Transcending the Borders of Countries, Languages, and Disciplines in Russian Émigré Culture

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Edited by

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PREFACE

Since the publication of *Russian Émigré Culture: Conservatism or Evolution?* (Flamm et al. 2013) – the direct predecessor of this volume – some years ago, scholarly interest in topics regarding the culture of Russia Abroad and its exponents has not diminished: An ever increasing number of emigrated writers, artists, composers and other *культурные деятели* [people active in the area of culture] of Russian origin are being investigated, *émigré* networks reconstructed, and archives explored. Furthermore places hitherto considered to be peripheral are re-evaluated and turn out to be focal points of the Russian diaspora, albeit on a minor scale than "Russian Berlin", "Russian Paris" or even "Russian New York". Thus the picture of the Russian emigration and its cultural impact becomes much more multifaceted and colourful.

This second volume, again based on an international interdisciplinary conference held at Saarland University in Saarbrücken, testifies to the increased broadness of scholarly perspectives on Russian *émigré* culture. It displays new facets of this phenomenon of a vibrant culture far from its homeland and proposes new interpretations. Above all, it brings together Russian and non-Russian research on a subject that almost automatically tends to transport ideological subtexts, since many of the protagonists of Russian *émigré* culture had either been victims of ideological pressure or proclaimed ideologies of a specific Russian national and cultural identity or even of a spiritual mission. Understandably, present-day Russia looks at this topic, anathematised in Soviet times, differently, wishing to compensate for cultural losses, to unearth erased biographies, forbidden philosophies, and works of art hidden from the public, and to re-evaluate the relationship between Russia Abroad and Russia at Home in the sphere of culture.

Music had formed the predominant part of the preceding anthology since the first conference had been conceived as part of the festival "Russian Music in Exile", organised in 2011 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the death of N. Medtner. The editors of the present volume deemed it appropriate to achieve more of an equilibrium by giving additional space to other areas of culture.

* * *

The first section brings together papers devoted thematically to literature and geographically to "minor hotspots" of Russia Abroad. Chronologically it covers the time span from the earliest years of emigration up to the present.

Of all the *культурные деятели* that emigrated the writers and above all the poets among them were hit hardest by the loss of the homeland because their means of expression was language, in this case the Russian language. Whereas all the others might have to adapt to different tendencies, traditions etc., they could still use the tools they were familiar with. In the case of the writing profession sticking to the old tool, i.e. the Russian language, excluded them from the literary life of the country of adoption. Few of them chose to adapt linguistically partially or completely by writing in the old and the new language or by switching completely to the new language. The most famous example is undoubtedly Vladimir Nabokov who achieved fame first as a Russian, then as an English writer. The great majority, however, remained faithful to Russian as their language. It is not surprising therefore that they formed the core of *émigré* culture, that they championed the idea of Russia Abroad more than the others, that their circles were least open to fellow writers from the country of adoption,[1] and that the wish to turn the clock back or at least to go back was strongest among them.

One of the main themes on the mind of Russian *émigrés* in the first years after the revolution was the possibility of returning to Russia. Initial-

[1] An advantage of this splendid isolation is their easy recognisability. It is not surprising, therefore, that scholarship dealing with Russian *émigré* culture concentrated mainly on literature. Publications devoted to "Russian Berlin" or "Russian Paris" always put special emphasis on literature, and the writers saw themselves more often than not as the avant-garde of the *émigré* community. It is not surprising, therefore, that the literature on Russian *émigré* literature is abundant. Until the advent of *гласность* it (just like the literature it described) could only be published outside of the Soviet Union, and the authors were usually part of the *émigré* community (cf. Foster 1970, Karlinsky and Appel 1977, Kovalevsky 1971 and 1973, Shteyn 1978, Struve 1956, Poltoratsky 1972, to name just a few). Since then, however, Russian *émigré* literature and studies devoted to it have returned home (e.g. in the third, enlarged edition of Struve 1956, i.e. Struve 1996, published in Paris and Moscow, Bulgakov 1993, put together in the pre-war years, and newer publications such as Alekseev 1993, Glad 1999, Kasack 1996, Kodzis 2002, Mikhaylov 1993-2013, Nikolyukin 1994-1995 and 1997-2000) under the sobriquet *литература русского зарубежья* [the literature of Russia Abroad], and it has even achieved textbook status (cf. Agenosov 1998).

ly the idea was widespread that emigration would only be temporary. Some artists were even able to move between Russia Abroad (at that time mainly Berlin) and Russia at Home (i.e. Soviet Russia and later the Soviet Union), and others returned in spite of the fact that the political situation had not changed. In many cases this decision proved to have disastrous, even fatal consequences either immediately or in the 1930s at the latest. Obviously the topic of returning home could best be addressed in literature. But literature is notoriously ambiguous, and Dagmar Gramshammer-Hohl shows this in her analysis on Russian *émigré* poetry on homecoming. Often the overt message of literary texts is, as it were, subverted by pre- or intertexts and literary texts may in turn even subvert the reading of these pre- or intertexts. Thus the "grand homecoming narrative" prefigured in the return of the prodigal son and of Ulysses as well as another biblical motif, viz. the circularity of everything on earth, promise a "happy ending" on the surface. A closer reading, however, casts serious doubts on such a positive interpretation of both text and pre- or intertext.

