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# ANDREY BELY AND SERAFIM OF SAROV (PART ONE)

John E. Malmstad

No Russian writer, major or minor, has written so compulsively about himself and has tried so insistently to impose his own version of himself and his times on posterity as has Andrey Bely. Boris Bugaev or, as he might have preferred it, one of the several 'personalities' (*lichnosti*) of his 'individuum', stands at the centre of attention from his first published work, the *Second (Dramatic) Symphony* (1902), which he insisted was but a record of his own experiences in the spring and summer of 1901, to the 1928 'confession' *Pochemu ya stal simvolistom* (*Why I Became a Symbolist*) and the multi-volume memoirs on which he was still at work at the time of his death in 1934. In between lie the mid-career *Kotik Letaev* (published in 1922, but written earlier), which Bely encouraged readers to receive as autobiography (although it is anything but as straightforward as that),<sup>1</sup> and a host of other works in which matter-of-fact and matter-of-fiction co-exist so uneasily as to tempt the critic to abandon any attempt at sorting out one from the other. We move nervously across an open boundary between record and invention, in which the only constant is the reader's awareness of narrative 'literariness'. It is easier to call Bely's fictional world *autobiographie romancée* (not a bad definition for fiction in general) and get on to other matters.

Bely's massive self-presentation in the many drafts of an Autobiography that never became (nor could become) definitive would seem to leave the biographer with little to do except paraphrase. As archives begin to reveal their treasures, we are at last gaining access to rich and varied comments from other sources. They not only provide new means of testing Bely's published accounts, but are giving us information on matters about which he chose or was forced to be silent or circumspect.

Bely and Serafim of Sarov (1759–1833) must strike even specialists as a highly unpromising topic, so meagre are references to Serafim in the autobiographical works available to us. However, letters and other sources reveal an extent and depth of involvement with the great

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Russian saint never before suspected. That his life and works received idiosyncratic treatment at the hands of Bely, a chronic mythomaniac, will not surprise anyone familiar with his creative handling (some would say abuse) of all the major ideological 'influences' he experienced during his life. But beyond that dimension of study, we see in Bely's encounter with the gentle saint and his commitment to him and to the core of his teachings not only an unbroken thread running throughout the long years of a turbulent life, but something with which to test and, I believe, prove the essential rightness of Bely's insistence on the unity of his life, all signs to the contrary notwithstanding. At the very least it demonstrates the striking coherence of Bely's thematic obsessions. I want first to present the context for Bely's discovery of the saint, then his engagement with him, and finally examine his singular significance in Bely's life.

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Not long after his birth on 14 (27) October 1880, the Orthodox Church formally received Boris Bugaev into its communion with the rite of baptism, performed early in November by the archpriest of the Trinity Arbat Church, Vladimir Semenovich Markov.<sup>2</sup> In this Bely's parents followed dictates of custom (and law: only the Church provided a registry of birth), not conscience. Despite great differences of temperament, age and background, Nikolay Vasil'evich Bugaev and his wife, Aleksandra Dmitrievna, had at least one thing in common: both were believers in name only. Aunts and uncles on both sides of the family professed either aggressive atheism or indifference to religion, while the traditional religious ways of Bely's maternal grandmother provided amusement for the whole clan.<sup>3</sup> For sixteen years, before being transferred to the staff of the Church of Christ the Redeemer, Father Markov made ritual visits to the Bugaev household at Christmas and Easter, but only because Professor Bugaev was far too polite ever to think of denying him admittance.<sup>4</sup>

Bely remembered his father as an 'enemy of everything connected with the Church; he approached religion from a rationalist point of view'.<sup>5</sup> Yet he was hardly the run-of-the-mill Darwinian positivist that most of his university colleagues were. He had worked out a complex philosophical system of 'evolutionary monadology', in which man's moral evolution, as reflected in 'religious emblems', played a central role.<sup>6</sup> He was prepared to listen with interest in June 1901 to Anna Sergeevna Goncharova's account of her Paris conversion to theosophy and her meetings with prominent theosophists like Besant, Leadbeater,

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and Pascal: 'Papa took a tolerant attitude towards the main dogmas of theosophy (karma, reincarnation), finding, in his brochure *The Fundamentals of Evolutionary Monadology*, that these conclusions of theosophy were well-founded philosophically.'<sup>7</sup> Thus, in January 1886, during one of his wife's many absences in Petersburg, it was he who took it upon himself to teach his five-year-old son the rudiments of scripture (*zakon Bozhiy*). Until then the boy, who had been taught to say the Lord's Prayer (*Otche Nash*) before going to bed, although not a word of it had been explained to him, had thought God's name was 'so to speak' (*tak skazat'*), so commonly did these words follow his father's references to the deity.<sup>8</sup> 'So to speak' also dominated his father's account of the biblical 'allegories' that January, Bely would later recall,<sup>9</sup> but unbeknownst to either parent, the instruction in the Old and New Testaments made a profound impact on the highly impressionable child who had long since learned to hide from them anything that had stimulated his interest or imagination. He dated his 'first powerful religious experiences' from that time.<sup>10</sup> The Bible stories became a part of his most private inner world. Most significantly, he saw in the story of Christ's innocent suffering and passion the very image of his own victim-like existence in the warring household of his parents.<sup>11</sup>

