

INTRODUCTION

THIS ANTHOLOGY presents the papers delivered at the conference 'The Kaleidoscope of Russian Thought at the Turn of the Last Century' which was held at the Department of Slavonic Studies, Lund University, in May 2000. The conference was held under the auspices of the project 'The Intelligentsia as Creators of Social Values in Russia and Poland during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', a project financed by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.

The turn of the last century a hundred years ago is perhaps the single most creative period in the history of the Russian intelligentsia. At the same time, as Julie Hansen writes, it was 'a nervous time, when doctors and artists alike saw a crisis looming on the horizon'. The metaphor of kaleidoscope was chosen as title for the conference in order to focus on the broad spectrum of ideas which were brought into continually new constellations by the individual thinkers and actors in the culture of the time. However, the kaleidoscope metaphor has its limitations : a kaleidoscope is merely an instrument, a prism, where the magic of the new patterns is insubstantial, a finite number of glass fragments being realigned for effect. Even the grander designation *The Silver Age* suggests an age set apart, complete in itself, glittering but in some sense removed from a stream of on-going culture and thought. Perhaps this was the way which this age was perceived during the Soviet Era, as a precious enclave where wonderful things happened, things which had not been permitted to enter into cultural history as a dynamic factor.

When the Soviet era collapsed one of the bonuses was that the Silver Age re-entered history in the sense that it became not only an object of wonder, but also a potential source of ideas and values which could be reappropriated. Everything which had been a part of the Silver Age literally gained a new dimension in answer to the question: is the legacy of the Silver Age relevant to post-Soviet culture?

This volume of articles is necessarily fragmentary; readers are invited to receive each contribution as a working fragment, part of a dynamic process whereby the significance of what was thought then, the better part of a century ago, is understood as a substratum of what may be reappropriated today, in the vacuum of post-Soviet culture. We should not view Silver Age culture as a pretty kaleidoscope, but as something more powerful, the kind of chaos from which, in Prigogine's terms, order may chance to be constructed. The volume is entitled *On the Verge*, and we hope hereby to indicate the potential continuation of the thought of the time; on the verge of a new century, on the verge of modernity, on the verge between East and West, perhaps on the verge of insanity. Thus the title *On the Verge* should indicate that the culture of the turn of the last century was not an enclave but part of a dynamic culture, the implications of which may yet come into a new light.

The intelligentsia

Diverse as they are, the thinkers and writers presented in this volume are considered to belong to that elusive—elusive since collective—phenomenon we call the Russian intelligentsia. Many of the thinkers were extremely learned and sophisticated philosophers and theologians, from Vladimir Solov'ev, through Nikolaj Berdjaev and Pavel Florenskij, for example, to Lev Karsavin. But what makes this time so remarkable is that the intelligentsia simultaneously branched out into extreme, shocking and self-contradictory positions. As Laura Engelstein says of Vasilij Rozanov, they wanted to have it both ways : '[Rozanov worked] with and against the modern medium ... He thus offended the hierarchy of taste, while preserving the conceptual coordinates that structured the thinking of his age.' (p. i.)

In their fascination with popular religious sects we see not only Rozanov but other thinkers abandoning a relatively learned and intellectual stance to embrace a ruder popular culture. In her analysis of Andrej Belyj's *Серебряный голубь* (*The Silver Dove*), Julie Hansen reminds us of the 'religious sectarianism that was flourishing at the turn of the century' (p. no). In Belyj's novel the protagonist, whom Hansen calls 'a child of the intelligentsia', becomes entangled with the Doves, a sect with affinities to the real-life flagellants.

Re-embracing Christianity, after the atheism of the nineteenth century, the religious philosophers reclaim it from the Church and look instead 'to the Old Believers and homegrown religious sects' (Engelstein, p. 2). And not only in the matter of Orthodoxy but in other areas as well we find an explosion of forbidden and crazy ideas as for example Nikolaj Fedorov's Utopian scheme literally to raise from the dead, with the help of modern technology, all our forebears.