Another big question that had to be addressed by the Russian *émigrés* was their relationship to the countries receiving them and especially the contact to the cultural life of their new surroundings (and even to the cultural life as it evolved in the Soviet Union). In the centres of emigration (especially in Paris) and in the early years the dominating attitude was that of "splendid isolation", neatly expressed in the concept of Russia Abroad. Ben Dhooge presents an alternative position taken by *émigrés* in one of the minor centres of the Russian emigration, viz. Prague.[2] Here a group of poets under the name of *Скит поэтов* saw the necessity of coming to terms with the new surroundings, with the new times, and even with Russia at Home in order to be prepared for a successful and triumphant return one day. In order to do so they proposed the concept of "living literature". In the cultural history of the Russian emigration this position was rather marginal and it eventually faded away.

For the Russian *émigrés* a way of cautiously opening up to the new cultural surroundings (while at the same time maintaining their cultural identity and asserting cultural equality or even superiority) was the presentation of their own culture. A prime example of this approach was the celebration of anniversaries of famous *культурные деятели*, above all of poets, that were organised so as to be attractive to a non-Russian public as well. A special occasion was the Pushkin centennial in 1937. The multiple pitfalls inherent in such cultural events are demonstrated by Wim Coude-

[2] On the Russian emigration in Prague cf. also the contribution of Marina Dmitrieva in the Fine Arts section.

nys in his analysis of the celebrations in Belgium. The fact that the centennial was not only commemorated by the *émigré* community but also by representatives of the Soviet Union mirrored the one-or-two-cultures paradigm. But in Belgium the situation was further complicated by the fact that it is hardly possible to speak of a Belgian culture. The francophone and the Flemish community celebrated separately and differently, and the political and ideological overtones differed, too. In the end the Pushkin centennial in Belgium turned out to be more of a mirror of the cultural and political situation of the host country than a presentation of the great Russian poet to the Belgian (Flemish and francophone) public.

Just as Belgium was not one of the centres of Russian emigration in Europe, so Shanghai could not claim to hold such a position in Asia. There the undisputed (and rather well-researched) centre was Harbin. The importance of Shanghai seemed to be minor by comparison. As Simo Mikkonen shows, however, this view may well be disputed, especially if the influence of the Russian *émigrés* in Shanghai on the local and even worldwide cultural life is taken into consideration. The importance of Shanghai is due to the fact that in contradistinction to Harbin, an essentially Russian town, Shanghai was a real metropolis where Russian culture was just one of many offerings to an affluent and interested public. Russian culture managed to hold its own in this cosmopolitan atmosphere and it achieved the highest degree of recognition in the realm of music and of ballet. Its influence reached as far as the American West Coast. Another aspect underlining the importance of Shanghai is the longevity of the Russian community there: it lasted until the Communist take-over in mainland China in 1949. But even after that Russian traditions lingered on in the now sinicised cultural life.

The contribution of Olga Velitchkina goes one step further in time and in cultural symbiosis. She analyses a most particular facet of the cultural life of "Russian Paris", viz. the cabaret culture. In its heydays, i.e. the interwar period, the cabarets catered to an affluent public that had stereotypical conceptions of what a "Russian cabaret" should be. The owners, managers, and those responsible for the programme did everything to meet the expectations of their patrons. An important part of the programme was always music, above all the so-called "Russian Gypsy music" that seemed to be the best expression of the unfathomable "Russian soul". In the postwar years the tradition was continued, but eventually it became petrified and lost its attractiveness to the public. Fortunately, however, another tradition arose, one that was far more satisfying musically. A second generation of musicians that were much more open to the musical development in Russia at Home created a new kind of Russian cabaret. In their

repertoire they amalgamated the old tradition (with the exception of the most worn-out evergreens such as *Калинка*) with the music of Soviet Russian choirs touring Western Europe, with Russian folk music, with Soviet popular songs, and even with politically *risqué* material from the bard scene in the Soviet Union. In doing so they not only introduced the Soviet tradition to Russia Abroad, but they also preserved the *émigré* tradition and eventually transmitted it to Russia at Home.

* * *

The second section deals with the fate of Russian artists and researchers of art in less known places of Russian emigration and examines, thus going far beyond the reception of their art in the respective host countries, the changing ideas on Russian art in a global context. To be able to contextualise the papers regarding fine arts, it is helpful to take a look at previous art historical research on the Russian emigration.

The "first wave" of Russian emigration – a result of the revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Civil War – became a topic in Soviet art history in the 1970s and 1980s in connection with the upcoming interest for the Silver Age. Initially emigration was touched upon only indirectly, through carefully commented publications of memoirs, diaries, letters and other documents. Important artists of the Silver Age like Alexandre Benois (Benois 1980), Mstislav Dobuzhinsky (Dobuzhinsky 1987), Konstantin Korovin (Zil'bershteyn, Samkov 1971), Konstantin Somov (Podkopaeva and Sveshnikov 1979), or the entrepreneur Sergei Diaghilev (Zil'bershteyn and Samkov 1982), returned after a long period of silence to the collective memory or, more precisely, to the consciousness of those social circles in the Soviet Union who shared cultural and intellectual interests.