His many governesses were forbidden to discuss religion with him, but in the autumn of 1887 a serpent entered the 'progressive' professorial Eden on the Arbat when his mother engaged a new servant, remembered only as Annushka. She immediately took pity on the lonely, withdrawn child and began telling him stories. Among them were Old-Believer Apocrypha and, of particular note: '*It was she who narrated, in her own words, the Book of Revelation. I began to await the end of the world.*'<sup>12</sup> In one of those odd coincidences that litter Bely's life, he first encountered Vladimir Solov'ev at that same time, when the philosopher visited the Bugaev apartment and the seven-year-old boy was presented to him. A few months later (February 1888), during the reign of terror of a particularly nasty Swiss governess, Mlle Marie (she liked to slap the child during his lessons and was soon dismissed), Annushka did her best to shelter him and told him vivid tales of the Antichrist. The boy now began 'to await the coming of the Antichrist.'<sup>13</sup> His mental state can well be imagined from the fact that when his mother read him Turgenev's 'Phantoms', he had an attack of hysterics. As at several times in the past, doctors forbade his exposure to any belles-lettres. He now spent all his time with Annushka and her Old-Believer world. In February 1889 he underwent what he would

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refer to laconically only as 'an outburst of strange mystical experiences'.<sup>14</sup>

In September 1891 he was enrolled as a pupil at the private grammar school of Lev Polivanov. Until then he had received what little education he had from his parents and governesses. He had made real progress with the only governess he ever liked, Mlle Belle Radin, and with a private tutor, who finally, in the autumn of 1889 and throughout 1890, gave him some formal instruction in *zakon Bozhiy* in preparation for his entrance to school (catechism being a required part of the curriculum).<sup>15</sup> The boy did as well in it as in his other subjects. If these regular religious lessons made any impression on him, he made no note of it in any of his autobiographical writings beyond a mention of a Father Nikolay Pavlovich Dobronravov as one of his teachers in the winter-spring of 1898: 'his lessons were interesting; he was able to interest us in the history of the Church by his cultivated exposition of the subject.'<sup>16</sup> The emphasis on 'cultivated exposition' rather than on the subject itself, is telling.

Throughout 1894-95 he read avidly but unsystematically, by sneaking books from his parents' libraries. This 'clandestine life', a period he would remember as 'utter and meaningless penal servitude',<sup>17</sup> came to an end in October 1895 when he met one of his young neighbours, Sergey Solov'ev. He began to visit the Solov'ev apartment, at first once a week, then every day. Ol'ga and Mikhail Solov'ev, brother of the philosopher, provided enormous intellectual stimulation and treated him as an equal. They encouraged him to read widely and, most important, urged him to discuss his reading with them. For the first time in his life he found himself in an atmosphere where talk about the arts (especially recent European developments) and about philosophy flourished, not warred, and it acted on him 'like a corkscrew'.<sup>18</sup>

By early 1898 his passionate response to everything from Bal'mont, Dostoevsky and Ibsen to Madame Blavatsky, Confucius and the *Upanishads*, which led him to Schopenhauer, made Ol'ga Solov'eva, apparently concerned that things were getting out of hand, remark to Blok's mother on her young friend's 'excessive predilection for the most obscure (*tumannye*) and complex things, quite inappropriate . . . for his age'.<sup>19</sup> His parents would have been even more concerned had they been aware of what was going on. They did not even know their son had so neglected his schoolwork that he faced a re-examination to pass into the eighth class. This he hid from everyone, and what he

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regarded as deceitful behaviour provoked a deep depression that culminated in an extraordinary revelation:

. . . my pessimism turns into a kind of ominous anxiety; a few weeks before the examinations, in Holy Week, a very powerful mystical experience happens to me at the Trinity Church on the Arbat. During the magnificent liturgy a scene unfolds, seemingly prophetic, of an immense future: I see the two cupolas of a *'Temple of Glory'*, whither mankind will ascend; I begin to think that Antichrist will come to this Temple; and, like lightning, the thought strikes me that everything that is unclear and ominously vague in the soul is a dim foreboding of the coming of Antichrist; there arises, for the first time clearly, the idea of the end of world history (before Vladimir Solov'ev); shaken, I rush out of the church and run up to Voronukhin Hill (above Krymsky Bridge), and there passes before me a succession of dazzling images from the unwritten mystery-drama *'He Who Has Come'* (i.e. Antichrist); that evening I jot down a plan of the scenes of this 'mystery', and during the days that follow I sketch out the scene that was subsequently published (in botched form) in the 3rd issue of *Northern Flowers*. After that I often visit Voronukhin Hill and look from there at the spring sunsets; and I think about the future fate of humanity and of art; at these moments the line to be adopted in my future *'sermon of symbolism'* begins to take clear shape within me: the first shift from pessimism through catastrophism (the end of the world) to religious symbolism and Christianity I experienced, dispirited as I was by examination resits, during that melancholy spring.<sup>20</sup>