As in Western Europe so in Russia, sexuality became another area of liberation and imagination, and this was doubly shocking in a culture which had not mastered the basic epistemological ethos of modernity. A negative connection between religion and sexuality is made by Fedorov for whom, according to Per-Arne Bodin, the Trinity represents 'the perfect unity between men, a unity which excludes the sexual union between man and woman' (p. 22). A negative attitude swings with Rozanov to titillating fascination for the graphic denial of sexuality in the act of self-castration by the sect of the *Skopcy*. The paper delivered by Peter Ulf Møller, unfortunately not included in this collection, examined the lifting of the taboo of sexuality in the literary works of Leonid Andreev and Michail Arcybasev.

Another shocking constellation is the anti-Semitism which is the subject of Efim Kurganov's interpretation of an anomaly in A.F. Losev's thinking. Losev himself, with his platonie inclinations, defined the intelligentsia as representing the self-awareness of the national consciousness : 'The consciousness of the nation cannot be constructed arbitrarily; it corresponds to the level attained by the nation, in spiritual, intellectual and ethical matters.' (Kurganov, p. 70, my translation-*F.B*) Kurganov recounts two Russian-Jewish conversations in order to show that anti-Semitism was systematic in the Russian intelligentsia at the beginning of the century. As a member of the Russian intelligentsia, Zinaida Gippius, when asked whether she supported the perpetrators or the victims of the pogroms, was bound to side with the perpetrators. The trauma of being Jewish in a potentially anti-Semitic culture is further the story told by Magnus Ljunggren in his presentation of Sabina and Isaak Spielrein.

In his account of the cultural political path which Petr Struve, a late-time Caadaev, followed, Gunnar Opeide gives us a less sensational story, but a story which provides a solid contextual background to the problems and dilemmas which faced all Russian thinkers at the time. It explains the context shared by the religious thinkers and those amongst the intelligentsia who were active on the political front. If Rozanov was clearly overwrought, even the relatively earthbound Struve's intellectual career is described by Opeide as 'tumultuous', as an intellectual he was 'precocious ... intellectually volatile and restless' (p. 47). Struve was a Westerniser, who in his development from Marxism to liberalism criticised people, government and bureaucracy alike for not coping with the need for political reform, but most of all he criticised the intelligentsia for failing to appreciate the connection between culture and order. With his respect for order, Struve provides a counterpoint for most other thinkers considered in this volume.

Grappling with modernity

At the turn of the last century Russia had been on the verge of modernity for two hundred years. From the start ambivalence towards modernity was the crucial issue for the intelligentsia. Peter the Great had upset the apple cart of Russian traditional culture and, during the nineteenth century (when the concept of an intelligentsia was appropriated), ambivalence towards modernity gradually settled in the emergence of two fairly distinct groups, the Western-isers and the Slavophiles. At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, this comfortable duality was once again upset, exacerbated by the economic and political strains of for example late industrialisation as well as by the thinking of writers such as Dostoevskij, Nietzsche and Freud. New constellations formed again so that, even amongst the religious philosophers of the time, Per-Arne Bodin can see modernity as a kind of watershed: 'While Solov'ev and Fedorov use the Trinity in projects where modernity does not exist, Bulgakov tries to use the Trinity to create an alternative modernity, a trinitarian deep psychology.' (p. 24.) Bulgakov's deep psychology was a deliberate response to the development of modern psychology in the West.

A holistic, synthetic epistemology in contrast with Western, analytical philosophy, as well as notions such as *sobornost'*, had been cultivated by the Slavophiles and launched as specifically Russian. Some decades later, the religious renaissance of the turn of the century was now a genuine reaction to industrialisation, capitalism and the ideology of socialism by thinkers who themselves had been part of the Westernising fraction of the intelligentsia. Holistic or synthetic thought is the concept which both Bodin and Elena Namli analyse. Bodin examines trinitarian thought in five thinkers as an epistemological matrix which could explain a specific Russian way of thinking. The Trinity provided a model for thinking which was distinct from Western rationalism but went beyond the conservative Slavophilism with its passive focus on a passive community spirit at the expense of the individual. Trinitarian thinking was dynamic; it allowed for unity in diversity, the integrity of the unique individual taken up in the synthesis of a higher order.

