

VIACHESLAV IVANOV'S IDEAL OF THE ARTIST AS PROPHET:
FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE¹

Pamela Davidson

Я не знаю Нежной Тайны явных ликов и примет.
Снятся ль знаменья поэту? Или знаменье – поэт?
Знаю только: новой свету, кроме вещей, песни нет.²

The representation of the writer as a prophet is a long-standing and well-established tradition in Russian literature. It first became prominent at the time of Romanticism, when it was taken up by the Decembrist poets in a specific historical context and extended into a broader, more general image by Pushkin, Lermontov and Tiutchev. The earliest systematic attempt to develop its ideological significance within a messianic context was made by Gogol', whose claims were subsequently fleshed out and elaborated much more fully by Dostoevskii in his famous Pushkin speech of 1880. Vladimir Solov'ev built on the legacy of Dostoevskii, incorporating the ideal of the artist as prophet into a fully fledged philosophy of history and aesthetics. The religious branch of the Symbolist movement in a sense represen-

¹ This article forms part of a wider project on the development of the image of the writer as prophet in the Russian literary tradition. I am extremely grateful to the British Academy for the award of a two-year Research Readership in 1997-99 and to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for a grant for research leave in 2000-2001 that enabled me to investigate this topic. A conference grant from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London also made it possible for me to deliver a preliminary version of this paper at the International Symposium on Viacheslav Ivanov held in Rome in November 2001 and to collect further unpublished materials for this essay in Viacheslav Ivanov's Rome archive.

² The closing lines of "Prooemion," the second poem of *Nezhnaia taina* (1912) - III, 11.

ted the culmination of this trend; its poets were disciples of Solov'ev, who took up his doctrine of theurgic art, translated it into the language of contemporary aesthetics and attempted to implement it in their own creative lives and art. Their experiment was designed to reveal whether prophets could also be poets; as Blok put it, были "про-роками", пожелали стать "поэтами".³

In this context Viacheslav Ivanov played a crucial and pivotal role: he was not only the acknowledged leader and theoretician of the religious Symbolists, but also exerted an important formative influence on the writers of the next generation. In his creative work he confronted the issue of whether art could take on the function of prophecy. Through his response to this question, the legacy of the nineteenth-century image of the writer as prophet passed on into the twentieth century.

This essay examines Ivanov's contribution to this tradition by focusing on three key issues. The first section considers the early sources and formation of Ivanov's theoretical ideal of the artist as prophet and its reflection in poems from his first collection, *Kormchie zvezdy*. How did Ivanov reconcile his chief source – the biblical model of prophecy – with the classical mode of expression that he frequently chose for it? Which artists from the past did he advance as prototypes of his prophetic ideal?

The second section investigates the practical application of the ideal of the artist as prophet to Ivanov's own time. To what extent did Ivanov envisage that his ideal could be realised in contemporary art? How did he build up this ideal in his essays on aesthetics? Did his views on the subject change or develop over the years? Did he put forward any contemporary artists as models of his prophetic ideal?

The third and final section probes into the most sensitive and personal aspect of this topic. How did Ivanov see his own role in relation to the ideal of the artist as prophet that he promulgated for his age? Was he seen in this light by his contemporaries? To what extent did he regard or present himself as a poet endowed with prophetic insight? How was his self-image affected by the experiences of war, revolution and emigration?

³ Aleksandr Blok, "O sovremennom sostoianii simvolizma," in Aleksandr Blok, *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. V. N. Orlov, A. A. Surkov and K. I. Chukovskii, Moscow and Leningrad, 1960-1963, t. 5, s. 433.

Ivanov's Ideal of the Artist as Prophet

In constructing the image of the writer as prophet, Russian writers, like their European counterparts, drew on two principal early sources. The Judaeo-Christian biblical tradition provided a broad context for the notion of the writer as a prophetic figure, inspired by God with a spoken and written word of divine origin and empowered to articulate and shape the nation's messianic destiny. Alongside strong models of prophetic leadership such as Moses or Isaiah, biblical tradition also offered the archetypal model of the poet-prophet in the person of King David, the psalmist.

The Graeco-Roman classical tradition also served as a rich source of myths and images associated with prophecy and well assimilated into literature. Although it did not offer such a clearly focused national dimension as the biblical tradition, it established a close link between the gifts of prophecy and poetry through the myths of Apollo and Orpheus as well as in the oracular pronouncements of the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo at Delphi, and of the Sibyls. In ancient Greece Homer, the blind seer, provided an early prototype of the prophetic writer; in ancient Rome the "vates" was a common figure, whose integration into the Christian prophetic tradition was facilitated by Virgil, the author of the messianic Fourth Eclogue.

Both traditions are invoked early on in Russian literature in relation to the ideal of the poet as prophet. The word "prorok", for example, is used in both contexts. Pushkin's celebrated poem "Prorok" (1826) clearly refers to the figure of the biblical prophet; indeed, one of its earliest readers and first publisher, Mikhail Pogodin, referred to it quite simply as "Pushkin's verses from Isaiah".⁴ By contrast, in his earlier address to his friend and fellow poet Nikolai Iazykov ("K Iazykovu", 1824), Pushkin's characterisation of Anton Del'vig as "muz vozvysennykh prorok" takes up the same term in its classical sense. In a later poem addressed to Nikolai Gnedich, "S Gomerom dolgo ty besedoval odin..." (1832), Pushkin explores the differences

⁴ In November 1827 M. P. Pogodin noted in his diary: "voskhishch[alsia] stikhami Pushkina iz Isaii". See M. A. Tsiavlovskii, "Pushkin po dokumentam Pogodinskogo arkhiva", in *Pushkin i ego sovremenniki: Materialy i issledovaniia*, 19-20, Petrograd 1914, s. 87-88. "Prorok" was first published in Pogodin's journal "Moskovskii Vestnik" 1828, 3, s. 269-70.

between poetry and prophecy by contrasting the figures of Homer and Moses.

It is the biblical source, however, rather than the classical one, which has consistently acted as the main driving force behind the development of the Russian tradition of viewing the writer as prophet; evidently this is because it provided the model for the overarching messianic view of the nation's destiny, taken over by the Russians from the Jews. This assimilation of the prophetic tradition of Hebrew scriptures into Russian literature can be traced right back to some of the earliest formulations of the Russian national idea and mission; for example, the magnificent sermon "Slovo o zakone i blagodati" (ca. 1047-50), composed by Metropolitan Ilarion of Kiev, constantly seeks to demonstrate that the mission of the newly Christianized Rus' is a direct extension and fulfilment of the Hebrew prophecies.⁵ The same underlying approach resurfaces in literary form in the work of much later writers. In his *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druž'iami* (1847) Gogol' directly compares Russian poets to the Hebrew prophets, arguing that they are uniquely inspired by a biblical, prophetic spirit, which is not shared by the poets of England, France or Germany. As "proof" of this claim, he invokes the example of Pushkin's poem "Prorok".⁶ Dostoevskii followed this lead when he chose to give several readings of this particular poem after his famous speech of 1880, in which he argued that Pushkin's significance for Russia was essentially prophetic. Solov'ev in turn based his view of Dostoevskii as a prophetic figure on these materials and added an entirely new, much broader dimension to the Russian assimilation of the ideal of biblical prophecy through his extensive work on the Hebrew prophets.⁷

Ivanov found himself on the receiving end of both traditions. His approach to the biblical tradition of prophecy was to a large extent determined by his reading of Solov'ev's works. The intellectual diary

⁵ See Ilarion's sermon "On Law and Grace", in *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'*, trans. and with an introduction by S. Franklin, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, v. 5, Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard Univ. 1991, pp. 3-29.

⁶ "O lirizme nashikh poetov" (1846), in N. V. Gogol', *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Moscow and Leningrad 1937-1952, t. 8, s. 249, 251.

⁷ On Solov'ev's contribution to the tradition of art as prophecy see P. Davidson, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Ideal of Prophecy*, "Slavonic and East European Review" 78, no.4, October 2000, pp. 643-70.

that he kept in Berlin during the late 1880s includes a fascinating fragment entitled "Evrei i russkie" (1888-1889); it is clear from this source that he took up Solov'ev's idea of Russia's messianic mission, modelled on that of the Jews, at a very early stage of his religious and philosophical development.⁸ Later, in his most extensive elaboration of the Russian national mission, "O russkoi idee" (1909, revised for publication in German translation in 1930), he invoked the prophet Isaiah's vision of the universal messianic mission of the Jewish nation as a model for the Russian national idea (III: 325).

Throughout his life Ivanov considered himself a faithful disciple of Solov'ev in his approach to the Jewish people and Hebrew prophecy.⁹ His mentor's teachings provided him with the immediate framework for his cultivation of the image of the artist as prophet. Solov'ev had reformulated for his generation in the language of philosophy the well-established view of the Russian national idea as an extension and fulfilment of the mission of the Jews. If the Hebrew prophets had served to define the mission of the Jews, it stood to reason that those writers who took it upon themselves to define the mission of the Russians for the modern age (e. g. Gogol', Dostoevskii, Solov'ev, Ivanov) were aligning themselves with the same tradition and fulfilling a similar prophetic function. This view was reinforced by Solov'ev's writings on aesthetics, in which he argued that the task of the artist in the modern age was a theurgic one, destined to bring about the fulfilment of the messianic, prophetic ideal through art. In Solov'ev's view Russian artists were uniquely equipped to take part in the revival of the ideal synthesis of art and mysticism, defined by him as a "free theurgy" (*svobodnaia teurgiia*) or "integral creativity" (*tsel'noe tvorchestvo*).¹⁰

⁸ Ivanov prefaces his reflections on the similarities between the Jews and the Russians by acknowledging his debt to Vladimir Solov'ev's seminal work *Istoriia i budushchnost' teokratii* (1887). See the section entitled "Evrei i russkie" from "[Intelktual'nyi dnevnik. 1888-1889 gg.]," ed. N. V. Kotrelev and I. N. Fridman, in *Viacheslav Ivanov. Arkhivnye materialy i issledovaniia*, ed. L. A. Gogotishvili and A. T. Kazarian, Moscow 1999, s. 30-32.

⁹ See, for example, Ivanov's statement in a letter to E. D. Shor of 9 July 1934: "to, chto ia pisal odnazhdy o evreistve, mog by povtorit' i segodnia; eto moe neizmennoe ubezhdenie. Nedarom zhe ia idu ot Solov'eva". Cited in Dimitrii Segal, *Viacheslav Ivanov i sem'ia Shor*, "Cahiers du Monde russe" 35 (1-2), janvier-juin 1994, p. 351.

¹⁰ See P. Davidson, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Ideal of Prophecy*, cit., pp. 647-50.

To Solov'ev's presentation of the biblical prophetic ideal, Ivanov added a second strand. Not surprisingly, given his own background as a scholar of Greek and Roman antiquity, he played a particular role in developing elements from the classical tradition of prophecy as a means of articulating aspirations that were essentially biblical in origin. His earliest published translation (1899), for example, was Pindar's first Pythian ode, full of prophetic motifs, into which he consciously introduced elements from Russian religious and popular tradition.¹¹ His approach to the classical tradition was strongly coloured by his discovery of the writings of Nietzsche in the early 1890s. Like Ivanov, Nietzsche was also a classical scholar, but unlike Ivanov, he had set himself up in opposition to religious tradition as an anti-Christian prophet for the modern age. His influence provided Ivanov with a powerful "negative" springboard. Throughout the 1890s and 1900s Ivanov worked on the reconciliation of these two conflicting strands: the biblical tradition of prophecy, filtered through Solov'ev, and the classical tradition of prophecy, filtered through Nietzsche.¹²

Poetry was the principal sphere in which this process of syncretic reconciliation was initially carried out. It served as an ideal medium for this task, as it enabled Ivanov to blend disparate traditions within a new, unified text of his own making, which possessed a higher degree of "authority" than prose. The intuitions encapsulated in verse were then elaborated in a series of more theoretical essays, initiated in the early 1900s, in which Ivanov would often quote his own verse as "proof" of the composite ideal that he was advancing in prose.

This constant drive to reconcile the biblical and classical traditions of prophecy informs many of the poems from Ivanov's first collection *Kormchie Zvezdy* (1903). In this respect Ivanov was a true Renaissance man; indeed, many of his earliest references to art as prophecy are related to the work of one of the most celebrated artists

¹¹ See Ivanov's introductory comments to his translation; *Pervaia pifiiskaia oda Pindara*, "Zhurnal ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia" 1899 (July), s. 49.

