

Summary

Through Tears: Russian Emotional Culture

Guest Editor: Konstantin A. Bogdanov

Igor Severyanin's poem "A girl was crying in the park" (1910) is one of the best known and, at the same time, one of the poet's most "strange" works, famous for his aesthetic and poetic innovations. It would seem that the unsophisticated and almost childish poem looks quite isolated in comparison with the poet's many outrageous works. In his article "'A Girl Was Crying in the Park" by Igor Severyanin as a Beautiful Poem" **Konstantin A. Bogdanov** argues, that considering the broad context of Igor Severyanin's favorite motifs — the beautiful and elegant life, love and narcissism, deliberate audacity and irony, intertextual references to the traditions of *l'art pour l'art*, the poem is open to different readings that are not only of a "childish" character. In formal terms, Severyanin's poem is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. It plays with stylistic and lexical and grammatical features that construct the poet's unique universe, in which there is a place for the past, the present and the promising future; a place for tears and serenity, words and music, as well as the salacious style of erotic feelings. The research possibilities of "close reading" detail in this the case literary, visual, and socio-psychological contexts important to both Severyanin himself and his contemporaries.

Vera Polishchuk's article "'Storm of Sobs": Motif of Tears in V. Nabokov's Poetics" examines the important role this motif plays in Vladimir Nabokov's poetics as part of the complicated motif

structure of the Russian and English works by the writer: short stories and novels such as *King, Queen, Knave; The Defence; Invitation to a Beheading; and Lolita*. The motif of tears helps Nabokov emphasize his relation to the romantic canon, which he both parodies and develops, and also allows him to flesh out ways of depicting mental illnesses and moral issues. The development of sexual representational techniques from Russian to English works is analyzed in detail, including an extensive revision of the English translation of the novel *King, Queen, Knave*.

In her article "'Soldier's Tear" in Soviet-Era Culture" **Maria A. Aleksandrova** traces the history of the folklore tradition of a soldier's lamentation. The author argues that revolutionary culture broke with this tradition; the militarized art of the 1920s—1930s aimed to "abolish" tears. In the culture of 1941—1945, emotions were subordinate to moral mobilization; however, writers partially rehabilitated the "tears of a soldier." In the post-war situation, when the antithesis of "tears of grief and tears of happiness" arose, the dramatic fate of the song "Enemies Burnt the Dear House Down" by Isakovskiy and Blunter reflects the paradoxes of Soviet emotional culture. The late-Soviet official cult of military memory and nostalgia of the front generation for their military youth led to the canonization of the "tears of a soldier." Against the background of these tendencies, the relationship between the

motif of soldiers' tears and existential issues is shown in the works of Platonov, Tvardovsky, Okudzhava, and Astafyev.

Aleksandr Kobrinsky's article "'Kom-somol Girl's Tear': Venedikt Erofeev's Semiotic Cocktail" presents a structural and semantic analysis of a fragment from Venedikt Erofeev's poem *Moscow to the End of the Line* dedicated to a description of the cocktail "Kom-somol Girl's Tear" with the wide use of literary pretexts, as well as an attempt to comprehend the function of "female" and "male" tears in the history of Russian literature of the 20th century. As for Erofeev's pretexts, works such as Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem "Vladimir Ilyich Lenin"; Aleksandr Bezymensky's poem "Komsomoliya"; Mikhail Sholokhov's novel *The Fate of a Man*; Viktor Kin's novel *On the Other Side*, with fragments removed from the text for self-censorship reasons; Vikenty Vere-saev's novel *Sisters*; and an example of the "living newspaper" of the 1920s are analyzed. The article also demonstrates Erofeev's orientation toward contemporary ideas about structure, its elements

and their relationships (most importantly in the works of Yuri Lotman).

According to eyewitness accounts, Dmitry Prigov was not known for sentimentality. However, paradoxically, his work contains many tearful images. A careful reader will discover numerous depictions of tears among his graphic, prose, and poetic experiments. These include bloody tears of monsters, eyes suspended in the metaphysical air of history, allusions to the tears found in Russian literature, and streams of redemptive tears that threaten to consume the whole world and the Moscow metro train. Prigov even creates bizarre ekphrasis of imaginary pictures that incorporate tears. At times, tears are combined with diminutive suffixes and become expressions of tenderness and "the moisture of the divine." Other times, tears serve as a premonition of otherworldly forces, of a worldwide flood. In her article "Prigov: 'The New UNsentimentality'" **Yaroslava Zakharova** outlines the distinctive characteristics of the artistic expression of tears within the context of Dmitry Prigov's literary and behavioral project.