He recalled this eschatological experience, with its first hint of a shift from 'pessimism' to 'catastrophism' to Christianity, in the first volume of *Zapiski chudaka (Notes of an Eccentric, 1922)*, where a chapter on Vladimir Solov'ev immediately follows.<sup>21</sup> And he always insisted on dating it 1898, that is, two years before the appearance of Solov'ev's *'Kratkaya povest' ob antikhriste'* (*'Short Story of the Antichrist'*, 1900). There is no reason to doubt Bely's assertion — his experience is testimony to the chiliastic mood dominant at the turn of the century.

Up to this point, references by Bely to Christianity are conspicuous by their absence: the account of the vision marks the first explicit mention of it in the *'Material for a Biography'*, the most candid autobiographical narrative presently available to scholars. The Solov'ev family, unlike Bely's, was deeply religious,<sup>22</sup> but its members were wise enough never to force their own interests and beliefs on their young friend. They could, however, expose him to the figure of Vladimir Solov'ev himself, and Bely often met him at their apartment from the autumn of 1898 on.<sup>23</sup> Conversations with the Solov'evs about 'the end of world history' followed in the winter months (January—

February) of 1899, but what Bely called an 'Apocalyptic note' stirred in him only dimly that year.<sup>24</sup>

In the autumn Bely entered Moscow University, where systematic exposure to the natural sciences 'totally absorbed him', leading him, much to the astonishment of the Solov'ev family, to 'preach a philosophy of natural sciences dreamed up by me'.<sup>25</sup> With this he tried — successfully, he thought — to reconcile his devotion to Schopenhauer; and to it he added yet another element at the end of the year when he began seriously to read Rozanov and especially Nietzsche, whose *Also sprach Zarathustra* produced a 'giddy effect' on him. 'The crucial year 1900 found me in the midst of such intense and varied experiences.'<sup>26</sup>

The figure of Vladimir Solov'ev dominates Bely's biography in the year 1900. To him he credited the awakening of his 'first interest in religious-philosophical paths [*puti*]'.<sup>27</sup> Early that year he learned that Solov'ev had delivered a lecture entitled 'On the End of World History' (the 'Short Story of the Antichrist') in Petersburg. Mikhail Solov'ev astonished him when he remarked: 'In general, Borya, Volodya has taken your theme', by which he meant that of the 'mystery' 'He Who Has Come', about which the young man had spoken to the philosopher's brother.<sup>28</sup> Bely now read Solov'ev's poetry for the first time and recognized in it his own inner voice, murmuring 'the end is already nigh'. Finally, in May, his first 'real encounter' with Solov'ev himself took place. It left an unforgettable impression:

At this time (the end of April, the beginning of May) there took place my inward encounter with Vladimir Solov'ev and my conversation with him on the day when he was reading his Third Conversation with the 'Story of the Antichrist'; during this conversation I realised that my high-school 'revelations' at the Arbat Trinity Church in 1898, which had led to the writing of the scenes from 'He Who Has Come' — were true, that the end — '*was approaching*'; and that it was necessary to prepare for the battle with the Antichrist and the meeting with Christ; that very evening I was supposed to read my fragment to Vladimir Solov'ev, but because of the late hour we postponed the reading until autumn, when Solov'ev was due to be in Moscow. M. S. Solov'ev said to me afterwards that he liked my fragment more than he did the 'Story of the Antichrist'.

After that I walk around as if reborn; and I begin to take a strict attitude towards the events in my life and feelings: from the angle of the struggle within me of the Christ and Antichrist principles; during this May I experienced moods related to the moods of the knight in the second part of my *Northern Symphony*; at the same time, during this spring, some of my old childhood experiences came flooding back into my mind: nightmares and fairy tales; but then they had been dreams, whereas now they clustered around me in reality; it was as if I could see through *reality* to

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the '*ancient truths*' which used to lie in wait for me in the Arbat, on the Maiden's Field; my state of awareness is comparable to Blok's lines: '*I began to be amazed at everything, on everyone I glimpsed the seal*'; and this '*seal*', or rather, these '*seals*' seemed to me to be the '*seals*' of Christ and Antichrist, imprinted upon us in view of the imminent appearance of the Antichrist in the world . . . I was intending to talk all this over in the autumn with Vladimir Solov'ev whom, since my discussion with him, I had begun to regard as my teacher; on one point only was I in profound disagreement with Vladimir Solov'ev: on the question of his attitude to Nietzsche; to me Nietzsche appeared as a '*white child*', tormented by devils; and Nietzsche's very illness I explained to myself as the result of his having been tormented by demons, precisely because in the deepest core of his being he had not betrayed the forces of light.<sup>29</sup>