During the period of Perestroyka and even more so after the end of the Soviet Union the scholarly discourse on Russian emigration intensified both in Russia and in the West. The new opportunities for work in Russian archives which were up to this time hardly accessible and the possibility of free exchange between scholars from Russia and from abroad stimulated new research. Among the scholars from different disciplines who initiated discussions on art and influenced them continuously were well-known authors like John E. Bowlt (Bowlt 1981), Fritz Mierau (Mierau 1988), Marc Raeff (Raeff 1990), Karl Schlögel (Schlögel 1994) and many others. Dmitri Severyukhin, Oleg Leikind and Kirill Makhrov from St Petersburg

deserve credit for having published encyclopedias on Russian *émigré* artists.[3]

Since the 1990s, research on Russian emigration in the area of art has been accompanied by a great number of exhibitions focusing on different issues.[4] The art works and documents shown in these exhibitions came both from public and from private collections. That means that from the beginning art dealers and private collectors as well as public institutions were interested in art coming from those who dared to start a new life outside of the Soviet Union.

Comprehensive exhibitions with "great names" turned the attention of the public also to those artists who neither represented the values and artistic orientations of the Silver Age nor those of the avant-garde, but managed the fate of being emigrants in an unorthodox way. It is interesting to see that exhibitions dedicated to artists like Ivan Miasoyedov and Nikolay Zagrekov were presented in Russia under the heading of "return".[5] This means that they were included in the universal Russian cultural heritage regardless of their political positions and place of birth in the former Russian empire.

For several years now Russian collectors of art have been very active on the international art market trying to obtain pictures and other art works of their compatriots, among them a lot of emigrated artists. At the same time the topic of Russian artistic emigration has been a constant part of the programme of Russian publishing houses.

The successor of the previously state-run publishing house "Искусство" [Art], now a privately financed Moscow publishing house, "Искусство – XXI век" [Art – the 21st century] has featured the book series *Художники русской эмиграции* [Artists of the Russian emigration] for more than ten years now. This series includes lavishly designed monographs on Russian *émigré* artists (both famous ones and others who were not so well-known in the West) who had moved to Berlin, Paris or New York. The texts are usually written by respected Russian and Western art historians. The series was started in 2005 with a survey of Andrey Tolstoy which followed the escape routes of the artists of the first wave of Russian emigration, including the stations Constantinople, Belgrade, Prague, Berlin and Paris, and presented a number of masterpieces. Furthermore, it listed a large number of different organisations founded by emigrants and described the wide spectrum of cultural and artistic activities. The author revised the old Soviet position which had tended to eliminate the emi-

[3] Severyukhin and Leikind (1994); Leikind, Makhrov and Severyukhin (1999).
[4] See, for example: Ex.-cat. (1995), Ex.-cat. (2003), Ex.-cat. (2014).
[5] See: Ex.-cat. (1998), Ex.-cat. (2004).

grants from collective memory and had denied for ideological reasons that those artists might have had any value for their homeland. This new position put an emphasis on the idea that the artists who had left the Soviet Union and had gone through an individual artistic development in the diaspora were a genuine part of Russian art as a whole. In the preface to Tolstoy's book, Dmitri Sarabyanov underlined the existence of very different forms of emigration: legal, illegal, accompanied by violence, voluntary, temporary or ultimate (Tolstoy 2005, 6). Subsequently, volumes of the series *Художники русской эмиграции* were dedicated to Nikolay Tarchov (Bialik 2006), Ivan Puni (Sarabyanov 2007), Nikolay Kalmakov (Bowlt and Balybina 2008), Chaim Soutine (German 2009), Marc Chagall (Rakitin 2010), Alexei Javlensky (Devyatyarova 2012), Zinaida Serebryakova (Rusakova 2014) and Natalia Goncharova (Lukanova 2017). These and other aspects are discussed later in the text in more detail.

The fate of a book on Marie Vassilieff (Raev 2015) which initially was to be published in the same series, demonstrates a characteristic tendency of *Художники русской эмиграции*. After long delays the volume had been shortened and was consequently moved into another series, geared towards a broader audience of non-specialists. The reasons for this step are connected to the fact that this artist's works did not reach prices on the art market as high as initially hoped for. Finally the book appeared under the title *Мария Васильева. Чужая своя* [Marie Vassilieff. The alien own]. The subtitle was chosen by the publishing house. It is symptomatic for the current Russian perspective that compatriots deciding to live abroad are seen as something like traitors. But at the same time, those who were successful in the West are welcomed back and presented as part of the one Russian culture.

In the last years researchers have shed new light on the Russian emigration concerning the use of media. Susanne Marten-Finnes (2012) revealed the double-face of the famous magazine *Жаръ-Птица* [Firebird] which addressed German and French readers as well as the emigrants themselves. It was created by Aleksandr Kogan in Berlin and appeared from 1921 to 1925 in his publishing house "Русское искусство" [Russian Art]. All 14 issues of the magazine were designed in a distinctively noble and retrospective manner. Furthermore *Жаръ-Птица* is also an example of the various contacts between parts of the emigrants and representatives of the new Soviet élite during the 1920s.