¹² On Ivanov's discovery of Nietzsche in the 1890s, see his "Avtobiograficheskoe pis'mo" (II, 19). For Ivanov's interesting comment on Solov'ev's enormous influence on him, despite the fact that his personal contact with the philosopher coincided with the time of his life when he was a passionate follower of Nietzsche but had not yet overcome him, see his letter of 22 September 1929 to E. D. Shor, cited in D. Segal, *Viacheslav Ivanov i sem'ia Shor*, cit., s. 352.

of the Renaissance, Michelangelo. In “Sikstinskaia Kapella”, one of the last poems from the cycle of Italian sonnets, Ivanov takes pains to underline the link between biblical and classical prophecy in Michelangelo’s art by devoting two consecutive lines to the biblical prophets and the Sibyls, represented in Michelangelo’s frescoes as part of a single, continuous line of succession, anticipating the coming of Christ:

И из гремящих уст семи судеб глагол;
И отклик зрящих дев на голос, их зовущий;
И тел, и вздохов ритм, и сѣмьи, в скорби ждущей,
Потомка тайного неискупленный ствол...¹³

In an earlier sonnet from the same cycle Ivanov chooses another work by Michelangelo to serve as a striking image of the assimilation of biblical prophecy into the creative sphere of art, allied with the classical tradition. His description of Michelangelo’s statue of David in “Il Gigante” highlights the artist’s response to the prophetic potential of his subject, destined to be realised in future generations:

Все в нем залог: и глаз мечи, что медля метят,
И мудрость ждущих уст – они судьбам ответят! –
Бог – дух на льва челе... О, верь праще, Давид! (I, 616)

An even more powerful image of the artist embracing the prophetic ideal was Michelangelo’s statue of another biblical prophet, Moses, which stands today in Rome in the basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli. We shall see below that Ivanov attached a particular significance to this statue since his early childhood, when he first saw it in an album of reproductions. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that his programmatic poem on art, “Tvorchestvo”, carries as an epigraph the legendary words that Michelangelo addressed to his statue of Moses when he found that it was too big to enter the basilica:

Ricordati che vivi, e cammina!
Слова Микель-Анджело к мрамору “Моисей” (I, 536).

It would be difficult to find a more vivid example of the artist’s ability to harness the energy of the prophet. In a letter to Briusov Ivanov referred to this poem as the expression of his understanding of the “ac-

¹³ I, 622. In his note to the sonnet Ivanov emphasised the exact correspondence between his poem and Michelangelo’s frescoes; his list of the frescoes described in his poem includes “Proroki” and “Sivilly” in fourth and fifth place. I, 860.

tive (theurgic) task of art".¹⁴ However, although his poem emphasises Michelangelo's connection with prophecy, it represents this artist more as a Demiurge than as a prophet.¹⁵

The first artist from the past clearly put forward by Ivanov as a model of the ideal of the artist-prophet for the modern age was in fact neither a painter, nor a sculptor, not even a poet or a writer, but a composer: Beethoven. Significantly, his name is mentioned alongside Michelangelo in "Tvorchestvo". *Kormchie zvezdy* contains numerous references to him, of which the best known is the poem "Missa Solennis, Betkhovena", placed shortly before "Tvorchestvo" in the opening section of the collection.

В дни, когда святые тени
Скрылись дале в небеса,
Где ты внял, надзвездный гений,
Их хвалений голоса?

В дни, как верных хор великий,
Разделенный, изнемог,
Их молитв согласны лики
Где подслушал ты, пророк?

У поры ли ты забвенной,
У грядущей ли исторг
Глас надежды неизменной,
Веры мощь, любви восторг?

Но и в оны веки лира
Псалмопевная царя
Не хвалила Агнца Мира,
Столь всевнятно говоря!

¹⁴ See V. I. Ivanov's letter to V.Ia. Briusov of 28/15 December 1903: "iskusstvo - ne 'ancilla' Poznaniia. Kak ia ponimaiu ego deistvennuiu (teurgicheskuiu) zadachu, ia skazal v stikhotvorenii 'Tvorchestvo' v 'Kormchikh zvezdakh'." S. S. Grechishkin, N. V. Kotrelev and A. V. Lavrov eds., "Perepiska s Viacheslavym Ivanovym," in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 85, *Valerii Briusov*, Moscow 1976, s. 442.

¹⁵ See the lines "Bud' novyi Demiurg! Kak Dant ili Omir, / Zazhgi nad solntsem Empirei! / Priroda - znamen'e i ten' predvechnykh del: / Tvoi zamysel - ei simvol ravnyi" (I, 537). In a similar vein, in "Il Gigante" Michelangelo is described as "sverkhchelovechestva nemoi ierofant" (I, 616).

Ибо ты в сем гrome пирном,
В буре кликов, слез и хвал
Слиться с воинством эфирным
Человечество созвал (I, 534-35).

In the second stanza Ivanov addresses Beethoven directly as a prophet, who was able to catch the sounds of the harmonious prayers of the “great chorus of the faithful” at a time when it had fallen silent. Beethoven is presented through the retrospective prism of Wagner and Nietzsche as a figure who carried the legacy of biblical prophecy over into the sphere of art. Significantly, the fourth stanza even implies that he was a more powerful prophet than David the psalmist, whose praise (i.e. prophecy) of the Lamb of the World was not as distinct as Beethoven’s prophetic call to humanity to unite.

The poem advances Beethoven as a model of the artist-prophet for the modern age. It does not, however, specify exactly how this prophetic message might apply to the Russians. Interesting light is cast on this question by a passage from Ivanov’s intellectual diary of 1888, recording his response to hearing the slow movement of Beethoven’s Sonata no.12:

Мерно и медленно падали важные, победные и вместе печальные аккорды [Бетховенского [марша?]] Бетховена (op. 26), полные легких отзвуков наших церковных песен. Мне чудилось наше победное шествие в [заветный] час, когда смирились несчетные враги, нас не понимавшие, и мы даем народам стоящим с серьезными лицами и полным внутреннего умиления, какой-то торжественный завет.¹⁶

It might seem surprising that Ivanov heard echoes of Russian Orthodox liturgical chants in the “Maestoso andante” movement of Beethoven’s twelfth sonata (referred to by the composer as a funeral march on the death of a hero). These “echoes”, however, enabled him to interpret Beethoven’s march as the triumphant procession of the Russian people, delivering a message of special import to the nations of the world. Beethoven thus becomes the “prophet” of Russia’s universal message to the world, anticipating the later teachings of Do-

¹⁶ See the extract dated 19 February [1888] and Kotrelev’s accompanying notes in “[Intellectual’nyi dnevnik. 1888-1889 gg.]”, ed. N. V. Kotrelev and I. N. Fridman, in *Viacheslav Ivanov. Arkhivnye materialy i issledovaniia*, ed. L. A. Gogotishvili and A. T. Kazarian, Moscow 1999, s.13.

stoevskii and Solov'ev. As Nikolai Kotrelev has pointed out, in the light of this extract Ivanov's reference in his poem to Beethoven's prophetic message of unity to humanity appears to carry a particular meaning for the Russians: they are called upon to reunite the "great chorus of the faithful", "divided" since the split between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity.¹⁷

The next section of this essay will investigate how Ivanov developed his understanding of the ways in which contemporary Russian artists might respond to this prophetic call.

The realisation of the Ideal of the Artist as Prophet in contemporary Russian culture

Ivanov's first collection of verse *Kormchie zvezdy* was a highly personal compilation, written over a number of years at a distance from Russian literary circles and published before his return to Russia. Although it already contained many of the elements of his prophetic ideal, combining biblical and classical motifs filtered through the teachings of Solov'ev and Nietzsche, these were scattered throughout the collection and did not amount to a unified statement directed at any particular audience.

The task of translating the prophetic intuitions expressed in verse into a coherent aesthetic programme for contemporary artists was taken up by Ivanov after his return to Russia in 1904. Through a series of highly influential essays he sought to establish a platform around which a circle of like-minded followers could unite; the essays were written from the point of view of a new collective "we", which extended the isolated lyrical "I" of the poetry into the public domain. As we shall see, they articulated a gradual progression towards an increasingly strong affirmation of the prophetic powers of the contemporary Russian artist.

In the very first essay, "Poet i Chern'" (1904), Ivanov raises the question of the poet's prophetic role in the modern age. After citing

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 46. Kotrelev supports his reading by pointing out that the immediately preceding extract in the diary (ibidem, p. 12), written on the same day, offers a rather negative comment on the papacy's striving to dominate the whole world.

Pushkin's poem "Poet i tolpa" (1828) as evidence of the tragic split between the poet and his audience, he asks a rhetorical question:

Или Поэт здесь – "пророк", один из искони народоборствующих налагателей воплощенной в них воли на воли чужие? Напротив. Чернь ждет от Поэта повелений, и ему нечего повелеть ей, кроме благоговейного безмолвия мистерий. "Favete linguis". Или даже прямо: "Удалитесь, непосвященные" (эпиграф Иамба).¹⁸

Although Ivanov states that Pushkin's Poet is not and cannot be a prophet, the very fact that he poses the question is highly significant. It sets up an expectation that the poet, as envisaged by Pushkin, should be a prophet, and is only prevented from this by the tragic split between himself and the people. There is already a clear implication that the poet will be reinstated in his true role as a national prophet once this rift is mended. This is certainly how Ivanov's contemporaries understood the message of his essay. Merezhkovskii, writing for "Novyi put'" in September 1904, summed it up as follows: "Поэт некогда был и снова будет пророком".¹⁹

The initial negative framing of the prophetic ideal paves the way for its positive development in the rest of the essay. Ivanov continues to outline the path that contemporary poets should follow in order to recover their lost prophetic status: they should develop their own, inward-looking symbolic language, modelled on the utterances of the prophesying Pythia:

Верны своей святыне остались дерзнувшие творить свое отрешенное слово. Дух, погруженный в подслушивание и транс тайного откровения, не мог сообщаться с миром иначе, чем пророчествующая Пифия. Слово стало только указанием, только намеком, только символом; ибо только такое слово не было ложью (I, 712).

True symbols are intimately bound up with the national soul and are "metaphysically true" (I, 713); they possess the power to heal the rift between the poet and the crowd. The poet who follows this advice will be guided "along the path of the symbol to myth" (I,714). Like Michelangelo in Ivanov's early poem "Tvorchestvo", he will become a "new demiurge" (I,714), ruling the world through myth.

¹⁸ I, 709. The essay first appeared in "Vesy" 1904, 3 and was republished in Ivanov's influential collection of essays, *Po zvezdam: Stat'i i aforizmy*, SPb. 1909.

¹⁹ D. M[erezhkovskii], *Za ili protiv?*, "Novyi put'" 1904, 9 (September), s. 269.

We may note that there are no explicit references in this initial essay to the biblical dimension of prophecy; Ivanov approaches his theme through the prism of the classical tradition, as is clear from his association of modern poets with the prophesying Pythia. His next essay on the subject, “Nitsche i Dionis” (1904), continues to develop this classical approach to prophecy, focused on Nietzsche’s understanding of the cult of Dionysus. Significantly, however, a link with the biblical tradition of prophecy is now introduced. Ivanov compares Nietzsche, defined as the “prophet and opponent of Dionysus” (I, 726), to the biblical patriarch and prophet Jacob, characterised as a theomachist:

И – как Иаков богоборец улучил благословение – так Ницше принял страдальное впечатление страдающего бога, им проповеданного и отринутого. Пророк и противник Диониса в своих возгорениях и муках, своей вине и своей гибели, он являет трагические черты божества (I, 726).

This establishes a broad framework for the parallel between the classical and biblical traditions of prophecy, which is carried over into Russian literature through the association of Nietzsche’s Dionysian “prophetic ears” with the hearing of the biblical Prophet described in Pushkin’s poem:

Его небольшие изящные уши – предмет его тщеславия – должны были быть вещими ушами, исполненными “шумом и звоном”, как слух Пушкинского Пророка, чуткими к сокровенной музыке мировой души.²⁰

The reference to hearing and music paves the way for the discussion of Beethoven’s prophetic significance that follows. Ivanov establishes a line of succession, originating in the music of Beethoven, whose prophetic mantle was passed on to Nietzsche through Wagner (I, 717). He hints at the continuation of this line of prophetic succession in Russian literature through his references to Pushkin’s “Prophet” and to Dostoevskii as the “great mystagogue of the future Zarathustra” (I, 717).