That conversation was never to take place: Solov'ev died on 31 July. But in the autumn Bely looked over Solov'ev's manuscripts with the philosopher's brother and began a close study of his philosophy.<sup>30</sup>

From then on both Solov'ev and Nietzsche became an integral part of Bely's inner world.<sup>31</sup> It is often hard to recognize the '*real*' Russian and German philosophers in the writings about both that poured from Bely's pen in the years immediately following. Bely's '*creative response*' led him to fashion around each a private mythology (for example, that '*white child*' in the excerpt above) reflecting his own millennial desires and coloured by his first intense reading of the New Testament in December 1900, on the eve of the new century:

. . . Serezha and I immerse ourselves in the interpretation of the Gospels; we spy on the workings of grace in the present; our mystical experience at this time is the recognition of apocalyptic feelings connected with the colour '*white*'; laughingly we tell each other that we are researching the '*white elements*' of life; in them we see the spirit of an approaching great era, the advent of Sophia Divine Wisdom and the Spirit of the Comforter . . .<sup>32</sup>

Bely could share these premonitions of the '*white elements*', the recurring hallucinatory immanence of Apocalypse in human affairs, only with the members of the Solov'ev family and with his other closest friend of the time, often his sharpest debating opponent, a university classmate, Aleksey Sergeevich Petrovsky (1881–1958), a fervent admirer of Rozanov and Leont'ev.<sup>33</sup>

Bely greeted the new century with hope and expectation. Until the end of his life he would remember the year 1901 as the '*epoch of the dawn*' (*epokha zari*), a year of '*maximal mystical tension and mystical revelation*',<sup>34</sup> when he enjoyed experiences of ineffable illumination



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which would not be recaptured until his conversion to Anthroposophy a decade later. The year was no less pivotal for Petrovsky:

For A. S. Petrovsky this year was the year of a great spiritual revolution which happened to him in the course of a few days: from being an atheist, a sceptic, to some extent a cynic, he turned into a man of prayer, heeding the voice of Diveevo and Sarov; he became a pillar of Orthodoxy, burying himself in the reading of the *Philokalia* and the *Menaea*; from that time he began to think about monkhood . . .<sup>35</sup>

In January, during conversations that went on for hours, Petrovsky had 'mobilized all the power of his irony and scepticism' against what Bely called 'the strongest outburst of religious expectations' he had yet himself experienced.<sup>36</sup> Now, in February, Petrovsky suddenly became fanatically religious:

For me the third great event of this month is Petrovsky's unexpected and even alarming conversion to the sources of Orthodoxy; completely shaken, he comes to me and says that some benevolent hand is leading him to God; this headlong turn to God and the Church after months of maximal revolt and demonic nods and winks à la Rozanov rather frightens me; just as before Petrovsky had shown me his 'devil's' tongue, so now, converted to God, he experiences with utmost intensity the 'dark force's' attack on him; he detects even in my words hints of the *Antichrist*; he suspects people of being possessed by demons; and his gesture is one of penitence, humble prayer and fear of staring into 'abysses'; but — 'abysses of horror' swarm around him; he comes to me in these moods, sitting up with me till 2 o'clock in the morning, and our discussions about God and the devil sometimes turn into a kind of mystical séance, when I begin to believe myself that the 'demons' surrounding him are attaching themselves to me; for me there is a manifest note of 'Huysmansism' in him. He always summons up in me the leitmotif of the demon, of the Antichrist.<sup>37</sup>

Shortly before, Petrovsky had mocked 'from the right', i.e., from the standpoint of Rozanovian scepticism, Bely's devotion to Solov'ev; now he attacked 'from the left', i.e., from the position of strict Orthodoxy.<sup>38</sup>

In March Bely introduced Petrovsky to the Solov'evs, and the young student made 'an enormous impression on Ol'ga Mikhailovna', who began 'to believe him in everything'.<sup>39</sup> The same month, a new subject in Petrovsky's conversations further stimulated Bely's specific religious interests:

. . . A. S. Petrovsky and I chat more and more often about Serafim, Sarov, the Serafim-Diveevo cloister where a sister of his is a nun; I read a biography of Serafim and penetrate more and more into the apocalyptic spirit of Diveevo;

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A. S. corresponds with Diveevo; thus the Diveevo tradition begins to enter my soul; at the same time I read whatever I can about the monastery at Optino and the elder, Amvrosy, and I reread *The Brothers Karamazov*: I see Alyosha [Karamazov] as 'white'; I read K. Leont'ev's biography of 'Father Sederholm'. Monasteries and a monk's cell seem to me a desired and peaceful haven; thus A. S. influences me more and more with the monastic notes developing in him.<sup>40</sup>

Berdyayev has called Serafim the greatest Russian saint.<sup>41</sup> Bely's fascination with him and the whole elder (*starets*) tradition, especially as manifested at the Optino monastery, a major centre for pilgrimage, intensified throughout 1901.