The currently perhaps overworked opposition between Russia and the West was interwoven with if not identical to the question of modernity. Several of the articles in this book show that while the anti-Westernising intelligentsia often thought that it was pursuing Russianness, in fact it was doing so in the spirit of the times, often in an exact parallel to similar anti-modernist trends in the West. Engelstein refers to the Skopcy as 'mystical eccentrics' who 'appealed to intellectuals such as Rozanov as embodiments of a native style' (p. 8), a native style, that is, which could act as a bulwark to modernity. In actual fact the Skopcy were responding to modernity in ways reminiscent of the Quakers in America from the 17th century and other manifestations of Christian mysticism in England and Germany from the late 18th century: 'Not just the timing of their appearance but also the persistence of these beliefs and practices conform to a European pattern.' (p. 8f.) In his discussion of Florenskij's trinitarian thinking, Bodin writes: 'The opening-up of the self was a prominent idea at this time, perhaps as a reaction against more or less solipsistic modern psychological theories. I do not wish to find easy genetic links, but only to say that the *Zeitgeist* and some aspects of Orthodox theology interacted here.' (p. 26.)

Many elements of thought cultivated as specifically Russian could be correlated with those anti-modernist trends which have constituted a consistent undercurrent in Western thought.

Of the Russian thinkers considered in this book, Belyj is the one who most openly connects the basic rifts, contradictions and disputes of the time with the question of an East-West conflict. On the philosophical level, Belyj desired the synthesis of Western rationalism and the non-rational experience embodied by Russia (Hansen p. 103), and in the novel *The Silver Dove*, he expresses the conflict topographically.

Namli raises the opposition of a Russian and a Western way of thinking onto the level of modern academic scholarship and addresses the question of Russian specificness at a level which involves her own position within two cultures and two apparently incompatible philosophical traditions. Born and educated in Russia, Namli has been a graduate student at the Theological Faculty of Uppsala University. In her recently published dissertation,¹ Namli states her ambition of contributing to a dialogue between two apparently incompatible ways of thinking; Russian religious philosophy on the one hand, and Western post-Kantian philosophy on the other. Rather than mythologise the difference, Namli is anxious to interpret basic tenets of Russian religious thought so that it may be available and hopefully even enrich the predominant academic tradition in the West.

The political and social implications

Any discussion on East and West leads into a discourse which is not purely intellectual but also political. In this volume only one article directly addresses the political culture of the time in Russia, namely Opeide's article on Struve. There are however social and even political implications in several of the issues discussed. Bodin presents two of his thinkers, Solov'ev and Fedorov, as outright Utopians, albeit their utopias were apparently 'located in a time before modernity'. Bodin writes : 'The Trinity is used by Solov'ev and by Fedorov to formulate a social Utopian project. The common and

¹ Elena Namli, 2000, *Etikens ontologiska grund. En analys av Lev Karsavins personalism*, Skellefteå

the trinitarian seem to be synonymous for Fedorov.' (p. 22.) A more threatening issue of social and political concern is the anti-Semitism of which Kurganov and Ljunggren write. Even such apparently abstract and mystical ideas as those of Velimir Chlebnikov on time, travel from pure mysticism in a parabola back into current history. Chlebnikov's first impulse to study the laws of time, in order to explain the atrocities of history, came to him the day after the defeat of the Russians by the Japanese in the naval battle at Tsushima in 1905. Jonas Dahlström traces Chlebnikov's evolution 'from an initial consideration of wars as something positive and strengthening for the Slavic sense of unity', through his scientific attempt to chart the laws of time in order to explain and accept the atrocities of war, to a concerted effort to use knowledge about time so as to be able to avert the dangers latent in time (p. 120). Chlebnikov begins as war enthusiast and ends as a convinced pacifist.