In retrospect and concerning the artistic emigration there are three interconnected questions. The first one is related to the process of the self-positioning of the emigrated artists and to the acceptance which they did or did not receive from the cultures of their host countries. In other words:

their success depended on the degree of their integration into the new culture they were now living in. The second question concerns the standing they had or still have in the culture of their homeland. And the last question deals with the contribution of the Russian diaspora to world culture in the past and today.

The essays in this publication, focusing on different locations, periods as well as personal and institutional representatives of Russian emigration, help to get more precise and subtle answers to these and other questions. The different texts lead the reader not primarily to the well-known centres of Russian emigration like Berlin or Paris, but rather to Istanbul, Bombay, Prague, Rome, and to the USA. While some of the essays are devoted to the first wave of Russian emigration, others deal with later stages up to the present.

Vita Susak and Aişenur Güler look at the short stay of the Ukrainian artist and participant of Moscow's avant-garde movement in the 1910s, Alexis Gritchenko (1883-1977) in Istanbul/Constantinople. Both authors focus on different aspects of Gritchenko's life and work there. They base their research on drawings, sketches and paintings created during his stay in Istanbul in 1919-1921 and draw on his picturesque memoirs. Susak examines how Gritchenko perceived the oriental town with its rich and diverse cultural heritage and the nimble live of its inhabitants. She shows how the artist managed to integrate the new impressions into his modern artistic language – the so called *Цветодинамос* [Tsvetodynamos, i.e. Colour-Movement]. Güler attends to the contacts of Gritchenko to Turkish artists like İbrahim Çallı (1882-1960) and Namık İsmail (1892-1935) and analyses the impact of Gritchenko on the development of modernism in Turkish art.

Lina Bernstein writes about the Russian Jewish artist Magda Nachman (1889-1957), who came to Bombay in 1936 together with her husband, the Indian nationalist M.P.T. Acharya. Her text shows that artistic and financial success did not necessarily guarantee a full integration into Indian society. The art of Magda Nachman was – because of the ethnic otherness of the artist – regarded as unsuitable to represent a young and independent country searching for its national identity.

The study of Matteo Bertelé focuses on two Russian artists who chose Italy as a place of emigration: the realist painter Gregorio Sciltian (1900-1985) and the abstract and action painter Mikhail Koulakov (1933-2015). Bertelé discusses the implications of political systems on their status within Italian society and art scene. Both artists took part in prestigious shows like the Venice *Biennale* and the Rome *Quadriennale*. But decisive for their success in Italy was the support of politically influential individuals

like the pro-fascist critic Ugo Ojetti in the case of Sciltian or the non-dogmatic communist Enrico Crispolti in the case of Koulakov.

Marina Dmitrieva examines in her essay the N.P. Kondakov-Institute (1925-1952) in Prague. This research centre, which was largely based on the personal enthusiasm of its members, focused on the study of Russian and Byzantine art and archaeology in exile with an emphasis on sacral art and nomadic cultures. It was supported by President Tomáš Garrigue Masarýk as well as by private sponsors and was in contact with many scholars, artists and intellectuals from Czechoslovakia and other countries. Dmitrieva characterises the research centre through its manifold activities as a place where the utopia of independent scholarly research met the utopia of Pan-Slavism.

The essay of Bettina Jungen is devoted to the correlation between emigration and the collecting of art. Jungen describes the network that allowed the US diplomat, journalist and translator Thomas Porter Whitney (1917-2007) to assemble a remarkable collection of Russian modern and nonconformist art. According to Jungen, it was not by chance that many works purchased by Whitney were bought out of *émigré* households. Furthermore, several purchases were facilitated by the *émigré* poet Alexis Rannit (1914-1985), Whitney's friend and adviser.

Olga Keller deals with Ilya Kabakov (b. 1933), the most famous Russian *émigré* artist in today's global art world. She aims to cover the mechanisms that led to contradictory assessments of his position in contemporary art. From a Western perspective Kabakov is considered to be both an integral part of contemporary world art and at the same time a prototypical representative of Russian art; in Russia he is accepted as an exception among his compatriots because of his successful career in the West.

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The third and final section covers musical aspects of the Russian diaspora, a field of musicology which, apart from some big names such as Stravinsky and Prokofiev, has been explored above all by post-Soviet Russian researchers (cf. Flamm et al. 2013). Indicative of the growing awareness of Russian *émigré* culture outside from Russian musicology as well are the steps Richard Taruskin has undertaken recently. He is the most eminent specialist on Russian music of our times and, in view of his monumental study on the Russian ties of Stravinsky (Taruskin 1996), predetermined for this topic. His latest anthology is programmatically entitled *Russian Music at Home and Abroad* (Taruskin 2016) and contains, in addition to several texts on Stravinsky again, reflections on the *émigré* composer Arthur Lou-

rié – who is being rediscovered with the help of a Swiss-based international society founded in 2005[6] and who has been the subject of a collection of scholarly essays (Móricz and Morrison 2014) – as well as on the general question "Is There a 'Russia Abroad' in Music?". In the early 1930s, Lourié had published an article in three versions and languages, claiming there was a Russian school of composers in the diaspora, but failing to name any common features – it was hardly more than wishful thinking. Or maybe it was more than that: *émigré* ideology. Uncovering and understanding such constructions of identities, both of the protagonists and of their commentators, remains one of the difficult tasks of research on *émigré* culture.