In “Kop’e Afiny” (1904) Ivanov develops the idea that contemporary “art of the cell” (*keleinoe iskusstvo*) will necessarily lead to the

²⁰ I, 717. The essay first appeared in “Vesy” 1904, 5 and was republished in *Pozvezdam* (1909). For a later example of Ivanov’s association of the hearing of Pushkin’s Prophet with the music of Nietzsche’s Dionysian teachings, see Viacheslav Ivanov, *O ‘KhimeraKh’ Andreia Belogo*, “Vesy” 1905, 7, s. 52.

rebirth of “universal art” (*vsenarodnoe iskusstvo*) in the future. In support of this view he notes that several key models of the artist-prophet from the past, including Dante and Beethoven, exhibited features of both types of art in their works. Although Ivanov had already introduced this idea in “Poet i Chern”, he had at that stage raised the possibility of a connection between the artist of the modern age and the prophet only in order to deny the possibility of its realisation in the present. In “Kop'e Afiny”, written and published just a few months later, he restates the issue in more positive terms and explicitly relates both types of art to two different levels of prophecy. The modern artist, who follows Nietzsche's Zarathustra and “dares” to prophesy, is now presented as innately prophetic and on the verge of attaining a higher degree of prophecy.

In order to relate this idea to the Russian literary tradition, Ivanov cites the example of Lermontov; his “Prorok” of 1841 – a response to Pushkin's eponymous poem – is said to embody the characteristic features of art of the cell:

Его [келейного искусства] представители, все, в большей или меньшей степени, являют черты лермонтовского Пророка. Символом его мистической души мог бы служить текст Данта: “Немногое извне доступно было взору; но через то звезды я видел и ясными, и крупными необычно”.²¹

It is significant that Ivanov follows the reference to Lermontov's Prophet by quoting a translation of the very lines from Dante's *Purgatorio* (XXVII, 88-90) that he had appended to his own collection *Kormchie zvezdy* as an epigraph. He clearly intended Dante's lines to encapsulate the image of the poet on the verge of making the projected transition from art of the cell to universal art. The implication seems to be that Ivanov, like Dante and Lermontov before him, is already practising a partially, if not fully, prophetic form of art.

This idea, first introduced on the basis of the poetry of Dante and Lermontov with a hint at its possible application to Ivanov and his contemporaries, is then translated into a more dogmatic maxim valid for all forms of art of the cell and universal art. Later in the essay Ivanov states that the “prophetic daring” of art of the cell will eventually be transformed into the “prophetic submission” of universal art:

²¹ I, 729. The essay first appeared in “Vesy” 1904, 10 and was republished in *Po zvezdam* (1909).

в искусстве келейном “безвольный произвол” гения переступает пределы эмпирического дерзновения (по существу аналитического) и достигает свободы внутренней, или пророческой. [...] Здесь свобода переходит в необходимость, произвол делается безвольным, пророческое дерзновение обращается в подчинение пророческое (I, 731).

In many ways this view represents an attempt to bridge the gap between the Nietzschean model of prophetic daring and the Solov'evian, biblical ideal of prophetic submission.

By the next year, in the essay “Iz oblasti sovremennykh nastroyenii” (1905), we find a brief statement of the same ideas in the form of a programmatic declaration of faith, challenging Merezhkovskii's ideas on prophecy:

Мы же [...] верим в божественную мощь и провиденциальное назначение сферы пророческой, сферы того свободного творчества, которое необходимо становится творчеством теургическим, как оно станет и творчеством всенародным в хоровых общинах.²²

Ivanov writes as the self-appointed representative of a collective body (“we”), evidently consisting of contemporary artists who subscribe to Solov'ev's teaching on prophetic energy as the sphere of inspired creativity. These artists are said to place their faith in the “divine might” and “providential mission” of the “prophetic sphere”, now equated with the sphere of “free art”, which is already becoming “theurgic” (note the present tense) and will inevitably become “universal” in the future.

In an essay written during the following year, “Predchuvstviia i predvestiia” (1906), Ivanov develops the implication that the theurgic artist can harness this divine power and providential mission. He starts by asking whether contemporary symbolism belongs to the sphere of romanticism or prophecy:

Видеть ли в современном символизме возврат к романтическому расколу между мечтой и жизнью? Или слышна в нем пророческая весть о новой жизни, и мечта его только упреждает действительность?²³

²² “Iz oblasti sovremennykh nastroyenii: I. Apokaliptiki i obshchestvennost’”, “Vesy” 1905, 6, s. 38.

²³ “Predchuvstviia i predvestiia. Novaia organicheskaia epokha i teatr budushchego” - II, 86. The essay first appeared in “Zolotoe runo” 1906, nos.4 and 6 and was republished in *Po zvezdam* (1909).

The question is an important one, for romanticism dreams nostalgically of a lost past, while prophecy looks to the future:

Романтизм – тоска по несбыточному, пророчество – по несбывшемуся. Романтизм – заря вечерняя, пророчество – утренняя. Романтизм – *odium fati*; пророчество – “*amor fati*”. Романтизм в споре, пророчество в трагическом союзе с исторической необходимостью. [...] “Золотой век” в прошлом (концепция греков) – романтизм; “золотой век” в будущем (концепция мессианизма) – пророчество (II, 87).

It follows from this that the prophetic artist does not just anticipate future events, but actively shapes reality through his art, described as a form of dynamic creative energy:

Под пророчествованием мы понимаем не непременно точное предвидение будущего, но всегда некоторую творческую энергию, упреждающую и зачинающую будущее, революционную по существу (II, 87).

This significant shift takes place at the time of Ivanov's most intensive involvement with mystical anarchism and explicitly extends the power of the artist into the domain of history and politics. Art is therefore revolutionary in its essence, and true political freedom will only come about when the art of the future (centred on the theatre) will have shaped the people's will:

Театры хоровых трагедий, комедий и мистерий должны стать очагами творческого, или пророчественного, самоопределения народа; [...] И только тогда, прибавим, осуществится действительная политическая свобода, когда хоровой голос таких общин будет подлинным референдумом истинной воли народной (II, 103).

The artist-prophet is now entering into a potentially dangerous collusion with the forces of history. In the space of just a few years Ivanov has clearly moved a long way from his initial statement in 1904 that the artist, represented by Pushkin's Poet, is not and cannot be a prophet. By the time he came to write his essay “Zavety simvolizma” (1910),²⁴ he had completed the process of assimilating Pushkin's Poet into his view of art as theurgic and prophetic; he now described him as a “builder” or “organiser” of life, who is not just an interpreter but also an active “strengthenener” of the divine basis of reality:

²⁴ The essay first appeared in “Apollon” 1910, 8 and was republished in *Borozdy i Mezhi* (1916).

Пушкинский Поэт помнит свое назначение – быть религиозным устройтеlem жизни, истолкователем и укрепителем божественной связи сущего, теургом (II, 595).

We may note the interesting term “religious organiser of life”. One might well ask: in what sphere does the Poet “organise” life - through his actions in life or through his art? This vital question is not addressed directly in this essay and remains open to a considerable degree of ambiguity. Ivanov does, however, issue a warning against the dangers of symbolist art which is not grounded in spiritual experience; he introduces the concept of the “inner canon” as a corrective to this tendency, evident in some of the excesses of mystical anarchism. This also enabled him to counter the attacks on the relationship between symbolist art and reality, launched by the newly emergent movements of Acmeism and Futurism.

This shift of emphasis from art to life as the primary field of spiritual endeavour (and therefore of prophecy) gathered strength over the next few years and reached its fullest development in “O granitsakh iskusstva”, first given as a lecture in December 1913 after Ivanov’s return to Moscow and published in 1914. Here Ivanov develops the idea of the “inner canon”, introduced in “Zavety simvolizma”, and draws a crucial distinction between life – the sphere of spiritual ascent (voskhozhdenie) - and art – the sphere of descent (niskhozhdenie). Significantly, he chooses to illustrate his idea by quoting from Pushkin’s “Prorok”. The moment of prophetic insight described in this poem is ascribed to the spiritual sphere; this can only be achieved in life, not through art, which can only express spiritual insights previously attained in life:

Само то мгновение, когда разверзаются “вещие зеницы, как у испуганной орлицы”, есть момент внезапного воспарения, по отношению к которому чисто художественная работа творческого осуществления и овеществления представляется опять-таки – нисхождением.²⁵

Ivanov therefore declares that it is beyond his competence to evaluate the prophetic status of contemporary poets, as this judgement relates to a different sphere from art: “На самом деле, поэтами поистине были все эти деятели; измерять пророчествование их лежит вне пределов нашей компетенции и самой темы” (II, 637).

²⁵ II, 636. The essay first appeared in “Trudy i dni” 1914, no.7 and was republished in *Borozdy i Mezhi* (1916).

We have moved from a peak of affirmation of the poet's ability to affect life through his theurgic art to an apparent retreat from this position - and yet this withdrawal (not a "denial" [otrechenie] but a significant "limitation" [ogranichenie] of previous claims, as Ivanov puts it) is followed almost immediately by a renewed affirmation of the artist's prophetic powers. What is going on here? Does this represent a retreat from previous claims, or is it a case of "reculer pour mieux sauter"?

The seeming paradox can be resolved as follows. By joining the idea of the theurgic artist (represented by Pushkin's Poet) to the idea of the spiritual seeker or prophet in real life (epitomised by Pushkin's Prophet), Ivanov was in fact strengthening the image of the artist as prophet and preparing the ground for the more substantial claims that he went on to make for two particular Russian artists as models of this ideal in both life and art. Up until this point he had invoked various Western European figures as models of the artist-prophet (Dante, Michelangelo, Beethoven, Nietzsche) and had begun to apply this ideal to the Russian literary tradition by citing the lyrics of Pushkin, Lermontov and Tiutchev. He had succeeded in establishing his ideal, illustrated by examples from the past, but had not yet put forward any examples of recent or contemporary Russian artists as models for the present age.

After his return to Russia in 1913, Ivanov made two significant moves in this direction. His first choice was Dostoevskii. In February 1914 he described Dostoevskii's work as a source of "true wisdom" about the Russians and even about God and recommended it as a sacred text to be studied "like a Russian Bible":

Иногда, мне кажется, что Достоевский оставил нам какие-то веды и что из этих вед начинается наша настоящая мудрость о нас самих и о Боге. Если Дельфийский оракул говорит: "познай самого себя", то какая-то тайная сила говорит нам, познай Достоевского, а через него и самого себя. Пушкин тоже дал нам величайший завет, но все же, что подлежит, собственно, истолкованию, это именно, конечно, Достоевский, а не Пушкин, потому что в Пушкине все это слишком имплицировано, все то, что он знал и предугадал о России, а в Достоевском это уже разъяснено, как в некоей русской библии, так что нам остается ее только читать и понимать.²⁶

²⁶ [Vystupleniia po dokladu S.N. Bulgakova v religiozno-filosofskom obshchestve, 2 fevralia 1914 g.], in *Viacheslav Ivanov. Arkhivnye materialy i issledovaniia*, ed. L.A. Gogotishvili and A.T. Kazarian, Moscow 1999, s. 64. In a later essay on Do-

Ivanov makes the case for Dostoevskii's role as a prophetic artist much more strongly than he had for Pushkin; nevertheless, although Dostoevskii's message was still highly relevant to the present, he remained a figure from the past, whose voice had been silent for some thirty years. In "O granitsakh iskusstva" (1913) Ivanov referred to Dostoevskii as a prophet in connection with his promise that beauty (understood as the future Mystery of true theurgic art) would save the world ("krasota spaset mir") (II:650). Was there no figure from the present who could serve as a model, demonstrating that the theurgic ideal of the artist-prophet could be realised in contemporary art?

Ivanov found such a figure in Aleksandr Skriabin. Soon after the composer's sudden and unexpected death on 14 April 1915, he wrote two sonnets in his memory; in both poems he presented Skriabin's death as the culminating act of his life, demonstrating his wilful embracing of Fate (Rok). In the second sonnet, recited on 14 May 1915 at a gathering in memory of the composer, he compares him to the wise Hiram, the builder of Solomon's temple, described as an "architect of mysteries" (zodchii tain); he concludes by openly declaring him a prophet, taking up the link between *rok* and *prorok* (much exploited in Russian verse since the time of the Decembrist poets):

"Не медли!" – звал он Рок; и зову Рок ответил.

"Явись!" – молил Сестру, – и вот, пришла Сестра.