If the revolution of 1905 became a focus of intellectual hopes and disillusiones for the intelligentsia at the turn of the century, the revolution in 1917 had outright political results which affected the lives and thoughts of all Soviet citizens in both tangible and intangible ways. The two final articles in the volume take us further into the century to discuss the legacy of the Russian intelligentsia in the new totalitarian state of the Soviet Union. Fiona Björling discusses the poet Boris Pasternak who, despite a disinclination to become involved in politics, was inevitably considered a public figure. In the passage discussed from *Охранная грамота (Safe Conduct)*, it is the fact of having belonged to an apolitical generation which seems, in 1931, to be a problem for the author. The final article by Irina Sandomirskaja discusses cruel language and exposes the dilemma of poetry under Stalin's totalitarian state. Stalin makes foul use of a Russian cultural legacy, namely the sacrosanct character of the Russian language, allowing us to trace a connection between the apparent freedom and emancipation of poetry during the Silver Age and the uses which solidified into the Stalinist values.

Language and imagination on the verge of science

Language was of crucial concern in the Silver Age, not only as regards overt attitudes to and experiments in verbal art, but as a means of knowing or constituting human existence, both here on

earth and on a metaphysical level. The Silver Age celebrated language, poetry and symbol and saw in language not merely the way to but also the substance of knowledge. I would venture to say for example that the notion of the Trinity is inextricable from language: without the language to embody it there would be no trinitarian thinking. Discussing Florenskij's use of the Trinity as a matrix, Bodin writes : 'Human relations turn into not an analogy to the divine Trinity, but an icon of it or an earthly manifestation of the Trinity' (p. 26.) Bodin captures here the distinction between an instrumental view of symbol (analogy) and a substantial view (icon).

Language as symbolic representation is directly invoked by many thinkers presented in this volume. Thus Rozanov praises the Old Believers for their 'artistic judgement' and he appreciated the Skopcy precisely because their faith was expressed archaically in the embodied symbol of actually removing the offending member of the human body. (pp. 5, 13.)

During the Silver Age, language serves both as an archaic embodiment and as a medium of transition from a traditional to a modernist way of thinking. Hansen states directly what is implicit in several other articles, that scientific thought was integrated in and gradually emerging from the broader strata of language culture, that is philosophy, theology and poetry: 'the boundaries between science and the humanities were not yet clearly defined.' (p. 98) At a juncture between the non-rational thought of the specifically Russian, the native, the non-Western on the one hand and Western rational thought on the other, Hansen shows the symbolists actively intent on synthesising the rational and the non-rational (991). Science and professional thinking was taking shape in an intimate interplay within the broader culture of the time. We might understand this as an invasion from without, an encroachment upon a pre-modern, non-scientific culture of modern scientific thought; or we could instead see the birth of scientific and professional thought in Russia as emerging from within a culture which gave language and poetry predominance and provided a creative ambience within which significant intellectual and social changes could be negotiated.

On the one hand theology dallied on the boundary of mystical eccentricism and on the other it verged on political Utopian thinking. Belyj represents the symbolists in their attempt to create a synthesis between metaphysics and modern science. As he began the business of a systematic description of poetics, Belyj straddled the line between being a poet and describing poetry scientifically. Chlebnikov is another poet who pivots on the border between imagination and science, as he embarks on what he regards as a scientific investigation into the laws of time. Chlebnikov became a pacifist at the beginning of a century which was to be rent asunder by wars and political disasters, but he touched too on another concern of the 20th century, the correlation of Time and Space. Chlebnikov tackled the problem in a positivistic way, hoping to find laws but nevertheless his thinking—on the verge between poetry and mathematics—is symptomatic of an era when philosophers such as Henri Bergson and physicists alike were concerned with the riddles of time and space.² Further into the 20th century Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy and quantum mechanics constitute a scientific challenge of broad epistemological dimensions, while in literary theory the interconnectedness of time and space, culminates in Bachtin's notion of chronotope.