Rebecca Mitchell's contribution to this volume portrays Lourié's contemporary Leonid Sabaneyev, known to the musical world mainly as Skryabin's Eckermann. Sabaneyev's transformation from the pre-revolutionary herald of ultra-modernist utopias to the apocalyptic nostalgic of a lost Silver Age is put in the wider context of Russian *émigré* mental history. Disillusioned with the cultural outcomings of the Bolshevik revolution, the concept of progress in itself had become questionable, it gave place to a pessimistic worldview of metaphysical loss, discernible both in Sabaneyev's *émigré* writings and in the grandiose compositional project of his life in exile, the *Apocalypse*.

The musical quality of the verses of Marina Tsvetayeva, a central figure of Russian *émigré* poetry, has been praised and described by famous colleagues such as Andrey Bely or Boris Pasternak, who were relying partially on vague concepts such as the leitmotif, transferred from music to poetry. In her article Marina Lupishko analyses the metrical structures of some of Tsvetayeva's poems and puts them into the context of poetological discussions of contemporary writers, of modern scholarship, and of the poetess herself. Later Russian composers were well aware of Tsvetayeva's characteristical deviations from standard prosody, as Lupishko demonstrates with examples taken out of vocal cycles from Sofia Gubaidulina and Dmitry Shostakovich. Thus, intimate links between Russian *émigré* and Soviet Russian culture are highlighted.

A comprehensive picture of the development of Russian choir music in the first half of the 20th century is drawn in the contribution of Svetlana Zvereva. Preeminently concentrating on Orthodox sacred music, Russian choirs and church music composers faced hard times when religion was officially banned from public life in the 1920s. Against the general background of Orthodox church life both in the USSR and in the diaspora, Zvereva reconstructs first the stepwise disappearance of church choirs and

[6] Cf. www.lourie.ch

church music in the Soviet Union as well as the destinies of those musicians who stayed in Russia, some of them turning to secular repertoire. She then draws her attention to the fate of Russian church music and choirs in exile, their often mixed concert programmes and publishing activities, and the scarce emergence of new works. Though in Russian musicology many studies and documentary publications have already been dedicated to Russian church music, Zvereva's article presents many seldom heard or completely unknown facets of this central aspect of Russian *émigré* culture.

Finally, Elena Dubinets shares with us her insight into the complexity and diversity of multiple identities of present-day Russian *émigré* composers, often based on personal interviews. Already the biographies of first wave emigrants like Aaron Avshalomov (1894-1964), who abandoned his former wish of creating Jewish music when living for decades in China, show much more contradictions and fractures than often has been ascribed to Russian *émigré* composers. The simple idea of conserving one's (Russian) identity is hardly any longer valid when confronted with the multiperspective lives and changing ambiences, audiences and music markets of present-day composers of Russian descent, and it gets even more complex when considering the self-reflection given by these composers either in writings, interviews – or musical works. Thus, Russian diaspora tends to dissolve in global culture.

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A major problem encountered in preparing the papers for publication was the transliteration of Russian proper names. Basically British transliteration was used except in those cases when the names appear mainly in non-Russian sources in a specific. Still some inconsistencies remain.

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A scholarly conference and the publication of conference materials is always a collective endeavour and has to rely on the efforts of many helpers. Not all of them can be mentioned here. Special mention goes to Marina Lupishko, who launched the idea of the conference and, as the main organiser, took care of most of the preparatory work. During the conference a team of the Department of Slavonic studies at the Saarland University helped to overcome many difficulties; special thanks go here to Magda Telus. Petya Moll and Marco Klüh of the same department provided

invaluable help in preparing the papers for publication, as did Franziska Rundstadler.

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SECTION 1:

RUSSIAN *ÉMIGRÉ* CULTURE IN GENERAL; LITERATURE

"AND ON ITS CIRCUITS THE WIND RETURNS": INTERTEXTUALITY IN RUSSIAN *ÉMIGRÉ* POETRY ON HOMECOMING

DAGMAR GRAMSHAMMER-HOHL

Introduction

In literature of exile, memories of lost homes and reflections on possible or impossible returns play crucial roles. However, the question of how Russian literature of emigration displays and narrates return has, thus far, been widely ignored.