Таким свидетельством пророка Дух отметил.²⁷

In his essay "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo", first delivered as a talk in December 1915, Ivanov elaborated the comparison between Skriabin and Hiram, noting that the biblical artist, according to legend, had likewise died prematurely before completing his work.²⁸

stoevskii, "Lik i lichiny Rossii" (1917), Ivanov describes *Brat'ia Karamazovy* as a novel which prophesies the spiritual future of Russia - IV, 480.

²⁷ "On byl iz tekh pevtsov (takov zhe byl Novalis)..." – III, 565. The sonnet was first published under the title "Pamiati A.N. Skriabina" in October 1915 in the newspaper "Russkoe slovo" and the journal "Muzyka". Ivanov had already used the traditional association between *prorok* and *Rok* as a key rhyme in one of his earlier prophetic poems, "Zhertva agnchaia," first published in "Zolotoe runo" 1907, 3, s. 36 and included in *Cor Ardens* (1911); see II, 293.

²⁸ V. Ivanov, *Skriabin*, Moscow 1996, s. 23 (first pagination). Ivanov's essay is cited from the booklet produced by the Skriabin Memorial Museum in Moscow, as it reproduces the most authoritative version of the text from the proofs of Ivanov's book on Skriabin due to be published by Alkonost (held in TsGALI), including

He also related the mystic context of his approach to Scriabin as a prophet to the image of the prophet in the Russian literary tradition, developed by Pushkin and Dostoevskii. After defining Scriabin as an artist who reached the third and highest stage of mystic initiation (intuition) by dissolving his own identity in the transcendent worlds with which he merged, he detailed each stage of this process at length with reference to Pushkin's "Prorok":

На третьей, почти недостигаемо высокой ступени посвященный сам сливается с живыми и действительными силами миров иных, становится их земным орудием.

И он мне грудь рассек мечом,
И сердце трепетное вынул,
И уголь, пылающий огнем,
Во грудь отверстую водвинул...
Как труп, в пустыне я лежал...

After an extended discussion of the mystic significance of Scriabin's death in the light of Pushkin's phrase "как труп", Ivanov concludes that Scriabin embraced death in order to achieve a higher level of mystic insight in his life and art: "Этого страшного причащения снедающей человека тайне и алкал Скрябин, ибо, по его замыслу, мистерия не могла осуществиться иначе".²⁹ Scriabin is thus presented as a contemporary artist-prophet, who realised the highest level of mystic, prophetic initiation, described in Pushkin's poem. Death enabled him to transcend the Nietzschean prototype of the superman and to achieve Dostoevskii's Russian ideal of the universal man of "sobornost". The ideal represented by Pushkin's Prophet, previously associated with Nietzsche's prophetic hearing, has now merged with Dostoevskii's reading of Pushkin and attained its fullest realisation in contemporary art:

Так горел своим пророчесственным волением этот русский художник-все-человек, отдавший свое сверхчеловечество – соборности, для себя же моливший единого дара – пламенного языка новой Пятидесятницы, который бы сжег в нем ветхого человек.³⁰

Ivanov's handwritten corrections and several important additional passages. An incomplete version of the essay, based on a different, earlier set of proofs (dated 1916) held in Ivanov's Rome archive, is printed in III, 172-189.

²⁹ V. Ivanov, *Skriabin*, s. 30 (first pagination).

³⁰ Ibidem, s. 36-37 (first pagination).

For Ivanov, Skriabin's theurgic art represented the fullest realisation and validation of Dostoevskii's prophetic promise that beauty would save the world.³¹ Five years later, in a speech delivered at the Moscow Conservatory in April 1920, he went even further, describing Skriabin as a prophet and "Messiah", "capable of saving the world".³²

One might well wonder how Ivanov could have moved from the more sober definition of prophecy as an ideal to be achieved in life (in "O granitsakh iskusstva") to this full-blown promulgation of Skriabin the artist as a prophet. Robert Bird has speculated about how this apparent contradiction could have occurred. He suggests that Ivanov's previous "limitations" applied only to symbolism, but were no longer valid for Skriabin, who fell outside this category as a "true post-symbolist, the messiah proclaimed by the Symbolist forerunners".³³ It seems unlikely, however, that Ivanov's claims for the primacy of life over art in the sphere of spiritual endeavour were limited to the narrow context of the Symbolist movement.

Ivanov was in fact strengthening his previous position, rather than contradicting it, by presenting Skriabin as an "artist-hero" (*khu-dozhnik-geroi*) or "hero of the spirit" (*geroi dukha*),³⁴ who achieved a high level of mystic, prophetic insight *in his life* (as well as in his art). The question that we should rather be asking is a different one: what caused Ivanov to depart from his earlier declaration that he could not judge the prophetic qualities of contemporary artists? What gave him the confidence to make such an unambiguous pronouncement about Skriabin's prophetic status? To answer this, we need to look at the third, most personal aspect of our topic: Ivanov's own claims to the role of prophet.

³¹ *Ibidem*, s. 26 (first pagination).

³² "On vystupaet kak nekii Messiia. On edinstvenno sposoben spasti mir." *Ibidem*, 3 (second pagination). In the preface O. M. Tompakova identifies the transcript of Ivanov's speech at an evening dedicated to the memory of A. N. Skriabin held in the Bol'shoi zal of the Moscow Conservatory on 19 April 1920. The transcript is imperfect and interrupted by numerous breaks.

³³ Viacheslav Ivanov, *Selected Essays*, trans. and with notes by Robert Bird, ed. and with an introduction by Michael Wachtel, Evanston, Ill., 2001, p. 313.

³⁴ V. Ivanov, *Skriabin*, s. 29, 31 (first pagination).

Ivanov's own Image as a Prophet

So far we have traced the way in which Ivanov constructed the ideal of the artist as prophet for his age and applied it to past and contemporary art. We should now consider one final and crucial issue: to what extent was Ivanov's presentation of this ideal shaped by a personal sense of his own prophetic role? For this, we have to go behind the public platform and attempt to see what inner convictions informed it.

Needless to say, this is not a simple task, particularly as a prophet cannot openly testify to his calling. In religious tradition a prophet's status can only be validated by a number of external agencies: by God (who summons him to his mission), by an existing prophet (who confers recognition on his successor), by the people (who receive and acknowledge the message of divine origin), or by history (which retrospectively confirms the truth of the prophecy). Ivanov, even if he did harbour a sense of his role as prophetic, could not directly declare himself a prophet. He might prepare the ground for such a view by putting forward the ideal of the artist as prophet or by adopting a prophetic tone in his own writings, but ultimately the task of pronouncing him a prophet would have to be left to his readers.

We shall therefore start by examining the views of Ivanov's contemporaries, as these undoubtedly influenced his perception of his role. From early on during the period of his residence at the *bashnia* in Petersburg, Ivanov was seen by both his admirers and his detractors in the light of the prophetic ideal that he promoted for contemporary art. The translator and critic Evgeniia Gertsyk introduced her review of his third collection of verse, *Eros* (1907), by underlining its prophetic nature:

Эта маленькая книга – вещая. Она – колыбель-судьба новых веяний нашей жизни и поэзии. Ею да освятится неизбежное то, чему суждено быть!³⁵

The philosopher Fedor Stepun concluded his review of Ivanov's first volume of essays, *Po zvezdam* (1909), by stressing the prophetic qualities of Ivanov's aesthetic theory of realist symbolism, compared to a golden crown surrounding the "sun of a new life" about to

³⁵ E. Gertsyk, Review of Viacheslav Ivanov, *Eros*, "Zolotoe runo" 1907, 1, s. 90.

dawn.³⁶ Several reviewers of *Cor Ardens* (1911-1912) – from the famous poet Mikhail Kuzmin to the relatively obscure critic Pavel Medvedev – drew attention to its prophetic character.³⁷

These views of Ivanov's writings naturally led to the portrayal of their author as a prophet in his own right. In the course of a survey of recent Russian literature, Ivanov's former disciple and close friend Sergei Gorodetskii openly declared the poet an unrecognized prophet:

Все стихи Иванова суть ознаменования божественного. [...] Иванов поистине изумительное и величавое зрелище для наших дней. В Иудее он был бы пророком, и зачарованная толпа ходила бы за ним. В России он непонимаемый поэт или мудреный версификатор.³⁸

In fact the opposite was closer to the truth: in Judaea Ivanov would never have been considered a prophet; such an approach was only conceivable in Russia. Kranikhfel'd, the barbed critic of "Sovremennyi mir", recognized this and wrote a series of essays, attacking the Russian tradition of regarding literature as prophecy. He traced this approach from Gogol' through Dostoevskii to Merezhkovskii and various other contemporary writers. He took particular issue with the "prophetic utterances" of Ivanov's essay "O russkoi idee" (1909), dismissing these as the "high-faluting deliberations of a modernist prophet" and ridiculing Gorodetskii's presentation of Ivanov as an unrecognized prophet in Judaea.³⁹ He insistently demanded a different form of prophecy, based on action rather than empty words.

After the publication of the second volume of *Cor Ardens* in 1912, Ivanov left St Petersburg with Vera to spend the next year and a half living outside Russia; the heyday of religious Symbolism appeared to be over and its leader's reputation as a prophet began to dwindle. Critics started to call into question the viability of the notion of the poet-prophet. Boris Shletser, in a review of Ivanov's second

³⁶ F[edor] S[tepun], Review of Viacheslav Ivanov, *Po zvezdam*, in "Logos: Mezhdunarodnyi ezhegodnik po filosofii kul'tury", 1, Moscow 1910, s. 282.

³⁷ M. Kuzmin, 'Cor Ardens' Viacheslava Ivanova, "Trudy i dni" 1912, 1 (January-February), p. 49. Pavel Medvedev, *Arabeski. II. Viach. Ivanov. Cor Ardens, ch. II*, "Novaia studiiia" 1912, 13, 1 December, s. 5.

³⁸ Sergei Gorodetskii, *Blizhaishaia zadacha russkoi literatury*, "Zolotoe runo" 1909, 4, s. 70.

³⁹ Vl. Kranikhfel'd, *Literaturnye otkliki: Novye nasledniki 'Perepiski' Gogolia*, "Sovremennyi mir" 1909, 8 (August), s. 114-115 (second pagination).

collection of essays, *Borozdy i Mezhi* (1916), pointed out that its author, like Nietzsche before him, did not fit into any clear category: to poets he seemed more like a prophet, to philosophers more like an artist, while to orthodox believers he seemed like a priest without God or a church.⁴⁰ The literary critic Ivanov-Razumnik in his popular history of Russian literature described Ivanov rather caustically as a poet who tried in vain to be a prophet (unlike Blok who was cut out to be a prophet but instead became a poet).⁴¹

We can see, therefore, that Ivanov's contemporary readers did much to bolster his image as a prophetic writer, whether by positive reinforcement, critical comment or ironic denigration. To what extent, however, did Ivanov consciously or unconsciously cultivate this view of himself? In a sense he invited identification with the figure of the poet-prophet through his constant references to this image as the ideal to which contemporary art should aspire. Furthermore, the consistent focus of his work on transcendent truths implied and conveyed a prophetic stance. This could be sensed on two complementary levels. His mystic verse often reflected an intimate, personal vision, while his essays on universal art and the Russian national idea articulated the same intuitions on a more public level for a larger audience. As in the case of his mentor Vladimir Solov'ev, the two levels complemented each other: the visions of the private mystic, communicated in verse, served to authenticate the prophetic utterances of the more public persona.⁴² Mindful of the higher level of prophetic "authority" possessed by verse, Ivanov often incorporated quotations from his own poetry into his essays as "proofs", validating the ideas presented in prose.

As a result of this dual approach, Ivanov's private verse was frequently read as a public statement. This is clear from contemporary responses to *Eros*; although this collection deals with intimate details from his complicated personal life of 1906, it was understood by

⁴⁰ B. Shletser, Review of *Borozdy i Mezhi*, "Birzhevye vedomosti" no.15791, 9 September 1916, s. 5; cited from the extract quoted in "Biulleteni literatury i zhizni" 1916, 5 (November), s. 71.

⁴¹ Ivanov-Razumnik, *Russkaia literatura ot semidesiatykh godov do nashikh dnei*, sixth edition, Berlin 1923, s. 376.