Another relevant area of modern science is modern psychology and psychiatry. Bodin touches on the border between theology and psychology when he presents Bulgakov's therapeutic use of the Trinity as a kind of Christian Orthodox deep psychology.³ In another direction we find the intermingling of imagination and science in conflicting attitudes towards mental disease. Hansen shows how the idea of madness is caught in the Russian culture of the time between two evaluations, that is between Romantic approval of creative genius and the new psychiatrists' diagnosis of destructive, dangerous mental disturbance. Poetry verges on psychiatry. The life stories of Sabina and Isaak Spielrein are symptomatic of the age and recount not only the tragedies of two unique people, they narrate too the fate of modern psychiatric theory in Russia. Both the sister Sabina and the brother Isaak pursued modern theories of

² See Namli *op.cit.* for a theological and philosophical exposition of Karsavin's intricate concepts of *все время* and *всёместье*.

³ See p. 16.

psychology, Sabina psychoanalysis in Vienna and Zürich, and Isaak the application of psychology in the rationalisation and technologi-sation of human labour. By the 1930s neither psychoanalysis nor psychotechnology was allowed.

We open with LAURA ENGELSTEIN'S article, 'Having it both ways. Rozanov, modernity and the Skopcy', a contribution which reveals the scope and the paradoxes inherent in the thinking of the period under consideration. The crux of Engelstein's article is the complexity and the ambivalence of the Russian response to modernity. This is illustrated in Rozanov's dual attitude to the Skopcy, the sect of self-castrators, on the one hand, and in the Skopcy's own dual attitude to modernity on the other. A favourite pastime for Rozanov's was 'making the most of a cultural contradiction', and while lacking 'a coherent view of Russian religion in general and of the Skopcy in particular' (pp. 5, 7), he was attracted to the sect. Rozanov appreciated that in denying the flesh the Skopcy actually raised it to a level of symbolic embodiment. In the drastic act of self-castration, sexuality was confirmed, a paradox which fascinated Rozanov. Rozanov's dual attitude was paralleled by the Skopcy themselves who harboured a self-contradictory attitude to modernity with 'their curious amalgam of pious anachronism and worldly savoir-faire' (p. 9). For Rozanov and other intellectuals of the time, the extreme sects appeared to manifest an authentic native spirit, and yet, as Engelstein points out, castration was introduced no earlier than the 1750s or 1760s. What appeared to be native and pre-Petrine was actually a negative response to modernity, a response, moreover, that was in keeping with contemporary religious movements from other parts of the world. It was not Russian and native at all.

PER-ARNE BODIN'S article, 'The Russian religious philosophers and the theme of Trinity⁵', opens a further perspective on the specifics of Russian thought at a time when 'Orthodox tradition, German Romanticism and the Slavophiles' make-believe constructions of Orthodoxy intermingle in creating the idea of the holistic Russian mind.' (p. 17.) The notion of the Trinity as an epistemological matrix was considered, at the turn of the last century, to be 'a special

Russian contribution to the Christian tradition'. Bodin traces this view of the Trinity to the hesychast movement in Russia during the 14th and 15th centuries, a time when Muscovy was developing into a major power in the East Slav region. He shows that 'the theme of Trinity thus developed both as a Russian national theme and as a contrast to, and polemic against, the "West".' (p. 19.) Examining trinitarian thinking in five Russian philosophers from the Russian religious renaissance, Bodin shows that the notion of Trinity provided for a more dynamic model than did the concepts of *sobor-nost'* or total unity, since it allowed for a greater complexity of unity within diversity. Trinitarian thinking comprised a broad spectrum of thought: from the Utopian thinking of Solov'ev and Fedorov, through Bulgakov's therapeutic function of the Trinity within a Christian Orthodox deep psychology, to Bachtin's theory of dialogue. So the notion of the Trinity was able to translate contemporary ideas—even those which came from beyond Russia— into a religious language which appeared to be specifically Russian.