Return can be thought of either as physical or as virtual return, either as realised practice, possible option, utopian projection or as an impossible, yet desired, dream. In any case, return (or non-return) plays an important role in diasporic consciousness and is therefore also inherent to the literature of emigration in one way or another. Whereas factual return has been comparatively rare among *émigré* writers – not only among Russian ones[1] – imaginary homecomings are a recurring literary motif; for the displaced writer they are, in Svetlana Boym's words, not even an artistic device, but a strategy for survival (Boym 2001, xvii). Vladimir Nabokov, in *Strong Opinions*, stated that the writer's art was his real passport (cited in Boym 2001, 274). Nabokov himself was never tempted to travel back to Russia, although he constantly revisited his Russian past in his works. In a BBC interview in 1962 he claimed:

> I will never go back, for the simple reason that all the Russia I need is always with me: literature, language, and my own Russian childhood. I will never return. I will never surrender. (Nabokov 1962)

Among those who returned, there is, of course, the most prominent and tragic example of Marina Tsvetayeva, who travelled back to Russia in 1939 and "surrendered", by committing suicide, in 1941. There are many

[1] See, for instance, Behring et al. 2004, 639-649, and Neubauer and Török 2009.

others who, upon their return, experienced new losses rather than retrieving what had been lost. As Yevgeny Vitkovsky put it:

> Для поэта-эмигранта нет пути назад: он потеряет либо голос, либо свободу, либо жизнь, либо все вместе. […] Для поэта-эмигранта в России XX века путь к дому закрыт. Лишь чужая земля способна дать жизнь его поэзии. (Vitkovsky 1995, 14-15)

Thus, the final return seems to be the end of the story, and therefore linked, at least, to metaphorical death. The longing for and prospect of homecoming, on the other hand, set creativity and writing in motion.

What can be observed in this connection is that literatures of exile – and notably return narratives – are characterised by a high degree of intertextuality. Topoi of expulsion, peregrination, and homecoming form part of world literature's "aesthetic arsenal" (Behring 2004). Through intertextual references, literature of emigration lends the exilic experience a time-transcending quality: emigration is represented not as an individual's fate, but rather as that of a worldwide, transhistorical community of exiles, exiled writers, writers in general, or even humankind itself (in the metaphorical sense of "exile"; see Bronfen 1993).[2] *Émigrés*, thus, favour literary models in their writings that can be understood as "signs of identity in exile" (Behring 2004, 516). However, different emigrations seem to favour different models. In Polish literature of emigration, for instance, references to national martyrology are of particular importance (ibid., 517). Russian literature about return has its own set of preferred reference texts. This article's aim is:

- to give examples of recurring intertexts;
- to provide analyses of selected works of first-, second-, and third-wave emigration from the perspective of intertextuality, with a focus on poetry; and
- to explore how Russian literature of exile negotiates what might be called the "grand homecoming narrative", and how it subverts dominant models of narrating belonging, longing, and return.

[2] On this "timelessness" see also Ranchin and Blokina (2016, 176): "[…] именно мифологические образы, генерирующие и накапливающие культурные смыслы за долгое время все новых и новых истолкований и варьирования, приобретают особенно высокую ценность и оказываются как бы изъяты из времени. […] Поэт, возводя события своей жизни к мифологическим архетипам, изымает их из потока времени, поднимает над бренным миром."

Intertextuality

Intertextuality has been described as "the text's memory" (Lachmann 1990, 35). The manifest text (post-text) "remembers" a reference text (pre-text), or, in other words, the present text reminds the readers of an absent text through signals of reference. The intersection, or even interaction (ibid., 71; Seljak 2010, 76), of both texts opens up a new textual quality. It provokes a semantic difference or, in Renate Lachmann's words, a "semantic explosion" (Lachmann 1990, 57): intertexts may preserve, but also defer, dissimulate, hide, suspend, or delete original meanings (ibid., 37), thereby resisting disambiguation and the idea of a "closed" text. Through the crossing of two or more codes, intertextuality produces double or multiple readings – not only of the manifest, but also of the pre-texts. Theories of intertextuality thus reject the idea of a pre-text's mere unidirectional impact on a post-text but assume that the post-text also influences the pre-text, conferring new meaning to it (Seljak 2010, 78).

Milan Kundera, in his French novel *L'Ignorance* [Ignorance] (2000), expresses the assumption that the homecoming of exiles is expected to be a "Grand Retour" [Great Return] capitalised, carried out in accordance with some preexisting "mode d'emploi" (Kundera 2005, 30) [operating instructions; Kundera 2002, 23]. These "operating instructions" obviously consist of the pre-texts that inform our preconception of what it means to return home:

> « Ce sera ton grand retour. » Et encore une fois : « Ton grand retour. » Répétés, les mots acquirent une telle force que, dans son for intérieur, Irena les vit écrits avec des majuscules : Grand Retour. Elle ne se rebiffa plus : elle fut envoûtée par des images qui soudain émergèrent de vieilles lectures, de films, de sa propre mémoire et de celle peut-être de ses ancêtres : le fils perdu qui retrouve sa vieille mère ; l'homme qui revient vers sa bien-aimée à laquelle le sort féroce l'a jadis arraché ; la maison natale que chacun porte en soi ; le sentier redécouvert où sont restés gravés les pas perdus de l'enfance ; Ulysse qui revoit son île après des années d'errance ; le retour, le retour, la grande magie du retour. (Kundera 2005, 9)

> ["It will be your great return." And again: "Your great return." Repeated, the words took on such power that, deep inside her, Irena saw them written out with capital initials: Great Return. She dropped her resistance: she was captivated by images suddenly welling up from books read long ago, from films, from her own memory, and maybe from her ancestral memory: the lost son home again with his aged mother; the man returning to his beloved from whom cruel destiny had torn him away; the family homestead we all carry about within us; the rediscovered trail still marked by the forgotten footprints of childhood; Odysseus sighting his island after years of wan-

> dering; the return, the return, the great magic of the return.] (Kundera 2002, 4-5)

The common features of these pre-texts frame, as I argue, the "grand homecoming narrative".