Bely gave expression to it in the work he would call a 'random fragment, almost the official minutes [*protokol'naya zapis*] of that real and immense symphony',<sup>42</sup> which he lived through during the first half of 1901, the *Second (Dramatic) Symphony*:

. . . A. S. Petrovsky and I experience unforgettable evenings filled with dread anticipations of some gigantic future; A. S. during these years always evoked in me the feeling of some menacing 'end' hanging over us; the thunder of apocalyptic events from the future clearly could be heard . . . I consider that some phrases from this *Symphony* are prophetic; . . . the elder Ioann who appears on the pages of the *Symphony* came to me through the impression of my conversations with Petrovsky about Serafim and Diveevo; he reflected Petrovsky's view of Orthodoxy at the time; the 'passive and knowing' individual, A. S. Petkovsky, who crops up in the *Symphony*, is that side of A. S. Petrovsky which influenced me at that time in my self-development towards canonic Orthodoxy; O. M. Solov'eva at that time saw Petrovsky as just such a 'knowing' person; whereas Popovsky depicted that side of A. S. against which I was struggling at that period: a sui generis 'esprit mal tourné' who could see nothing but temptation and the devil wherever he looked; A. S. did not trust in Vl. Solov'ev's doctrine of Sophia; he saw it as containing eroticism and 'chaldaism'; 'Solov'ev was a Chaldaean,' he would say . . .<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, in a letter sent to Ivanov-Razumnik in answer to his request for a commentary on the real-life prototypes behind the characters in the *Symphony*, Bely wrote on 20 November 1915 (some eight years before the account set down in the 'Material for a Biography' passage quoted above):

And 'Aleksey Sergeich Petkovsky' is my friend from university, or rather: one half of him; the other half of him went into Popovsky; but this is *between you and me*. Petkovsky is A. S. Petrovsky, now an anthroposophist, one time university friend of mine and participant in our 'Solov'evian conversations'; at that time he was going through a very agonizing transition from *materialism* and *scepticism* to 'mystical' awareness which took two forms in him: one moment he would become

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a 'doubting churchman', the next moment a pure and lucid mystic; since the *Symphony* was written for 'my own people', for an intimate circle, I expressed my attitude to the two sides of my friend 'pedagogically', depicting one side as *Popovsky* and the other as *Petkovsky*; this explanation is between you and me, of course, because neither *Popovsky*, nor *Petkovsky* are the real *Petrovsky* . . . <sup>44</sup>

As *Petrovsky* swung from one extreme to the other, Bely dreamed of a synthesis of the most diverse elements.<sup>45</sup> He believed that man was on the verge of achieving it in *Apocalypse*, signs of which he saw and 'read' everywhere in the immanent world.

*Petrovsky's* constant criticism of *Solov'ev* may have irritated Bely enough for him to caricature his friend mercilessly, if 'pedagogically', in the figure of *Popovsky*, whose thin lips are always twisted in a barely perceptible smile. But his attacks began to have an effect in July, when Bely carefully studied the works of *Leont'ev* and reread several volumes of *Solov'ev*:

. . . generally speaking a change takes place within me concerning my absolute acceptance of *Solov'ev's* philosophy; firstly, *Solov'ev*, as a philosopher, strikes me as abstract; secondly, *K. Leont'ev* with his strict view of the 'monastic path' shifts my position somewhat in the direction of the Church and its elders; a strict path is essential, the path of genuine *esoteric experience*; I am still not clear whether this is the path of theosophical 'gnosis', or the 'interior prayer' [*umnoe delanie*] of Orthodox elders, but one thing is clear: the 'path' is necessary; and *Vl. Solov'ev* does not yet give the 'path' (in the sense of the path of prayer or of spiritual meditation); furthermore, an exact interpretation of *Revelation* is required, and not just an incoherent, mystical experiencing of its texts; moreover, *Rozanov's* works and the study by *Merezhkovsky* seem to me 'gnostically' more concrete than *Solov'ev* in solving the fundamentals of a true path; both *Rozanov* and *Merezhkovsky* strike me as enemies, unable to be repulsed by *Solov'ev's* abstract conception alone; *Solov'ev* had 'experience', but he took it with him to the grave; and now we need to solve our new religious-philosophical problems in our own way . . . the end of the *Symphony* turns into a parody on the extremes of our own mystical experiences during the spring of 1901. *Petrovsky's* 'scepticism' towards 'neo-Christian' romanticism grows stronger within me.<sup>46</sup>