ELENA NAMLI'S article, 'Философия симфонической личности Льва Карсавина. К вопросу об онтологичности русской этики', takes the questions presented by Bodin into the narrower discipline of Western academic philosophy. Her question is ultimately whether there can be a dialogue between Russian and Western, i.e. post-Kantian, philosophy. Namli's analysis concentrates on the question of ethics in the two philosophical traditions. While Western philosophy subscribes to a normative ethics, centring on the definition and choice between two essential phenomena, good and evil, Russian thought treats ethics as an ontological question. Namli analyses the philosophy of Lev Karsavin who, following the thinkers presented by Bodin, seeks to understand ontological matters, such as personality, with the help of Christian trinitarian thinking, as well as with Solov'ev's notion of total-unity.⁴ Both models allow the unity of diversity according to which the personality is always different while ever remaining integral. According to Karsavin, ethics is an aspect of being which cannot be examined in the abstract, it is embedded in existence, in a cross-section at any

⁴ These questions are discussed at greater length in Namli's doctoral thesis, written in Swedish, see fn. I.

one of its moments. Karsavin denies the existence of evil, conceiving evil as the not yet full realisation of the personality: moral obligation consists in realising existence to the full. This is achieved not through rational analysis but through an intuition of the moral character of the situation. Moral experiences such as forgiveness or remorse illustrate that ethics is beyond normative categories of an either/or rational choice. Dostoevski's fictional characters illustrate the embedded character of Karsavin's ontological ethics.

GUNNAR OPEIDE'S article, 'State and Revolution. Locating Struve in the history of Russian political ideas', is the only article in this volume directly to address the question of political culture. The story of an 'intellectually volatile and restless' thinker's development from Marxism to liberalism is given against a broad background. Opeide discusses first the question of Russian backwardness, more problematic in Russia than in non-European cultures, because of the proximity of Russia to Western Europe. Whereas Russian backwardness was seen by many as a laudable Russian distinction, Struve was, like Čadaev before him, an unambiguous Westerniser, embracing in succession the two westernising ideologies, Marxism and Liberalism, both 'fundamentally alien to Russian political culture' (p. 51). Opeide discusses the fate of Marxism in Russia from the 1880s. Struve who, in opposition to Russian populism, became a Marxist and social democrat in the early 1890s, deferred on important points from orthodox Marxism. Rejecting the theory of dialectics, Struve advocated a continuum of economic development and saw the state as an institute which could guarantee order. Having broken with the Marxists, Struve was active as a member of the Kadet party from 1905 to 1907. He was critical in general of the inability of all levels of society to handle the situation unleashed by the 1905 revolution, he criticised the government and bureaucracy, the people and not least the intelligentsia (p. 51). Struve's criticism of the revolutionary intelligentsia was now extended to the liberal intelligentsia as well. He criticised the intelligentsia for a traditionally backward anarchic conservatism, averse to culture. What Russia needed was: 'state, culture, order, discipline, political and personal responsibility, doubt leading to tolerance, compromise' (p. 62). In other words, Struve believed in

progress rather than revolution and accordingly he declared in 1919 that 'the true Russian revolution had been defeated by the bolshevik movement.' (p. 65.)