History of Russian Spiritism

Guest Editors: Ksenia Butuzova, Elena Glukhovskaya

Vladislav Razdyakonov's article "Religious Anthropology of Russian Spiritism of the Late 19th — Early 20th century" focuses on cultural reception of spiritualistic ideas in Russia. It reveals the ideas of Russian spiritualism on the purpose of man and humanity, as well as the organization of man and his spiritual destiny. Compared to foreign spiritualists, Russian spiritualists have frequently criticized individualism as a variety of egoism, gave priority collectivism and traditionalism, and felt that the principle

of spiritual hierarchy was above the principle of personal freedom. These types of priorities were due to the evolutionary and monistic philosophy of spiritualism but also were deeply influenced by national and religious factors. Russian spiritualists have placed the inner spiritual freedom of a person, In Russian spiritualism internal spiritual human freedom, which included their submission to spiritual law, higher than the demands of their economic, social, and political liberation.

Anastasia Maklakova in her article “The Testament of Spirits: Eschatological Spiritualism in Russia at the Turn of the 20th Century” explores how the spiritualists identified the current moment with the beginning of the Age of the Holy Spirit. Like many other holders of an eschatological consciousness, spiritualists were fascinated by hermeneutic practices. Starting with the idea of the cultivation of revelation, they searched for ways to relate new revelations to biblical texts. The fundamental worldview of the spiritualists was a belief in invisible laws and the actions of otherworldly agents, which determine the course of events. Reflecting on the eschatological sense of history, spiritualists drew on oriental and national themes. In the historiosophical component of spiritualistic eschatologies, appeals to orientalist and nationalist themes can be found. The spirits of those who, in spiritualists’ view, embodied the Russian nation, were endowed with the power to intervene in the course of the events. Spiritualists waited for upheaval and catastrophes that were to rid world of impurity. At the same time, they believed in the coming total transformation of the world, which, however, would only be possible through the active participation of people in the eschatological process.

Ilya Vinitsky’s paper “Russian Glubdubdrib: False Dimitry’s Shade and Russian Historical Imagination in the Age of Realism” considers the seemingly paradoxical juxtaposition of historian and spiritualist in the context of Russian culture of the Realist age. The author addresses the attempts of historians, writers and above all dramatists of the 1860s to “materialize” the shades of the past, who were called upon to provide answers to the most troubling questions of the time. The author’s focus is the shade of the False Dimitry, which deeply affected the Russian historical imagina-

tion in the 1860s and 1870s. It is argued that, following the example of positivist historians (Nikolai Kostomarov), realist playwrights of the 1860s (Aleksandr Ostrovsky, Nikolai Chaev, Aleksei Suvorin) sought to “clarify” the shade of Dimitry, to materialize it as an unambiguous image (historical truth). However, the result of this struggle with the shade proved quite different: the defeat of the realist, the destruction of his fundamental beliefs, the spectralization of reality and the gradual transition to symbolist drama, with its new apprehension of reality.

The history of Russian spiritualism has thus far been written from the perspective of its male practitioners. This one-sided approach is largely due to a lack of sources which would allow historians to illuminate the wide-spread participation of women in the movement. As a tentative attempt to provide a more representative account, the article “Russian Spiritualism and its Silent Mediums” by **Julia Mannherz** offers a close reading of the mediumistic career of Elizaveta Dmitrievna Pribytkova (as described by her husband), and argues that spiritualism offered Russian women a limited forum in which they could express their ambitions and live their fantasies.

Ksenia Butuzova’s article “Rebuses in the Visual Culture of Russian Spiritualism” is on the pragmatics of rebuses published in *Rebus*, the first mass spiritualistic journal in Russia. Nikolai Wagner, a recognized Russian zoologist, writer and spiritualist, and the ideologue and creator of *Rebus*’ concept, published *The Light*, an educational science and art journal, before starting work on *Rebus*. The editorial policy of the journal implied a synthesis of science and art in a single educational mission. The status of the images declared in *The Light* allows us to take a fresh look at the function of the rebuses in *Rebus* in accordance with

spiritualist ideology. In *Rebus*, rebuses became an instrument of public education and, at the same time, a means of promoting the specific political views of the Russian spiritualist movement. The famous artist Baron Mikhail Petrovich Klodt developed the concept for a new type of rebus with an indivisible composition that is a full-fledged work of

art. The definition of the functions and status of rebuses makes it possible to talk about the connection between the views of Russian spiritualists and the political projects of the second wave of Slavophilism and thus demonstrates a paradoxical ideological genealogy, which becomes obvious only on the basis of visual culture.