⁴² On Solov'ev's two-fold approach to prophecy, see P. Davidson, *Vladimir Solov'ev and the Ideal of Prophecy*, cit., pp. 647-48.

many readers as a much broader statement of national significance. One of the poems from the collection reflects the poet's adoption of a prophetic self-image that functions on both personal and public levels. In "Poruka" the poet describes his attempts to bring into being through his love the true divine "countenance" (lik) of the "unborn" person to whom the poem is addressed (evidently Gorodetskii). In the third stanza he compares himself, engaged in this endeavour, to the prophet Moses, striking his staff against a rock in order to bring forth water (Num.20:11):

Пророк, воздвиг рукой торжественной
Я на скалу скупую, жезл.
Твой древний лик, твой лик божественный
Не я-ль родил из мощных чресл? (II, 377).

We saw earlier how Ivanov developed the parallel between the artist-demiurge and the biblical prophet through his reference to Michelangelo's statue of Moses in *Kormchie zvezdy*. The poem from *Eros* adds a new dimension to this association, revealing that Ivanov embraced the image of the prophet Moses on a personal level in his own life as well as in his art.

The period from 1906 (when this poem was written) until 1910 marked a high point in Ivanov's cultivation of art as the primary sphere of prophetic endeavour. This trend is reflected in many of the poems written during these years and later collected in *Cor Ardens*. In 1907, for example, Ivanov published a group of three poems, all dealing with the poet's relation to the prophetic ideal. The first two works are highly personal. In "Vates" the poet presents himself as a prophet in the classical tradition and dwells on the visionary character of his sight and hearing; later, when this poem was republished in *Cor Ardens*, it carried a dedication to Anna Mintslova, one of the most enigmatic "prophetic women" in Ivanov's life. In "Iz dalei dalekikh", dedicated to Lidiia Berdiaeva, the poet describes his soul's attraction to the "Sibylline charms" (sivillinskie chary) of the night. The third poem, "Zhertva agnchaia", drops the tone of an intimate prophetic confession voiced by the lyrical subject in favour of a more impersonal style. This sonnet addresses two figures, the priest and the prophet, and contrasts the active role of the "prorok" (rhymed with "Rok") with the submissive role of the "pokornyi zhrets", who will be called upon by the prophet to carry out his sacrifice when the time is ripe. Ivanov is evidently reflecting on the relationship between the

two role models of the Symbolist poet – the active, theurgic prophet and the more passive, sacrificial priest.⁴³

The prophetic character of the poet is stated explicitly in “Apolini”, the programmatic sonnet that Ivanov wrote in 1909 for the first issue of *Apollon* and later republished as the closing poem of the cycle “Poetu” in *Cor Ardens*; the poet’s hymns are compared to a wood of laurels and associated with “prophetic Daphnes” (veshchikh Dafn), captured and turned into laurel trees by Apollo, the god of prophecy and leader of the Muses. In “Poet”, a later sonnet from the second part of *Cor Ardens*, the poet is awarded the “laurel, prophetic and glorious” (lavr, prorocheskii i slavnyi) for setting hearts alight (like Pushkin’s Prophet) and providing the gods with a language (II:358-59, 499).

It is interesting to note, however, that in 1910, at the same time as Ivanov introduced the cautionary concept of the “inner canon” into his discussion of the precepts of symbolism, he published a rather personal poem, “Fata Morgana”, later dedicated to Evgeniia Gertysk, about the dangerous mirages which attract the poet who seeks to realise his prophetic intuitions in this world:

Так долго с пророческим медом
Мешал я земную полынь,
Что верю деревьям и водам
В отчаяньи рдяных пустынь, –

Всем зеркальным фатаморганам,
Всем былям воздушных Сирен,
Земли *путеводным обманам*
И правде небесных измен.⁴⁴

This concern over the possible delusions that could result from the symbolist quest for transcendence in this world prompted Ivanov’s subsequent move towards a clearer demarcation of the limi-

⁴³ “Vates”, “Iz dalei dalekikh”, and “Zhertva agnchaia” were first published in “Zolotoe runo” 1907, 3, pp. 35-36, and republished in the first part of *Cor Ardens* (1911); see II, 312-13, 306, 293.

⁴⁴ II, 305. The poem was first published in the almanach “Na Rassvete”, ed. A.F. Mantel’, Kazan’ 1910 without the dedication to E. Gertysk, to whom the italicised phrase “*putevodnym obmanam*” belongs.

tations of art and stronger insistence on the primacy of life over art in matters of prophetic insight. As noted above, in “O granitsakh iskusstva” he recommended that artists who wished to subscribe to the “inner canon” should recognize these limitations and subject themselves to the laws of “universal divinely infantile art” (vselenskogo, bozhestvenno-mladencheskogo iskusstva) (II, 638). The use of the word “infantile” (mladencheskoe) in this context signals an important link between this essay and Ivanov’s long narrative poem, *Mladenchestvo*, almost entirely written in Rome in the spring of 1913 but only completed and published in Moscow in 1918.⁴⁵ Art is “divinely infantile” when it is close to its roots in the prophetic dimension of life. This is demonstrated in the poem through the account that Ivanov presents of the prophetic origins of his infancy and discovery of his literary vocation. The poem, like the essay, draws a clear distinction between life and art. It is introduced as a “poetic account of *life*” (poeticheskoe zhizneopisanie)⁴⁶ and demonstrates through its very structure that the prophetic experiences of childhood *precede* the crystallization of the artistic impulse; the emergence from the “early paradise” (rannii rai) of infancy into the full “force of the sun” (solnechnaia sila), which releases “the living source” (zhivoi rodnik) does not occur until the concluding stanza of the poem, added in 1918.⁴⁷

We know from Ivanov’s earlier essay “O dostoinstve zhenshchiny” (1908) that he saw women as the “first teachers of magic and prophecy, of poetry and ecstasy” (III, 141). In his own writings he invested the two key women in his life with prophetic powers. His second wife, Lidiia Zinov’eva-Annibal, is frequently represented in his verse as a prophesying Sibyl.⁴⁸ In *Mladenchestvo* he portrays his

⁴⁵ Ivanov states in his own note to the first edition of the poem that the introduction and stanzas I-XLV were written in Rome from 10 April to 23 May 1913; the last three stanzas (XLVI-XLVIII) were composed in Moscow on 28/15 August 1918. See Viacheslav Ivanov, *Mladenchestvo*, Petersburg 1918, s. 57.

⁴⁶ “Vstuplenie v poeticheskoe zhizneopisanie” - I, 230.

⁴⁷ Stanza XLVII - I, 254.

⁴⁸ See in particular the four poems which make up the “Sivilla” section of the first book of *Cor Ardens*: “Na bashne,” “Mednyi Vsadnik,” “Iris in Iris,” “Molchanie” (Ibidem, 2: 259-62). After the death of Zinov’eva-Annibal, the role of female prophetic guide in Ivanov’s life was taken up by A.R. Mintslova, to whom Ivanov dedicated his poem “Vates” (1907) when it was reprinted in *Cor Ardens* (1911).

mother, prophesying the poetic destiny of her son even before his birth. The poem opens with an account of her fervent recital of psalms and prophetic communication with her as yet unborn son, whose cry in the womb she hears; although she did not understand what “secret gift” this sign “prophesied”, the narrator knows that she blessed him for a certain “sacred task”:

Может быть,
Творцу всей жизнью послужить...
Быть может, славить славу Божью
В еще неведомых псалмах...
Мать ясновидела впотьмах,
Мирской не обольщалась ложью;
Но в этом мире было ей
Поэта званье всех милей (I, 231-232).

The mother's visionary foresight thus serves to validate the future poet's prophetic destiny, whether in life or in art, associated from the outset with the psalms of David the prophet.

Mladenchestvo reveals that various other elements used by Ivanov in the construction of his public image of the artist as prophet were in fact rooted in his own personal “prophetic” autobiography. We have already seen how he presented Michelangelo's statue of Moses as a powerful image of the artist embracing the prophetic ideal in his early programmatic poem “Tvorchestvo” from *Kormchie zvezdy*. In his later autobiographical works he made a point of relating the image of this statue to the genesis of his own poetic calling. In his “Avtobiograficheskoe pis'mo” (January-February 1917) he describes how he was shown a picture of this statue in his childhood and was so struck by the image that he had several visions related to it, referred to by him as “hallucinations” (II, 11). One of these “hallucinations” was incorporated by him into *Mladenchestvo*. In stanza XXXIII the narrator recalls how his childhood imagination transferred the “horned countenance” (rogatyi lik) of Moses, described as a “sitting colossus” (koloss sidiashchii), to a museum in Moscow; the image of Michelangelo's statue of Moses captivated and confused his soul like a “two-faced idol” (dvoistvennyi kumir).⁴⁹ Just as Miche-

⁴⁹ I, 247. In the manuscript version of this stanza, lines 5-8 differed: “Koloss sidiashchii... V snakh Muzeia / Rogatyi idol Moiseia / Voobrazhenie khranit, / S nim pamiat' plavkuiu rodnit...”. RAI, Karton 5, Tetrads' no. 13, 14 ll.

langelo transposed the image of Moses into art, so Ivanov's creative imagination transferred the image of the biblical prophet into a Russian cultural setting (the museum) and later into his own poetic world. The artistic representation of the biblical prophet, first introduced in *Kormchie zvezdy*, turns out to stem from the poet's own life.

In many ways, therefore, *Mladenchestvo* can be read as Ivanov's most sustained attempt to create a coherent prophetic account of his own life. This was how it was received by one of its first reviewers, Valerii Briusov, who commented on its tendency to convert life into a series of prophetic visions: "весь внешний мир незаметно обращен [...] в ряд видений, пророчеств и вещей снов".⁵⁰ Interesting archival evidence suggests that Ivanov originally intended to write an even more ambitious, longer work, covering his entire *life* to date, not just his infancy.⁵¹ One might well wonder why he should have been so preoccupied with the construction of his prophetic autobiography at this particular juncture of his life. Was the fact that he was living far away from Russia a significant factor? Was the attempt to create a prophetic image for himself prompted by the decline of symbolism and consequent loss of his personal following and prestige? Could it even in part have been a reaction against the gossip and scandal surrounding his relationship with his step-daughter, Vera Shvarsalon, and the birth of their son in 1912? Many of Ivanov's followers lost their faith in his prophetic role at this point. The future priest Aleksandr El'chaninov, for example, recorded in his diary in June 1913⁵² that he stopped believing in Ivanov as a prophet or teacher after hearing Ern's critical account of Ivanov's marriage to Vera, culminating in his crushing verdict: "Вячеслав – поэт, а не пророк, он умеет стилизовать, строить воздушные замки, фальсифицировать и закрывать правду".

⁵⁰ P-r [Valerii Briusov], Review of *Mladenchestvo*, "Khudozhestvennoe slovo: Vremennik literaturnogo otdela NKP" 1920, no.1, s. 57.

⁵¹ Ivanov's archive in Rome contains a manuscript exercise book with the text of stanzas XXIV to XLV of *Mladenchestvo*, followed by the date 21/8 May 1913; the first page of the exercise book is headed "Zhizn': glava I (prodolzhenie)," suggesting that the text of *Mladenchestvo* in its final published form consists of the "first chapter" (supplemented by three stanzas added in 1918) of a work originally conceived as much longer. RAI, Karton 5, Tetrads' no.13, 14 ll.

⁵² See the entry from El'chaninov's diary dated 4 or 5 June 1913, in *K 50-letiiu konchiny sviashchennika A. El'chaninova*, ed. N. A. Struve, "Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia" 1984, no.142, s. 64.

Whatever the reasons for its genesis at this particular time, Ivanov did not choose to make his poetic account of his prophetic origins public until 1918. In the intervening period his growing sense of his own prophetic identity was reinforced by two important experiences, which followed shortly upon his return to Russia in the autumn of 1913. The first was the deepening of his creative relationship with Skriabin; the second was the broader historical context of the period, leading from war into revolution. As we shall see, both experiences were “read” by Ivanov as confirmations of his own prophetic intuitions.

We have already noted that Ivanov chose to advance Skriabin as his principal model of the contemporary artist-prophet after the composer's death in April 1915. Here I wish to suggest that this choice may well have been prompted by a further personal motive, connected with Ivanov's increasingly open cultivation of a prophetic image. Elsewhere, in a study of the validation of the writer's prophetic status in the Russian literary tradition, I have argued that writers seeking to establish their own prophetic credentials have commonly adopted the strategy of selecting a like-minded predecessor (usually after his death) and elevating him to the rank of prophet.⁵³ This technique almost invariably results in the writer who makes this pronouncement being hailed as the true interpreter of the deceased writer's legacy and therefore as his legitimate prophetic successor. This mechanism can be seen at work throughout the nineteenth century in Gogol's approach to Iazykov and Pushkin, in Dostoevskii's subsequent presentation of Gogol and Pushkin, in Solov'ev's speeches on Dostoevskii after his death, and – at the turn of the century – in the Symbolists' reading of Solov'ev and Dostoevskii. All these retrospective nominations of literary predecessors as prophets served to build up a solid chain of prophetic validation with its own self-perpetuating dynamics.