In his article, 'О профессоре А.Ф.Лосеве и природе антисемитизма', EFIM KURGANOV recounts two Russian-Jewish conversations (between Z. Gippius and M. Slonimskij on the one hand, and V. Rozanov and L. Sestov on the other) which reveal an anti-Semitism systematic for the Russian intelligentsia at the beginning of the last century. His conclusion is that a member of the Russian intelligentsia could not but be anti-Semitic. Kurganov pursues the theme of anti-Semitism in connection with Aleksej Losev's self-contradictory relationship to the cabbala. While it is clear that his own doctrine of '*Imjaslavism*' is dependent on the cabbala, Losev pretended to ignore these writings. Herein lie the seeds of Losev's anti-Semitism. Losev came to understand that the cabbala was not only written by the Jews, but also for the Jews. His tragedy was the incompatibility of Pan-Israelism and Orthodoxy. Losev neither could—nor did he want to—forgive the people of Israel the significance which the cabbala had for European thought. In adopting an attitude of revenge in order to cope with an intellectual and emotional dilemma, Losev was not alone. Rozanov and Bulgakov are examples of other Russian thinkers who found themselves in the same predicament.

MAGNUS LJUNGGREN'S article, 'Sabina and Isaak Spielrein', continues the theme of Jewishness and anti-Semitism. The sibling couple, Sabina and Isaak Spielrein, as their Christian names reveal, chose different paths for dealing with the issue of being Jewish. In 1905-6 Sabina turned to psychoanalysis and Isaak to socialism. For both brother and sister the chosen path led to death for being Jewish, Sabina at the hands of the Nazis and Isaak at the hands of the Bolsheviks. Sabina became entangled in the history of psychoanalysis with its split between the Jewish Freud in Vienna and the later Nazi sympathiser Jung in Zürich; Isaak, an ardent revolutionary, worked as a Bolshevik during the 1920s amongst other things on psychotechnology; eventually he fell a victim to Stalin's terror, directed 'not least at a generation of unheretically devout Jewish world revolutionaries' (p. 92). Brother and sister became the victims of the 20th

century's two parallel totalitarian regimes, Hitler's and Stalin's. Ljunggren interprets their personal tragedies as 'a richly symbolic narrative of Jewish destiny in the totalitarian twentieth century' (p. 94).

With her title 'Madness and reason in two works by Andrej Belyj', JULIE HANSEN focuses on another paradox of the age. At a time when the boundaries between the disciplines of philosophy, medicine and aesthetics were blurred, professional psychiatrist, thinker and writer alike all took part in a common debate on madness. Two conflicting attitudes met: the legacy of Romanticism which saw madness as a kind of poetic inspiration and the professional, critical verdict of the time which considered madness to be a dangerous disease. Caught in between, the Symbolists sought to reconcile rational and non-rational principles in a grand synthesis of art, religion and science, to which Belyj's consistent attempt 'to unite rational knowledge with non-rational revelation' (p. 100) bears witness. In his essay, *Трагедия творчества: Достоевский и Толстой (The Tragedy of Creativity: Dostoevskij and Tolstoj, 1911)*, Belyj takes issue with three stages of madness, presenting tragedies of madness and genius in the three writers Dostoevskij, Tolstoj and Gogol', as intertwined with the fate of Russia. Whereas the new specialists sought a cure for the disease of madness along the paths designated by Western rationalism, Belyj urged Russia's destiny as 'nothing short of the salvation of civilization through a synthesis of Western rationalism and the non-rational experience embodied by Russia' (p. 103). Hansen analyses how, in the novel *Серебряный голубь (The Silver Dove, 1909)*, the synthesis in question is postulated in geographical and ethnographical terms of East and West, from which two extremes the hero manages to escape. In his article, 'Velimir Chlebnikov in time and space', JONAS DAHLSTRÖM investigates Chlebnikov's all but obsessive search for the laws of time, an aspect of Chlebnikov's work which Dahlström considers to have been unduly neglected. Chlebnikov saw time and space as twin concepts but sought to explain space in terms of time, thereby reversing the accepted order. Chlebnikov's first impulse to find an explanation for historical events according to laws of time came as a reaction to the news that Russia had been defeated by the