Literature Outside of Itself: The Infiltration of Words into Contemporary Artistic Media

Guest Editors: Ivan Delazari, Dmitry Tokarev

Ksenia Dergunova and **Vasilisa Popova's** article "Technology as Mediator and Partner in the Creation of Theatrical Illusions: Mediality in the Theaters of Tolstoy, Pirandello, and BBC One" traces how the technical components of a theatrical performance goes from a medial "intermediary" to a medial "partner," creating a fundamentally different type of illusion, redistributing and "confusing" the referential relationship between objects, tools, and subjects. The emergence, removal, and re-assertion of theatrical illusions are examined in various aspects of Leo Tolstoy's Rousseauist aesthetics and the playful experimentation with reality in Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, as well as the latest approaches to the creation of narratives in popular culture used in the BBC One television series *Staged*.

The article "Video and Audio: Samuel Beckett's Late Teleplays" by **Ivan Delazari** and **Dmitry Tokarev** discusses Beckett's plays *Ghost Trio* (1976), *...but the clouds...* (1977), *Quad* (1984), and *Nacht und Träume* (1984) as examples of "teletexture," where the levels of the presence and proportional significance of the word is related to the nonverbal components of the television production

suggested by the text. The plurimedial overlays of music and words, the splitting of the character into their television image and their television voice, the geometry of movement and immobility on paper and screen, and the uncertainty of the video and audio dimensions of the broadcast world lay the foundation of television theater in Beckett's textologically unstable works. A close reading of Beckett's teleplays makes it possible to clarify the genre differences between drama and plays for television and underscores the performativity of the experience of reading teletexture.

Artyom Ryzhkov and **Sofya Tkachuk's** article "The Metaliterary in Russian Rap of the 2010s: Towards a Medial Autonomy" explores how the rap legacy can be theorized in terms of certain functions of metareferentiality, the so-called metaturn in contemporary culture, and the technological and sociocultural contexts. The metaliterary dimension of Russian rap reflects the grand-scale process of the penetration of one media into another, on the one hand, and on the other hand, it indicates the need of a musical genre to reconceptualize the essence of its mediality in a new sociocultural space, recreating its history and joining the tradi-

tion of the past on the other. This topic of research refers to the issues of blurring the boundaries of literature, which are

now determined by each person's experience of perception, allowing literature to migrate from one media to another.

Readings

The article “Boris Pasternak’s God-Nanny” by **Georgy Kunitsyn** is devoted to the biographical problem of Boris Pasternak’s christening. Based on an analysis of sources, it is suggested that the poet’s epistolary and oral testimonies can be considered as elements of the construction of an autobiographical myth. In Pasternak’s epistolary and poetic utterances of the 1940s and 1950s, the poet’s consistent appeal to the theme of martyrdom can be observed, which can be regarded as one of the components of the author’s self-presentation strategy. Thus, the legend of baptism in infancy is proposed to be considered in the context of hagiographic literature.

Jean Genet once said that one of the strongest literary impressions for him was Marcel Proust’s book *Under the Shade of Girls in Bloom*, read in prison while still working on his first novel. This recognition has become a frequent occasion for comparing the two writers and presenting the early novelistic series by Genet as a kind of response to the *Quest for Lost Time*. **Anatoly Riassov’s** article “Proust’s Religion and Genet’s Myth” shows that, however, there is reason to believe that this “dialogue” appears to be much more complex and polemical than it might seem at first glance. And oddly enough, the key here is not Genet’s prose, but his dramaturgy.

In Memoriam: Aleksandr Belousov (1946—2023)

This memorial block is dedicated to the literary critic, folklorist Aleksandr Belousov. He started his career at the Department of Russian Literature of the University of Tartu, then moved to Tallinn to teach at the Department of Russian Literature of the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute. After moving to Leningrad, he worked at the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), RAS, then at St. Petersburg State University and St. Petersburg State University of Culture and Arts. He was the first to turn to the study of modern urban folklore, school folklore, and the life and work of Leonid Dobychin. In the second half of the 1990s — early 2000s

together with S.Yu. Neklyudov he led the collective scientific project “Modern Urban Folklore”, on the basis of which the Center for Typology and Semiotics of Folklore of the Russian State University for the Humanities was subsequently created. This issue presents a memorial article by **Inna Veselova** ““I’m Interested in What’s Behind the Text — Reality, People”: In Memory of Aleksandr Fyodorovich Belousov”, as well as a reprint of **Aleksandr Belousov’s** article “From the History of Russian “Cemetery” Poetry: Konstantin Sluchevsky’s Poem “At the Cemetery”” and a biographical list of Aleksandr Belousov’s major publications.

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