Among the most widely used pre- or intertexts in Russian *émigré* literature on homecoming are:

- the biblical "блудный сын" [prodigal son];
- the Old Testament's Book of Ecclesiastes with the verse about the wind that returns on its circuits ("Возвращается ветер на круги свои", which has become a winged word in Russian);
- and, not least, the myth of Odysseus, previously mentioned in Kundera's quotation – according to Alfred Schuetz, the "most famous home-coming in the literature of the world" (Schuetz 1945, 369).

The prodigal son

An illuminative example of an intertextual reference to the parable of the prodigal son is Ivan Bunin's well-known poem "И цветы, и шмели, и трава, и колосья...":

> И цветы, и шмели, и трава, и колосья,
> И лазурь, и полуденный зной...
> Срок настанет – господь сына блудного спросит:
> "Был ли счастлив ты в жизни земной?"
>
> И забуду я все – вспомню только вот эти
> Полевые пути меж колосьев и трав –
> И от сладостных слез не успею ответить,
> К милосердным коленям припав. (Bunin 1967)

Bunin wrote these lines on 14 July 1918, two months after he had fled from Moscow to Odessa; from there he escaped to Constantinople in January 1920, leaving Russia forever (Vitkovsky 1995, 452).

The reference to the prodigal son, in this text, clearly evokes a return setting. The peaceful and harmonious image of a warm summer's day, depicted in the first two verses and revisited in the second stanza, marks the beginning and the end of the persona's path of life. Between them, obviously, lie experiences that the lyric subject would rather forget. By the grace of God ("милосердие") he is able to renew this past moment of happiness at the end of his life, although only in memory. His journey comes full circle, and he regains what had been lost. The initial peace and

harmony, the resonance with the surrounding world, is identical with what is retrieved in the end – just as is the case in the Bible (Luke 15:11-32), in which the prodigal son is restored his former status and identity upon his return to his father's house: the father's kiss and embrace as well as the clothes and shoes the son is given demonstrate that he has recovered his former respectable position, and a ring is put on his finger, which grants him the right to act in the name of his family (see Rienecker 1969, 371).

Jesus's parable of the prodigal son, however, connotes first and foremost sin, guilt, repentance, and forgiveness. The son who left his fatherland has erred and done wrong, and only through his rueful return does he get absolution. From this perspective, Bunin's poem can be read as expressing doubt that leaving one's fatherland might result in happiness. Moreover, the one who leaves home in search of happiness elsewhere makes himself guilty: only upon his return can he be freed from his sin.

"And on its circuits the wind returns" (Eccles. 1:4-7)

Another widely used biblical intertext is the following excerpt from the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes:

> [4] Род проходит, и род приходит, а земля пребывает во веки.
> [5] Восходит солнце, и заходит солнце, и спешит к месту своему, где оно восходит.
> [6] Идет ветер к югу, и переходит к северу, кружится, кружится на ходу своем, и возвращается ветер на круги свои.
> [7] Все реки текут в море, но море не переполняется: к тому месту, откуда реки текут, они возвращаются, чтобы опять течь. (Еккл. 1, 4-7)

As a winged word in Russian, "the wind that returns on its circuits" has two essential meanings: first, it expresses the idea that everything recurs, and second, it signifies a return to the starting point, like in the biblical text (Shulezhkova 2011, 107). This second meaning prevails in Russian literature of emigration, throughout its different waves. It seems to be linked to the image of "взвихренная Русь" [Russia in the whirlwind], introduced by Aleksey Remizov in his eponymous chronicle of the revolutionary years, published in 1927 (Remizov 1991). The revolution is associated with a whirlwind of destruction that sweeps and swirls up Russia, thus allowing for renewal and rebirth.[3]

[3] In the chapter "О судьбе огненной", which had been published in 1918 and 1919 as a separate work (in 1919 under the title *Электрон*) and which is consi-

We meet the reference to the returning biblical wind in poems of Vyacheslav Lebedev, Nikolay Otsup, Nikolay Turoverov, Irina Odoyevtseva, Vladimir Veydle, Aleksandr Galich, and Igor' Chinnov. Interestingly, these poems do not refer exclusively to the biblical pre-text, but partly to each other as well. A dialogue can be observed which unfolds between these texts, developing competing readings of the original verses and thereby providing different narratives of homecoming.

Skit poet Vyacheslav Lebedev referred to the "biblical wind" in his 1928 poem *Вечернее возвращение.* Just as in Bunin's poem discussed above, his poetic persona is a son that imagines his return home in the future:

Оставшись жить, оставшись ждать,
Несу тебя, моя чужбина.
И вот – года считает мать,
Когда опять увидит сына.