The result of Bely's new sceptical attitude towards 'neo-Christian', i.e. *Solov'evian*, romanticism was, as he noted, a decisive change in the ending of the *Symphony*, with a new emphasis on spring and the unironized character of the archpriest *Ioann*:

In August there finally ripens within me a plan to 'smash' the apocalyptic romanticism of the *Symphony*. I at first end it on a note of maximal pessimism with a picture of the extinction of the whole human race . . . *Musatov's* entire

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apocalyptic ideology is the *'first pancake that always turns out badly'*. The despairing final scene of the *Symphony* I replace with the scene set in the Novodevichiy Monastery where it is clear that nothing has perished, that *'many radiant joys yet remained for people'*; it turns out that only Musatov and his *'associates'*, the premature apocalyptics, have perished; Father Ioann, symbol of the Johannine principle and of the elders, was the only one to know in advance the errors of Musatov's gnosis — but he had kept his knowledge to himself; the *'knowing'* person along with the old woman Mertvago (canonically Orthodox) and Father Ioann (the principle of esoterism in Orthodoxy) assert: 'Now surely you can see . . . that it is *approaching'* (*Symphony*, Part IV). But *what* is it that is approaching? The answer to this is given by the trees in the front-garden outside the window; they *'beneath the pressure of the fresh breeze exulted and cried in a sing-song voice: "Lo! the bridegroom comes at midnight"'* (idem). The bridegroom is Christ. *His Second Coming is approaching, that, as yet unclearly formulated in consciousness, is the upshot of all my inward realizations during this year.* The mysteries of Sophia and Her Coming are but precursors of the main event: *the Second Coming of Christ.* In this note, which will henceforth grow stronger within me, the whole style of my ideology already carries a different nuance from the ideology of Blok, whom as yet I do not know; for Blok the alpha and omega of his realizations is expectation of the Coming of Sophia; for me, however, from this autumn on Sophia Herself is Christ's garment; Her coming is the sign of the supreme event: the coming of Christ. In the *Symphony* the elder Ioann knows this, but for Musatov it is unclear; that is why he perishes.<sup>47</sup>

Bely did not of course precipitately abandon former ideals, but his correspondence (with Margarita Morozova, Emily Metner, and Blok himself) provides abundant evidence of a subtle and highly significant shift, one that grew ever greater with time, from Solov'evian Sophiology and a Feminine Ideal, to which Blok would remain faithful all his life, to the figure of Christ. A deepening interest in a new kind of Apocalypticism that Bely called 'the apocalyptic spirit of Diveevo', the spiritual legacy of Serafim, accompanied and expressed the decisive change of direction in his thinking.

The appearance of the fantastical figure of Anna Nikolaevna Schmidt, with her claim that Solov'ev had been the incarnation of Christ and she the World Soul, only confirmed Bely's belief that Christ must be the focus of his strivings and that he had 'to have a strict path under the supervision of a person with spiritual experience'.<sup>48</sup>

For a time Bely hoped to find such a person and 'path' within the Orthodox Church and its tradition of spiritual elders (*starsy*). Berdyaev has written of his generation, which included Bely:

Members of the intelligentsia returning to the Orthodox Church revered the elders' tradition and sought spiritual guidance from them. At this time this was even more

typical of the intelligentsia, in its attempts to become truly Orthodox, than of the traditional Orthodox who had never left the fold. Some of those outside the Church, such as theosophists and anthroposophists, likewise developed a veneration for the elders, whom they regarded as 'initiates'. The elders were becoming a kind of myth . . . Characteristic of these currents in Orthodoxy at this time was the cult of St Serafim, whose way of life was represented as a new, 'white' form of monasticism, informed with the Holy Spirit. Conversations recorded between St Serafim and his friend and disciple Motovilov were felt to contain a new and profound revelation of Orthodoxy centring on the Holy Spirit: the contemporary cult of the elders was viewed as a continuation of the same esoteric tradition in Orthodoxy . . . Serafim really did contain a 'white' radiance . . .<sup>49</sup>

Berdyayev could be describing Bely's own experience with Serafim over the course of the next two years. Similarly, Berdyayev's rejection of the 'obscurantism' and the 'traditional monastic-ascetic Orthodoxy, hostile to knowledge, science, and culture' of the Novoselov circle paralleled Bely's ultimately negative reaction to it when Petrovsky, in the autumn of 1901, tried to interest him in its activities.<sup>50</sup>

Petrovsky's untiring apologia for Serafim had far more success, especially as Bely's new doubts about Solov'ev continued to nag and he began to feel a waning of the mystical fervour for Her that he had experienced in the earlier part of the year. His reading, however, was hardly limited to standard religious texts:

[In September] my encounter with Petrovsky becomes somehow particularly fruitful; we draw together absolutely on the subject of Orthodoxy, on the desire to seek the path; I immerse myself in interpretations of Revelation (that by Auberlen, amongst others), I read something of Swedenborg's volumes, 'L'Apocalypse expliqué'; A. S. initiates me further and further into Sarov and Diveevo; he gives me a little icon of Serafim and his biography written by Chichagov (archimandrite Serafim) . . . From this month on Pavel Nikolaevich Batyushkov, grandson of the poet and cousin of A. S. Goncharova, begins to make frequent appearances in our house; he and I spend long evenings talking about theosophy, about which I already know a fair deal from books by Besant and Leadbeater; he tells me about Mead and the latest news of the Theosophical Society; twice a week I visit A. S. Goncharova, with whom I become ever more closely connected through elements in my inner development; the '*Path of initiation*' becomes the summons of my soul: [Mabel Collins's] *Light on the Path* makes a very strong impression upon me;<sup>[51]</sup> . . . I switched to reading the Church Fathers in the museum; and above all I begin to study the works of Isaac of Syria, which left a very strong impression on my soul:<sup>[52]</sup> . . . [in October] I am very sombre at heart . . . I feel miserable and gloomy; this is the background which gives rise to the note in my Symphony: 'They awaited the *Comforter*, but it was the *Avenger* who approached'; A. S. Petrovsky slips me the chronicle account of the Serafimo-Diveevo Monastery;

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and from now on this becomes my bedside book; the image of Serafim, and the entire ceremony of his prayers quicken in my soul; from now on I begin to pray to Serafim; and it seems to me that He is secretly leading me; the image of Serafim as an invisible helpmate displaces the image of the deceased Vladimir Solov'ev within me; I live for Diveevo and for the reports of Diveevo from A. S. Petrovsky's sister who is a nun at the convent.<sup>53</sup>

The juxtaposition of the most seemingly incompatible sources in Bely's reading during those two months is very typical of him and the Russian intellectual tradition in general. Inevitably, his highly personal vision of Serafim (as of Solov'ev before) blended occultist and Christian motifs.

Bely's new faith in Serafim was soon put to the test. In October, his mother, who had long suffered from nervous disorders, fell ill.<sup>54</sup> By November her doctor recommended that she enter a private clinic. Suddenly, on a day Bely said he would never forget, she returned home and announced that she faced a dangerous operation.

... I was so startled that I started to fret; that evening, after locking myself in my room and lighting a candle before the icon of Serafim, I began to pray to him; I prayed for several hours in succession, begging Serafim to help mama; and suddenly there was a serene silence; I could sense that the holy elder was there next to me; and I could feel clearly from him that my prayer had been heard and that mama would not be threatened with the operation; when she went back to the clinic the next day, mama heard from [Professor F. V.] Snegirev the decision that *the operation would not take place, because a marked improvement in the condition had occurred*; I concealed my prayer to Serafim from everybody, but the certainty had taken root within me that my prayer *really had been heard by Serafim*; from then on my thoughts would turn to the saint with every event in life. And sometimes I would pray in front of the icon for whole evenings on end.<sup>55</sup>

This 'miracle' did not, however, commit Bely to Orthodoxy in any exclusive way: throughout the same period he cemented his friendship with the theosophists Batyushkov and Goncharova and continued his reading of theosophical literature. But his devotion to Serafim certainly became an integral part of his insistence on what, in June 1901, he called 'Christian theosophy'.<sup>56</sup>

The next specific references to Serafim occur in Bely's accounts of the summer of 1902. (In the intervening months he had begun a dialogue with Merezhkovsky and Gippius about their 'new Christianity', anathema to Petrovsky and the Solov'ev family,<sup>57</sup> and had decided that he and Merezhkovsky were 'brothers in Christ'.)<sup>58</sup> He spent the summer at his father's small property of Serebryanyy Kolodez' in the

province of Tula, south of Moscow. There, as during the previous summer, he closely observed the tonality of sunrises. He noticed that a 'note of masculinity' replaced the 'note of femininity', as the 'rose-coloured' hues of 1901 now became 'blindingly golden',<sup>59</sup> a highly significant change: in the colour theory on which he had been working since the previous year, shifts in the spectrum corresponded to movements on the 'path of enlightenment' (*put' posvyashcheniya*).<sup>60</sup> His prayers and an inner connection with Serafim (*vnutrenne oshchushchaemaya svyaz' so sv. Serafimom*) intensified,<sup>61</sup> but so did his old interest in Nietzsche, whose *Zarathustra* he read for the first time in the original. This certainly reflects his new friendship with Emiliy Karlovich Metner (1872–1936), a fervent apologist for everything German. Bely had met him casually in September 1901, but in April 1902 they had their first serious conversation. From then on Metner became his closest confidant in all matters religious and philosophical, and over the next decade Bely's letters to him provide unique information on his ideological development.