Japanese in the naval battle at Tsushima in 1905. In the first work which Dahlström considers, *Время—мера мира* from 1916, Chlebnikov concludes that the law of time is ruled by the number 317; 317 years can explain the occurrence of a number of naval battles and other atrocities in history. Chlebnikov accepts wars as a necessary evil governed by the laws of time. Later, having been conscripted himself and thus having experienced life in the military, Chlebnikov became more pacifist in his attitude to war. In his most important work on numbers, *Доски судьбы* from 1922, he modifies his initial position. Working now with the basic units of 2 and 3, Chlebnikov does not merely map the laws of time in history but seeks to make his knowledge available so that the fatally dangerous points in history can be navigated with care. Dahlström considers Chlebnikov's work as a scientist of the laws of time to be intimately connected to his poetry. Just as Chlebnikov saw transcendental language as a means for the unification of different people, so also his work on time 'was ultimately an attempt to vanquish time, to evade its snare, and thereby to vanquish both war and death itself (p. 128). Chlebnikov was in other words a Utopian.

In FIONA BJÖRLING'S article, 'Blind leaps of passion and other strategies to outwit inevitability. On Pasternak and the legacy from the turn of the 19th to the 20th century', we move further into the twentieth century to examine the legacy of the Russian religious renaissance in the thought of Boris Pasternak. Pasternak is considered within the tradition of Russian spirituality, but he makes significant changes in this tradition as he copes with the issue of spirituality in a basically non-spiritual age. The article focuses on a section from *Охранная грамота* (Part Three, 1) where Pasternak's thought is expressed in a complex cluster of metaphors beginning with the image of young people taking leaps of passion from the common path of life, in order to avert death and the 'gradual destruction of the universe' to which that common path leads. The passage is compared with passages from Dostoevskij's *Записки из подполья* which similarly expresses freedom and inevitability with the metaphor of a wall which blocks the road ahead. The article concludes that Pasternak replaces transcendental spirituality by a spirituality on earth. The two dimensions of secularised spirituality are history and art. Art and history are intertwined in a complicated

ontological and ethical relationship. In *Охранная грамота* the idea of the *generation* as a historical actor appears to take precedence over the notion of the unique and responsible individual; the generation as actor is a greater unit than the individual, but does not allow for the passivity and automatic unity suggested by the Slavophile notion of *sobornost'*. Björling concludes that for Pasternak in 1931 'art is a theme or force which exceeds the unique, incorporates the unique, at the same time art is the mechanism by which the succession of fleeing moments may be recognised as history.' (p. 148.)

IRINA SANDOMIRSKAJA'S article, 'The rehabilitation of bad poetry. Crickets, children, and "cruel language"', takes as its cue a term introduced by Baudrillard, cruel language, meaning a normative language imposed violently from above. Behind the notion of cruel language, lies the idea of the Russian language as sacred. Russian as a sacred language is part of a traditional legacy of Russian culture. In the hands of the new totalitarian regime during Stalinism, language as the symbol of Russianness is given a new and cruel twist. Sandomirskaja considers the exploitation of normative language by Power, an exploitation exacerbated in a culture which traditionally has attempted 'to create the symbolism of language as an iconic image of its own specificity' (p. 151). Sandomirskaja considers the poem 'Читая стихи' from 1948, by Nikolaj Zabolockij, apparently written in approval of the official view of language. Through a close reading Sandomirskaja shows how Zabolockij utilises his knowledge of political interrogation and prisoners' skill: while appearing to pay lip-service to the authorities, he in fact outwits them; professing allegiance he testifies to the silent presence of trauma. Appearing to betray the genuine poetry of Osip Mandelstam, Zabolockij actually celebrates it, knowing that poets and their poetry are safely consigned to eternity in 'the magical posthumous transformation of men into insects and plants' (p. 157). Sandomirskaja shows how Zabolockij, true to his personal myth of life-after-death, uses poetry to undermine the sacred and cruel language of official policy. Sandomirskaja ends her article with the intimation that 'the genealogy of the Russian language in its function

as ideological icon' did not come to an end with Stalin (p. 151). On the contrary 'Stalin' has himself become a symbol of cruel language, a cruel language which lives on.

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