... И я вернусь с чужих дорог,
Такой смирившийся и жалкий.
И робко стукну о порог
Концом своей дорожной палки.
И будет вечер тих тогда,
Под крик стрижей над колокольней.
И будет сердцу больно-больно
За эти шумные года.
И будет вновь по-детски верить,
Подняв тысячелетний гнет.
И ветром Библии дохнет
От раскрывающейся двери...

О, как узнаю средь морщин
Твои черты, что, помню, были...
– Ты крикнешь, жалостное: –
«Сын!»
И я, растерянное: –
«Ты ли?». (Lebedev 1994)

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dered the "philosophical centre" of *Взвихренная Русь* (Averin and Danilova 1991, 20), it says: "В огненном вихре проба для золота / и гибель пищи земной. / И вместо созданного останется / одно созидаемое – / персть и семена для роста." (Remizov 1991, 370) And further on: "Все совершается в круге судьбы. / Люди, звери и камни родятся, растут, / чтобы погибнуть, / и погибают, чтобы родиться." (ibid., 371) According to Stephen C. Hutchings, the circle that Remizov's whirlwind describes is more of a "spiral in which each return to the beginning progressively raises the point of departure to a higher level" (Hutchings 1997, 217-218).

There is no explicit reference to the prodigal son, though both sons are depicted in a similar way: Lebedev's poetic persona is miserable and resigned, and he is knocking on the door of his homestead with humbleness. He has fled from the "noise" of his years in a foreign land ("шумные года") to find the peace of home ("И будет вечер тих тогда"). On the other hand, rather than a kindhearted father, it is his old mother who yearningly awaits his return – whereby mother figures traditionally symbolise the home- or motherland. Her opening of the door parallels the return of the biblical wind.

However, the poetic persona's homecoming is not as he had expected it. He is aware that his mother – that is, his former home – will have changed. Nevertheless, he is bewildered when facing her: he does not seem to recognise her, whereas she recognises him in an instant. The return of the same and to the same promised by the biblical verse thus turns out to be doomed to failure.

In 1936, the first-wave poet Nikolay Otsup, on his part, wrote the following lines:

Возвращается ветер на круги своя,
Вот такими давно ли мы были и сами,
Возвращается молодость, пусть не твоя,
С тем же счастием, с теми же, вспомни, слезами.

И что было у многих годам к сорока,
И для нас понемногу, ты видишь, настало:
Сил, еще не последних, довольно пока,
Но бывает, что их и сейчас уже мало.

И не то чтобы жизнь обманула совсем,
Даже грубость ее беспредельно правдива,
Но приходят сюда и блуждают – зачем? –
И уходят, и все это без перерыва. (Otsup 1994)

In this poem, the two notions of "the wind that returns on its circuits" become intertwined. On the one hand, we are confronted with the idea of the eternal return of the typical life cycle: the persona appears as part of a "we" that shares its experiences with many other people. These experiences are linked to the stages of life. The poetic "we" positions itself on a threshold in the life's middle: there is "still" strength, although it is fading, and some "already" lack energy. This image echoes Dante's *Divine Comedy* with its well-known line "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita" ("Земную жизнь пройдя до половины" in Lozinsky's translation) – another

prominent intertext of Russian *émigré* literature that is worth investigating in more detail.

The close link between the experience of displacement and the feeling of growing older is a common topos in literature of exile (see Gramshammer-Hohl 2015). It can be traced in this poem as well. The eternal coming and going of people, described in the last stanza, seems to equal a law of nature that is challenged by the poetic persona: why do people have to be wanderers ("блуждают – зачем?"), the lyric subject asks. The verb "блуждать" (to roam, to wander, to err) is associated with the erring of the above-mentioned prodigal son, "блудный сын". From this perspective, Otsup's poem can be read not only as an account of the eternal human life cycle and the certainty of people ageing, people dying and others being born, but also as a return narrative: it expresses the persona's certainty in the closing of the circle, that is, in a future homecoming.

Nikolay Turoverov, in four short verses written in 1937, takes up the "returning wind" motif, but contests the idea of an eternal recurrence of the same:

> Возвращается ветер на круги своя,
> Повторяется жизнь и твоя и моя,
> Повторяется всё, только наша любовь
> Никогда не повторится вновь. (Turoverov 1965)

It remains open what kind of love the persona is speaking of: love of another human being (a woman, a child), or love of the homeland. In any case, we are confronted here with the idea of exclusivity: there exist such strong feelings as cannot be renewed.

In Irina Odoyevtseva's poem "Над зеленой высокой осокой скамья…", published in 1952, the wind blows not only through space, but also through time. It is indeed reverting back; however, the persona does not know to which origins the wind is returning: to the lyric subject's place of birth and former home in Petrograd, to Mesopotamia, the "cradle of civilisation", or to Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark is said to have landed after the Flood:

> Над зеленой высокой осокой скамья,
> Как в усадьбе, как в детстве, с колоннами дом.
> Возвращается ветер на круги своя,
> В суету суеты, осторожно, с трудом.
>
> Возвращается ветер кругами назад,
> На пустыню библейских акрид и цикад,
> На гору Арарат, где шумит виноград