnye tsvety na 1902 g.*, p. 213. See also the Berkeley reprint of *Mid* (where the essay is included as a supplement), p. 239. For details of publication see *Ln* 98 (i), p. 537.

Самородные лица грядут![33]

In thus championing his ideals in the *modern* age Oreus not only contributed to the continuity of the tradition of Russian literature and thought to which he subscribed, but also to its future development. Indeed, Oreus' fusion of past ideals and modern concerns in a Solov'evian credo for the future foreshadowed the emergence of a "generation" of poets to come, of Aleksandr Blok and Andrey Bely, of Vyacheslav Ivanov and Osip Mandel'shtam. The work of "Ivan Konevskoy" can indeed be judged prophetic when one considers that a *decade* after Oreus' death, in "O sovremennom sostoyanii russkogo simvolizma", Blok would write:

> Искусство есть *Ад*. Недаром В. Брюсов завещал художнику: «Как Данту, подземное пламя должно тебе щеки обжечь». По бессчетным кругам Ада может пройти, не погибнув, только тот, у кого есть спутник, учитель и руководительная мечта о Той, которая поведет туда, куда не смеет войти и учитель.[34]

The "teacher" to whom Blok referred was Vladimir Solov'ev, the "dream" - quite patently the ideal of "Smysl lyubvi".

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[33]*Sip*, p. 121.
[34]Blok, A.A., *Soch. v dvukh tomakh*, Vol. 2, p. 155.

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