Ivanov's elevation of Skriabin to the rank of prophet forms part and parcel of this same tradition. His yearning for the public recognition of his own prophetic intuitions was clearly an important motive, whether conscious or unconscious, behind this step. After Skriabin's death, he almost immediately proclaimed him a prophet, first in a

⁵³ P. Davidson, *The Validation of the Writer's Prophetic Status in the Russian Literary Tradition: From Pushkin and Iazykov through Gogol' to Dostoevskii*, “Russian Review” 2003 (forthcoming).

number of poems, widely read at public gatherings and usually published in the same year; these poems were then incorporated and elaborated in a series of more extended and explicit public lectures, delivered at various venues between 1915 and 1920 and mostly planned for publication.

It is clear from all these sources that Ivanov's excitement over Skriabin's prophetic ideas derived from their close relation to his own theoretical ideals. In his first lecture on Skriabin he noted the similarity of their ideas (on the theurgic mission of art and its relation to the ideal of *sobornost'*) and commented that the only difference between them was the fact that Skriabin treated these ideas as "immediate, practical tasks" for realisation.⁵⁴ As he put it in one of his sonnets in memory of the composer:

Так, все мы помнили, но он единый – деял!⁵⁵

It is hardly surprising that Ivanov's ideas were so widely reflected in Skriabin's works, as the composer had steeped himself in reading Ivanov's theoretical works and verse since the time of their first meeting in January 1909.⁵⁶ Ivanov gave him an inscribed copy of his collection of essays, *Po zvezdam*, which - as we have seen - contained all his most influential statements on the prophetic role of the artist. According to a German journalist who accompanied Skriabin on his concert tour of the Volga in the spring of 1910, Skriabin regarded this collection of essays as the most important influence on him, alongside Nietzsche's work on Dionysus and the birth of tragedy.⁵⁷ Later, on 1 April 1912, Ivanov presented Skriabin with an inscribed

⁵⁴ "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo," in Ivanov, *Skriabin*, 27 (first pagination). These words were crossed out by Ivanov in the proofs and replaced by a reference to the two artists finding a "common language".

⁵⁵ "On byl iz tekh pevtsov (takov zhe byl Novalis)...", "Russkoe slovo", 14 October 1915, s. 5. In later versions Ivanov changed the end of this line to "no volil on i deial". See III, 565

⁵⁶ The meeting took place at an evening held in honour of the composer in the editorial offices of "Apollon". See Iu. Engel', *A. N. Skriabin: Biograficheskiĭ ocherk*, "Muzykal'nyi sovremennik" 1916 (December and January), p. 76; for the exact date of the meeting (31 January 1909), see *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva A.N. Skriabina*, ed. M. P. Priashnikova and O. M. Tompakova, Moscow 1985, s. 166.

⁵⁷ Ellen von Tideböhl, *Memories of Scriabin's Volga Tour (1910)*, "The Monthly Musical Record" 1926, no. 6 (1 June), pp. 168-169.

copy of *Cor Ardens*, expressing the hope that their acquaintance would deepen.⁵⁸

The seeds planted in these early years came to fruition after Ivanov returned to Russia in the autumn of 1913 and set up home in Moscow. This was the period of their closest friendship and most intensive creative collaboration.⁵⁹ At the time Skriabin was working on his "Predvaritel'noe Deistvo", conceived as a preparatory introduction to his hugely ambitious theurgic project "Mysterium", designed to mark the fulfilment of time and to bring about "the birth of new man".⁶⁰ In the summer of 1914, while writing the poetic text of this work, Skriabin constantly read and reread poems from *Cor Ardens*.⁶¹ In November he invited Ivanov and Baltrushaitis to a reading of the text and was relieved to hear their approval;⁶² reminiscences of Ivanov's verse and traces of his influence have been found in the work.⁶³

Small wonder, therefore, that Ivanov was excited by Skriabin's ideas: he found in them a mirror, confirming the validity of his own most cherished prophetic intuitions. The remarkable elegy, full of personal reminiscences, that he wrote soon after the composer's death, makes this entirely clear; it states that Skriabin openly "prophe-sied" (*veshchal*) the mysteries that Ivanov had long since "foreseen" (*providel*):

⁵⁸ This copy is held in the library of the Skriabin Memorial Museum in Moscow. For the text of the inscription and a facsimile reproduction of it, see O. M. Tompakova, *Skriabin i poety Serebrianogo veka: Viacheslav Ivanov*, Moscow 1995, s. 6-7.

⁵⁹ See "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo", in *Skriabin*, s. 26-27 (first pagination).

⁶⁰ Ivanov gives this account of Skriabin's conception of his work in *Skriabin*, s. 10 (first pagination).

⁶¹ From the memoirs of B. F. Shletser, cited in *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva A. N. Skriabina*, cit., s. 231.

⁶² Engel', "A. N. Skriabin: Biograficheskii ocherk", p. 92. For Ivanov's glowing characterisation of the poetic text of "Predvaritel'noe Deistvo" (later crossed out in the proofs and replaced by one word, "nezavershennyi"), see "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo", in *Skriabin*, s. 9-10 (first pagination).

⁶³ According to Tompakova, Skriabin worked together with Ivanov on the poetic text. See Tompakova, *Skriabin i poety Serebrianogo veka: Viacheslav Ivanov*, s. 12. For evidence of Ivanov's influence on the text, see I. A. Myl'nikova, "Stat'i Viach. Ivanova o Skriabine", in *Pamiatniki kul'tury: Novye otkrytiia. Pis'mennost'. Iskusstvo. Arkheologiya. Ezhegodnik 1983*, Leningrad 1985, s. 91.

О тайнствах вещал он с дерзновеньем,
 Как въяве видящий, что я провидел
 Издавна, как сквозь тусклое стекло.
 И что мы оба видели, казалось
 Свидетельством двоих утверждено⁶⁴

An earlier manuscript draft of this poem which survives in Ivanov's Rome archive was even more explicit: the verb "prorochil" was first used in place of the later "veshchal".⁶⁵ If Skriabin's art marked a "new [...] marriage of Poetry with Music" (novyi [...] brak Poezii s Muzykoi), as stated in the elegy, then Ivanov clearly saw himself as the prophet of poetry, who collaborated with Skriabin, the prophet of music, to create a new form of theurgic art in response to Beethoven's call to humanity to unite.

In this way, through the mirror image or double of Skriabin, Ivanov was able to convey that which he could not have stated directly: his faith in the validity of his own prophetic intuitions, realised in the composer's art. He was also able to deal with the all-important question of how to distinguish a true prophet from a false one. In a revealing passage from "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo" he discusses Skriabin's awareness of his providential, prophetic mission and dismisses the idea that this could have been an invention on his part or a deception:

⁶⁴ *Vospominanie o A. N. Skriabine*, "Sovremennye zapiski" 1937, no. 63, s. 169. The punctuation of the version published in *Svet vechernii*, Oxford 1962, s. 51-52, reprinted in III, 532, differs from the original publication of 1937 and appears to be erroneous. The elegy is undated but was evidently written in 1915 (as stated in the notes in *Svet vechernii*, 193), although not published until much later (unlike Ivanov's other poems on Skriabin, published at the time). The elegy was included by Ivanov in his essay, "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo," first read as a lecture in December 1915 and prepared for (unrealised) publications in 1916 and 1919. It is included in the proofs of the essay held in Ivanov's Rome archive, stamped with the date of 10 September 1916: "Vzgliad Skriabina na iskusstvo", proofs with author's corrections in pencil and ink, RAI, karton 26, papka 1 (this is the copy of the essay printed in III, 172-89; see the note in III, 736). It also occurs in the later proofs of Ivanov's book on Skriabin, due to be published by Alkonost; see Ivanov, *Skriabin*, s. 28-29 (first pagination).

⁶⁵ "Raskrylas' pozdno druzhby nashei zaviaz'...". Manuscript draft in pencil, RAI, karton 1, papka 1, l.1. Ivanov evidently replaced "prorochil" with "veshchal" to allow for the inclusion of the pronoun "on".

Себя самого Скрябин *предчувствовал* [особенно, провиденциально] отмеченным и как бы [духовно] помазанным на великое всемирное дело. Такое предчувствие, – я бы сказал: такая магнитность глубинной воли, по существу не обманывает своего носителя, хотя и порождает большей частью обманчивые представления форм и путей ожидаемого действия. Этот тайный голос, этот внутренний опыт не был, конечно, ни самолюбивым вымыслом, ни – тем менее – умыслом⁶⁶.

There is a certain ring about these words, which suggests that Ivanov also based his faith in his prophetic status on the testimony of his own “secret voice” and “inner experience”. Skriabin had confirmed to him the validity of this “inner experience” and had given his “secret voice” a public form. This is made plain in the new concluding section which Ivanov added to the end of his essay when he was correcting the proofs of his projected book on Skriabin. After reiterating his view of Skriabin as “the last artist-genius of our days”, who perceived the very essence of being (bytie) as a “tender mystery”, he quoted the last lines of his poem from *Nezhnaia taina* (1912), cited above as an epigraph to this essay. In answer to the question he had posed in his poem (“Снятся ль знаменья поэту? Или знаменье – поэт?”) he answered as follows:

Поистине, Скрябин сам был таким знамением, миру же оставил завет, что другого искусства, кроме вещего. т. е. воссоединяющего нас с самим бытием, отныне не будет.

In other words, Skriabin, who inaugurated a new era in theurgic art, is presented as an artist who had “answered” the question posed in Ivanov’s prescient verses and demonstrated the truth of his conviction that “новой свету, кроме вещей, песни нет”.⁶⁷

The example of Skriabin gave Ivanov the confidence to articulate his sense of his own prophetic destiny more openly. In his “Avtobiograficheskoe pis'mo” (January-February 1917), he returned to many of the ideas presented in poetic form in *Mladenchestvo* and developed

⁶⁶ V. Ivanov, *Skriabin*, s. 7 (first pagination). The words in square brackets were crossed out by Ivanov when he was correcting the proofs of his lecture for his book on Skriabin, due to be published by Alkonost; by this stage Ivanov evidently wanted to tone down his hyperbolic claims for Skriabin’s prophetic status.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, unpaginated manuscript pages between pages 36-37 (first pagination). For the printed text of these additional pages, see Myl'nikova, *Stat'i Viach. Ivanova o Skriabine*, s. 113.

them for a public audience. He makes the connection between the two works plain by including in his letter several stanzas from the autobiographical poem (which was not completed and published until the next year), using his own “prophetic” verse to authenticate the ideas that he presents more explicitly in prose. In the following passage, for example, he elaborates the earlier 1913 sections of *Mladenchestvo* that sought to validate his poetic vocation in terms of his mother’s prophetic visions of his destiny:

Но я унаследовал черты душевного склада матери. Она оказала на меня всецело определяющее влияние [...] Хотелось ей также, чтобы ее будущий сын был поэт. [...] Она была пламенно религиозна; ежедневно, в течение всей жизни, читала Псалтырь, обливаясь слезами; видывала в знаменательные эпохи вещие сны и даже наяву имела видения; в жизнь вглядывалась с мистическим проникновением (II, 7-8).

Ivanov returns to this theme even more directly later in the letter:

Мать воспитывала во мне поэта, показывала портреты Пушкина, гадала обо мне по Псалтырю и толковала мне слова о том, что псалмопевец был юнейшим среди братьев, и что руки его настроили псалтырь (II, 11).

He then reports that as an infant he would spend many hours deciphering a scrap of printed paper “accidentally” stuck to the wallpaper above his bed, bearing the text of Pushkin’s “Poet” (1827). As we shall see below, this direct link between Ivanov the future poet and King David the psalmist and prophet subsequently received a fuller poetic development in one of the stanzas that Ivanov added to *Mladenchestvo* in August 1918.

In addition to the personal example of Skriabin, the unfolding of historical events from the First World War through to the revolutions of 1917 played a substantial role in bolstering Ivanov’s sense of the validity of his earlier prophetic intuitions and in deciding him to make this awareness more public. When Nicholas II abdicated from the throne in March 1917 and the Grand Duke Michael declined to succeed him, Ivanov rejoiced, seeing this as confirmation of his earlier prophecies that art would “organize” the people and thereby enable them to achieve self-determination. In a letter to his friend the philosopher Ern, posted from Sochi on 7 March 1917, he noted that the telegrams announcing the Grand Duke’s renunciation of the throne had been sent out on the day of his patron saint,⁶⁸ St Viacheslav (4

⁶⁸ See Ivanov’s poem “Molenie sv. Viacheslavu” (dated “Na 4 marta 1917”), in

March); he then commented that the stronghold of autocracy which the Decembrist uprising, followed by a whole century of bloodshed, had been unable to overcome had suddenly, without bloodshed, miraculously melted away. At this point he quoted a few lines from his poem, "Ubelennye nivu", written in November 1914 shortly after the outbreak of war, and confessed:

Нечеловеческим плугом
Мир перепахан огныне...
Вырвано с глыбою черной
Коренье зол застарелых...

Страшно переживать исполнение того, что сам предвидел и в чем уверял других, потому что предвидел *realiora*, с полным математическим знанием, что они сильнее, чем *realia*; но когда они внезапно становятся на место "реалий", ты не удивлен, как другие, но изумлен больше других...⁶⁹

Both implicitly, by quoting from his poem, and explicitly, in the gloss that follows, Ivanov is making it clear that current events represent the fulfilment of his earlier prophecies. A few months later, he decided to air these feelings in a more public forum. When returning the proofs of his autobiographical letter (dated January-February 1917) to Semen Vengerov, he included the text of a new postscript (dated May 1917) and asked for it to be included as an appendix to his open letter. Although in the event it remained unpublished, the postscript provides interesting evidence of his readiness to don his prophetic mantle in public; as Gennadii Obatnin points out, it is full of the author's "sense of himself as a prophet, whose forecasts had been fulfilled".⁷⁰ Ivanov exclaims:

Волю всей своей жизни вижу исполнившеюся, Россию – свободной! Не знал, хотя и чаял с первых дней войны, что она – порог новой эпохи и что под этим предлогом могила самодержавия. Не чаял, хотя и был уверен, что нечеловеческим плугом мир перепахан огныне".⁷¹

which he addresses his patron saint, the Czech prince Viacheslav, with the prayer: "Slavianskoi nyne bud' sobornosti zizhditel'!" – IV, 55.

⁶⁹ V. I. Ivanov, Letter to V. F. Ern of 7 March 1917 (RGB), in Gennadii Obatnin, *Ivanov – mistik*, Moscow 2000, p. 162. "Ubelennye nivu", dated 20 November 1914, was first published in "Otechestvo" 1914, no.7 and reprinted in the anthology *Voina v russkoi poezii*, Petrograd 1915; for the full text of the poem see IV, 26.

⁷⁰ G. Obatnin, *Ivanov – mistik*, cit., s. 162.

⁷¹ "Pripiska k 'Avtobiograficheskomu pis'mu' (May 1917)", in *Ibidem*, s. 162.

He then quotes the same lines from his poem of 1914, followed by an excerpt from his essay of December 1914 on the war (“Vselenskoe delo”), as evidence of the validity of his prophetic intuitions. He goes on to explain that the purpose of the postscript is to add to his literary autobiography “черточку, кое-что объясняющую в моих творениях”:

Все, что писал я, вызывая насмешки трезвых наблюдателей действительности, о всенародном искусстве и о соборном творчестве, о будущем культуры, по-новому органической, о религиозно-самобытных энергиях русского духа, имеющих развиться в его окончательном историческом самоопределении, – имело ближайшей оговоренною или подразумеваемою предпосылкой державство воли народной. Я говорил, что мы, представители творчества келейного, мыслим и творим “про запас” для будущего, предуготовляя в духе народу-пришельцу горницу убранную. и что дело наше постольку нужное дело, поскольку оно организует народную душу.⁷²

It is clear from this extract that Ivanov found in recent historical events confirmation of his earlier view of art of the cell as a preparation for universal art, destined to organise the nation’s collective spirit and to determine its historical path. Although he rounded off the postscript by adding that history might well prove him wrong, he reiterated his staunch faith in art of the cell as the surest path to “true universality” (*istinnaia vsenarodnost*’).

Significantly, it was only after this point - after the combined impact of Skriabin’s death and the course of historical events - that Ivanov added the most openly “prophetic” stanza to *Mladenchestvo*; on 15/28 August 1918, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, he composed the first of the three additional stanzas (XLVI), describing his mother’s prophecy over the psaltery on New Year’s Eve that her son would become a poet-prophet, like King David:

Крепчая, песгун-вал качает
 Мой челн: за молотом плещет ширь...
 Мать новолетие встречает, –
 Гадает, разогнув Псалтырь:
 “В семье отца я, пастырь юный,
 Был меньшим. Сотворили струнный
 Псалтирион мои персты”...
 – “Дар песен вещие листы
 Тебе пророчат”... Неразлучен

⁷² Ibidem, s. 162-163.

С тех пор с душою их завет:
Как будто потаенный свет,
В скудели полый, мне поручен, –
Дано сокровище нести...
Пора младенчества, прости! ⁷³

These lines expand the passage from Ivanov's autobiographical letter cited above and confer on it the additional authority of verse. The whole of Ivanov's infancy is now framed between his mother's two predictions: her first opening prophecy (over the psaltery) of his poetic path (as the author of "still unknown psalms") before he was born, followed by her closing prophecy (once more over the psaltery), now likening him directly to the prophet and psalmist King David, as he prepares to leave the shores of infancy for the wider waters of his poetic vocation.

This marks the high point of the gradually ascending line in Ivanov's presentation of the artist as prophet that we have traced – a line which moved from theory (prophecy as an ideal to be promoted through art) to practice (prophecy as an ideal to be embraced in life), reaching a peak during the years 1914-1918 when Ivanov came closest to identifying his own role in history - alongside that of Skriabin – with his ideal.

As Ivanov had feared, history did prove him wrong; his prophetic intuitions were not borne out but swept away by the course of the revolution. In 1924 he left Russia and spent the rest of his life in Italy. What became of his ideal of art as prophetic in emigration? Did he continue to nurture his belief in his own prophetic role? The extent to which the prophetic ideal of poetry could be sustained by a Russian poet in emigration was a question that clearly preoccupied Ivanov. It crops up soon after his move to Italy in his correspondence with a fellow poet in exile, Vladislav Khodasevich.

Like Ivanov, Khodasevich had forsaken Russia for Europe; after settling in Paris, he came to Italy in 1924 to spend the winter with Gor'kii in Sorrento. Around this time he wrote to Ivanov about the difficulty of continuing to write poetry in emigration. Ivanov responded with a long letter, written on 29 December 1924 shortly before

⁷³ I, 253. In a note to this stanza Ivanov refers the reader to its source, Psalm 151:1-2 (a later additional psalm, not in the original Hebrew text).

the New Year; after invoking his traditional model of the poet-prophet, the psalmist David, he complained that he was also finding it difficult to play David's harp:

Что до Вас, [...] Вашей хандры, [...] ежели только Муза с Вами, окончательно бояться не могу: когда в поэте затоскует Саул, закономерно поднимет в нем свой голос и Давид. Что до меня, [...] Саул во мне стосковавшись по все чаще и слишком надолго пропадающем Давиде, сам пытается перебирать пальцами струны его заброшенной арфы, да не налаживается волшебная песня.

Staying in Russia would not have been any better, however. After noting the pervasive sense of spiritual death that he had experienced during his last summer in Moscow, Ivanov added:

И жадно хотелось переменить воздух и оглядеться в Европе и из Европы; но жизни на западе я также не узрел – и вот влачусь в пустыне мрачной. Остается обратить пустыню в пустынь, чего бы я и желал.⁷⁴

Ivanov clearly continued to define his creative life in emigration in relation to the same models as before: King David and the biblical prophet presented in Pushkin's poem. He no longer embraces Pushkin's Prophet as a model of the theurgic artist about to proclaim his message to the world; he now compares himself to Pushkin's Prophet at the stage *before* he receives the transforming blessing of divine inspiration, when he is dragging himself along in a state of spiritual thirst, attempting to transform his wilderness (*pustynia*) into a place of spiritual growth (*pustyn'*). His comment in the postscriptum to his letter ("[я] привык пустынножить на Западе долгими годами и рядами лет, только укрепляясь в своем русском самочувствовании") suggests that his sense of his prophetic calling as a Russian poet was strengthened, rather than weakened by the experience of living abroad.

We noted earlier that this had also been the case when Ivanov wrote the main part of his "prophetic" autobiography, *Mladenchestvo*, in Rome in 1913. His letter of 1924 signals a return to the more sober emphasis on spiritual efforts in life, rather than in art, first

⁷⁴ *Chetyre pis'ma V. I. Ivanova k V. F. Khodasevichu*, ed. N. N. Berberova, "Novyi zhurnal" 1960, no. 62, s. 285-286. For Khodasevich's later letter to Ivanov of 21 January 1925 and for interesting comments on their correspondence, see *Iz perepiski V. F. Khodasevicha (1925-1938)*, ed. John Malmstad, in "Minuvshee: Istoricheskii al'manakh", vol. 3, Paris 1987, s. 262-268.

introduced in this poem and in "O granitsakh iskusstva", but then temporarily displaced under the heady influence of Skriabin and his historical upheavals. In his memorable poem of recantation, "Palinodiia" (14 January 1927), Ivanov turned once more to the language and form of Pushkin's "Prorok" to indicate a move away from classical culture and a retreat to more austere forms of spiritual life; after wondering whether he shattered the idol of Hellas "in prophetic terror" (*v veshchem uzhasse*), the poet describes his flight to the foothills of the Thebaid, where he feeds on wild honey and locusts (the diet of the prophet St John the Baptist).⁷⁵ The biblical tradition of prophecy seems to have reasserted its dominance over the classical model. Distance from Russia, disillusionment in the revolution, and conversion to Catholicism – all these evidently played a role in bringing about this change of emphasis. The result, however, was not a renunciation but a renewal of faith in the prophetic calling of poetry, now more firmly anchored in biblical tradition and in the concept of the Word made flesh. Shortly after completing his palinode, Ivanov wrote a remarkable sonnet, first entitled "Poeziia", then "Slovo – Plot'", and finally "Iazyk" (10 February 1927). Poetry is once more described as a "prophetic hymn" (*veshchii gimn*), born of the marriage of spirit and earth (linked to language); as the "precursor of spirit-bearing creation" (*tvoren'ia dukhonosnogo predtecha*), its function is clearly prophetic (III, 567, 846, note).

Ivanov continued to write a wide variety of works of a prophetic character in emigration. The major work of his late years, "Povest' o Svetomire tsareviche: Skazanie startsa-inoka" (1928-1949) represents a grandiose attempt to recreate a prophetic and messianic chronicle in the old Russian style, replete with prophecies and biblical quotations. In addition to personal lyrics with a strong prophetic orientation, he also wrote several essays on a range of writers, paying particular attention to the treatment of prophetic motifs in their works. His essay on Virgil's messianic view of history (1931) stresses the Roman poet's unique role as the prophet of Christ to the pagans, reconciling

⁷⁵ See P. Davidson, "Hellenism, Culture and Christianity: The Case of Vyacheslav Ivanov and his 'Palinode' of 1927," in *Russian Literature and the Classics*, ed. Peter I. Barta, David H.J. Larmour and Paul Allen Miller, Amsterdam 1996, esp. pp. 98-99.

the classical and biblical traditions of prophecy.⁷⁶ In his essay on the laurel in the poetry of Petrarch (1932), he singles out Dante's use of the image of the stars as an example of a truly "prophetic image", defined as the "almost impersonal and involuntary expression of an objective truth intuited through faith".⁷⁷

A similar preoccupation with the relationship between art and prophecy informed Ivanov's late writings on Russian poets and poetry. In his essay on Pushkin, "Dva maiaka", first given as a lecture in Italian in February 1937 and published in substantially different Italian and Russian versions in the same year, he devotes much space to this issue. He returns to the crucial distinction between art and life that he drew in his lecture of 1913, "O granitsakh iskusstva", and relates it once more to Pushkin's "Prorok", demonstrating with singular passion that this is not a poem about the poet. He attacks the widespread confusion of Pushkin's Prophet with his ideal image of the poet, attributing this to the Polish poet Mickiewicz, who transferred his own prophetic aspirations to Pushkin (a perceptive comment, not without relevance to Ivanov's approach to Skriabin). He points out that Pushkin's Prophet undergoes a complete transformation of his individual personality, tantamount to death and incompatible with artistic creation:

"Пророк" есть образ целостного и окончательного перерождения личности, которое в некотором смысле равносильно смерти. Избранник становится безличным носителем вложенной в него единой мысли и воли. Если б он раньше был художником, то, конечно, перестал бы им быть. Он не искал бы уже творческого уединения, [...] но обходил бы моря и земли с проповедью, иноприродною искусству.

After a detailed paraphrase of the final stages of the transformation undergone by Pushkin's Prophet, designed to make plain his fundamental difference from the Poet, Ivanov concludes:

Между посвящением пророка и высшим духовным пробуждением поэта, несомненно, есть черты общие; но преобладает различие двух разных путей и двух разных видов божественного посланничества (IV, 335).

⁷⁶ Wjatscheslaw Iwanow, *Vergils Historiosophie*, "Corona" 1931, Year I, no. 6 (May), pp. 761-774.

⁷⁷ Venceslao Ivanov, *Il lauro nella poesia del Petrarca*, Estratto dagli "Annali della Cattedra Petrarquesca" 1932, vol. 4, p. 4.

Pushkin's ability to make and maintain this distinction is the basis of his special quality of "spiritual sobriety" (*dukhovnoe trezvenie* - IV, 342).

One gets the sense from this passage that Ivanov is trying very hard to clarify a key issue which had caused him (and his generation) considerable confusion. His construction of the image of the artist as a theurgic activist, endowed with prophetic powers, had taken to a new and potentially dangerous extreme a tendency which was already well established in the Russian literary tradition. He now seems to be intent on deconstructing this image by returning to its source in Pushkin's "Prorok". Significantly, the Russian version of the essay devotes far more space to denouncing the confusion of Pushkin's Prophet with the Poet than the Italian original.⁷⁸ The brief passage devoted to this topic in the Italian essay was evidently expanded in the Russian version to act as a necessary corrective, aimed at Russian readers, brought up in a tradition which revered the poet as prophet and sought to trace this view back to Pushkin as the father-figure of Russian literature. In the original typescript of the Russian version (held in Ivanov's archive in Rome), this particular passage is also the most heavily corrected section of the essay. The many changes and additions made by Ivanov are all aimed at reinforcing the difference between the Prophet and the Poet, as if Ivanov was still struggling with himself to overcome a residual tendency to merge the two vocations. For example, in the last extract cited above, Ivanov originally used the word "posviashchenie" to refer to the calling of both the Prophet and the Poet; to avoid any confusion between religious initiation and artistic inspiration, he later replaced "posviashchenie" with "vysshee dukhovnoe probuzhdenie", when referring to the Poet.⁷⁹

In his late essay, "Mysli o poezii" (1938, published in 1962), Ivanov made an extended and more theoretical attempt to clarify the relationship between poetry and prophecy. He argues that poetry in

⁷⁸ The relevant passage occurs in section 3 of the Italian essay, which turned into sections 5 and 6 of the Russian version. See Venceslao Ivanov, "Gli aspetti del Bello e del Bene nella poesia di Puškin", in *Alessandro Puškin nel primo centenario della morte*, ed. Ettore Lo Gatto (Rome 1937), p. 32. The preface states that Ivanov's essay was first given as a lecture at the Istituto per l'Europa Orientale on 9 February 1937. The Russian version first appeared in "Sovremennye zapiski" 1937, no. 63.

⁷⁹ "O Pushkine. Dva maiaka". Typescript with author's corrections in pencil. RAI, karton 15, papka 4, l.9.

the modern sense bears the same relation to the incantations and prophecies of the ancient “veshchii pevets (vates)” as the Muses do to Apollo, the god of prophecy. Although poetry therefore only represents a diluted form of its original prophetic source, it preserves the memory of its “native legacy” (nasled’e rodovoe), which it constantly strives to recover (III, 651-52). To illustrate this claim Ivanov returns to some of his most cherished examples of prophetic art: Virgil’s messianic Eclogue, the works of Dante, the art of the Renaissance, including Michelangelo and Raphael. As a powerful syncretic image, designed to embody the reconciliation of Hellenic wisdom and divine revelation, he makes special reference to Raphael’s depiction of Poetry, seated between two angels bearing tablets with the inscription from Virgil “Numine afflatur” (Inspired by the god) (III:655-57).

It is clear from these examples and the general argument of the essay that Ivanov continued up until the end of his life to embrace and promote the ideal of theurgic, prophetic art that he first advanced in his early verse and essays. The following passage from the essay of 1938 could in fact easily have been written in the 1900s:

Поэты суть жрецы-возвестители непредвиденного вдохновения; зеркала гигантских теней, которые будущность бросает в настоящее; [...] неведомые миру законодатели мира. [...] Поэзия рождает бытие в бытии, вторично создает знакомый нам мир, обновляет космос (III, 657).

Ivanov did not renounce or alter his faith in the ideal of prophetic art; the only difference was that he no longer believed in its full realization in contemporary art, as he had when prompted by the example of Skriabin.

In August 1939 Ivanov wrote a letter to Karl Muth, responding to a request for his views on the concept of Beauty advanced in a book by the German philosopher of culture, Theodore Haecker. The extract from this letter, eventually published in 1946 under the title “Ein Echo”, provides a valuable indication of the way in which Ivanov continued to construct his prophetic ideal of art. The passage falls into three distinct sections. In the first, Ivanov recounts a personal prophetic experience, communicated to him some thirty years earlier, when he heard an “echo” or faint call from the depths of his being; this took the form of a few Latin words on life as a constant process of “becoming”. In the second section, Ivanov explains how he transformed this treasured revelation into a Latin distich. In the third section, he relates the prophetic, forward-looking approach to life imparted to him in this way to Haecker’s concept of three types of Beauty -

Beauty of the first Being (Splendor), Beauty of becoming (Via), and Beauty of the second Being (Gloria), noting that contemplation of the last type of Beauty requires mystic or prophetic ascent.⁸⁰ It is clear from the juxtaposition of these comments with the preceding account of a personal prophetic experience that Ivanov linked his own brand of prophetic art to the third type of Beauty (as can be seen from the second poem of *Kormchie zvezdy*, "Krasota"). Thus we can see that Ivanov, up until the end of his life, presented his ideal of prophetic art in terms of three inseparable stages, mirrored in this tripartite extract: first, the personal visionary experience, then, its articulation in poetry, and finally, its translation into a philosophy of aesthetics.

The link between personal visionary experience and prophetic poetry was fundamental to Ivanov's theory and practice of the prophetic ideal in art. For this reason, he felt a particular affinity with Lermontov. In one of his last essays, "Lermontov" (1947), he characterised the Romantic poet as a visionary prophet, who had failed to appreciate the difference between the "vati primordiali" of the ancient world and Pushkin's entirely different but equally sacred notion of the poet.⁸¹ Part of Ivanov clearly wanted to follow Lermontov in his maximalist approach to poetry as a surrogate form of prophecy, along the lines developed by Solov'ev and his disciple Blok, while another part of him was willing to settle for the greater "spiritual sobriety" associated with Pushkin's approach to poetry. One could even argue that the periodic fluctuations in Ivanov's view of the relationship between poetry and prophecy were defined by his relation to these two competing Russian models of the Poet's relation to the Prophet.

Finally, we may note a significant fact: in the last years of his life, from 1945 onwards, Ivanov wrote very little poetry; instead he devoted himself to editing and annotating various biblical texts. Of particular interest for our subject is the introduction to the edition of the psalms that he prepared towards the end of his life for the Vatican.⁸²

⁸⁰ III, 647. *Ein Echo* was first published in "Mesa" 1946, autumn, no. 2, pp. 21-22.

⁸¹ IV, 359-360. Ivanov's essay on Lermontov was commissioned by Ettore Lo Gatto in 1947, written in Italian, and first published in 1958.

⁸² Ivanov wrote the introduction and edited the commentary for an edition of the Church Slavonic and Russian texts of the psalms: *Psaltir': Na slavianskom i russkom iazykakh*, Rome 1950.

The writer who modelled his own artistic life and his ideal of the poet as prophet on the psalmist David, the poet who composed his own "psalms" (such as "Psalom Solnechnyi", 1906, or the later cycle of sonnets "De Profundis Amavi", 1920), finally submerges his creative voice and retires to the invisible role of commentator on sacred texts (his name is nowhere mentioned in the edition).

It is clear from the ground covered in this essay that the ideal of the artist as a prophet remained central to Ivanov's work throughout his life. It was rooted in his personal experience of life, understood as a constant process of "becoming;" it informed his poetry, devoted to the cult of Beauty in its relation to Being, leading to the transfiguration of matter; it also determined the direction of his writings on aesthetics and his approach to past and contemporary art, aimed at the promotion of this ideal; finally, it defined his teleological view of history, seen as a gradual progression towards the realisation of this ideal, and his understanding of the national mission of the Russians in this context. His contribution to the Russian tradition of regarding the writer as a prophet was undoubtedly a substantial one. But how original was it?

The actual content of Ivanov's message was not particularly original: it took up the well-established debate about the relation of Russia to Europe, initiated by Chaadaev and running through the Slavophiles to Solov'ev, and developed it in the direction of an overall ecumenical spiritual ideal, consistent with mainstream Christian messianic tradition. Ivanov's insistence on the role to be played by art in the realisation of this prophetic ideal was no doubt the most original part of his message, but this approach had already been broached before him by Solov'ev.

The distinctive features that set Ivanov's contribution apart from that of his predecessors and contemporaries can be found in the form in which he presented his ideal, rather than in its content. First, there was the sheer range of his sources and depth of his erudition. Although his knowledge of Hebrew biblical tradition did not match that of Solov'ev, he was very well versed in Christian biblical and patristic texts, and his immersion in the classical tradition put him at a special advantage when it came to addressing the fundamental problem pertaining to the ideal of art as prophecy: the reconciliation of the biblical and classical traditions of prophecy. He was also a poly-

glot, conversant with the broad spectrum of European culture from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance to modern times. His familiarity with all the arts meant that his models of art as prophecy were drawn from painting, sculpture and music, as well as from literature. He was therefore able to draw on an exceptionally wide range of prophetic "predecessors" and to present Russian literature in its European context as part of a broad continuum, reaching all the way back to classical antiquity. This range of reference was a powerful tool, which conferred a special authority on his pronouncements and enabled him to take up the role of "Uchitel'" among his contemporaries.

The second major area in which Ivanov's contribution was distinctive was his renewal of the core connection between poetry and the Russian tradition of literature as prophecy, both in theory and in practice. Although prophetic themes are present in the verse of earlier poets, such as Pushkin, Iazykov, Lermontov and Tiutchev, they cannot be described as central to their work (with the possible exception of Lermontov). In the case of Ivanov's immediate predecessor, Vladimir Solov'ev, prophetic concerns were at the heart of his poetry, but his verse was not distinguished. Among the religious Symbolists, Ivanov put prophetic intuitions at the very centre of his poetic endeavour. Through his "difficult" and demanding style of poetry, he made mystery and prophetic initiation part of his readers' experience. The same was true of his practice of the art of translation, both in his choice of "prophetic" authors to translate (such as Dante, Novalis, Mickiewicz) and in his manner of translation, often designed to emphasise or to introduce prophetic motifs into the original.

The third innovative area was Ivanov's integration of the prophetic ideal into his system of aesthetics. His development of a new style of "metaphysical" literary criticism took forward the process initiated by Solov'ev's essays on theurgic art. Ivanov wrote for his contemporaries in the language of art, rather than of religion or philosophy, and presented a highly focused programme for the development of the prophetic ideal in contemporary art. He far exceeded Bely and Blok in the number, range and inner consistency of the essays that he wrote on this subject over some five decades.

Finally, mention should be made of one further important aspect of Ivanov's contribution: his engagement with some of the key problematic issues raised by the ideal of art as prophecy. These included the reconciliation of divine revelation with Hellenic wisdom and the

relation of the prophetic ideal as experienced in life to its expression in art. The fluctuations and changes of emphasis in Ivanov's presentation of the ideal of art as prophecy resulted from his confrontation of these central issues.

In sum, therefore, among the many writers who have contributed to the Russian tradition of literature as prophecy, Ivanov could justifiably be said to have achieved the fullest integration of the prophetic ideal in his life, art and aesthetics. He not only drew on the broadest range of sources and examples in his promotion of the ideal; he also conveyed it through a remarkable variety of innovative forms.