In his first letter to Metner (7 August 1902) Bely anxiously inquired if he had yet read the 'letopis' Serafimo-Diveevskogo monastyrya'.<sup>62</sup> He also shared his observations on a whole series of atmospheric phenomena:

Nonetheless there twice took place in the sky something ineffably joyful which found its 'external' expression as a synthesis of incongruent (or rarely congruent) sunsets: a combination of a rose-coloured, religious, mystical, feminine sunset, symbolizing the Holy Church, the World Soul, Sophia, Lumen Coeli Sancta Rosa (Merezhkovsky), and of a golden, Nietzschean, man-godly, self-affirmatory sunset . . . is this ineffable synthesis of two most typical and contrary sunsets not a *symbol* drawing attention to itself . . .<sup>63</sup>

He went on to discuss aspects of his colour theory and its relation to theosophy, but the emphasis throughout the letter falls squarely on his image of Christ.

Bely's struggle to find his own 'path' inevitably involved a personal definition of Christianity. A year before, in August 1901, he had made the following entry in a notebook:

At the present moment, amid all the hues and colours of Christianity, two are deserving of special attention. The first is what Konstantin Leont'ev called rose-coloured and whose extreme is excessive sentimentality coupled with narrow-mindedness . . . To understand Nietzsche it is essential to remember that he knew Christianity as rose-coloured. The other Christianity, however, the one which has

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come down to us from St John the Divine, is white, individual, joyful. Whereas rose-coloured Christianity exudes the much vaunted '*Weltschmerz*' (?), the white version is full of the joy of imminent resurrection . . . if the Christianity of the past was rose-coloured, then the Christianity of the imminent future is white.<sup>64</sup>

This view closely parallels the revision Bely had made to the ending of his *Dramatic Symphony* that same month, with the emphasis on Father Ioann, who knows that 'many radiant joys yet remained for people', and the Second Coming. For, as he noted in November 1901, the epithets 'white' and 'new' are emphasized together in Revelation: "'White and new" — synonym of the Christianity of our time, and likewise, synonym of the victorious Christianity after the end of the world.'<sup>65</sup> These statements also clearly reflect his reading of works by and about Serafim: no word appears more frequently in them than 'joy' (*radost'*) whenever the saint speaks about his faith and his attitude to Christ. (The notion also runs throughout *Zarathustra*.) The comments also do much, of course, to elucidate the choice of his pseudonym, Andrey Bely.

He hoped that his joyous, resurrection-oriented 'white Christianity' could include communion with the official Church. In August 1901 he had ridiculed what he termed *tserkovniki* ('churchmen'):

We need to be able to see God not only in heaven amid the stars, but also in the puddles beneath our feet. But the churchmen persist in not wanting to look beneath their feet; forgetting about the omnipresence of God, they try to stretch so close to heaven that they stand on tiptoes. Is it any surprise that they quickly tire and fall back, stumbling and breaking their noses incessantly? Is it any surprise that they sit with their noses bandaged up?<sup>66</sup>

A year later, in his 7 August 1902 letter to Metner, he insisted that he was not claiming any exclusivity of Truth for theosophy, but he concluded:

. . . unfortunately, the churchmen do not nourish us with their churchliness in a profound, affirmatory sense, but with its surrogate — neurasthenia... '*Now are we the sons of God, but we do not yet know what we shall be*' (John). Which is closer to these joyful words of the Apostle: Nietzsche's '*Die Welt ist tief*' or the verses of the young St Petersburg poet, Aleksandr Blok, quoted below . . . which brilliantly express the mood of this false churchliness?<sup>67</sup>

Bely knew that the official Church, in the person of Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow (1782–1867), had drastically censored the posthumous edition of Serafim's 'Spiritual Instructions' (*Nastavleniya*), expurgating all paradoxical elements in the elder's mystical



experience,<sup>68</sup> and that some contemporary high Church officials, among them the reactionary Pobedonostsev, Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, were successfully resisting the ever more urgent appeals for Serafim's canonization.<sup>69</sup> All this only further enhanced his appeal to Bely. The secret significance of the white smock (*belyy balakhon*) that Serafim usually wore instead of the normal black cassock of monks could also not have been lost on a man who saw special 'signs' in everything. Similarly, the physical description of Serafim given in the *Letopis'* — 'the pleasant whiteness of his face . . . his bright, sky-blue eyes'<sup>70</sup> — had to impress Bely, for in his evolving colour theory 'white' and 'sky-blue' (*goluboy*) were manifestations of eternal spiritual values.

In the second half of 1902 Bely read everything he could about Serafim and experienced a new revelation: '. . . through the experience of the "prayers" instituted by Serafim, I recognize within them for the first time what will later be revealed as the "Christ Impulse". But an anticipation of this are my experiences in June 1902, when something of the Second Coming arose like the blowing [of the wind].'<sup>71</sup> Bely here uses a specifically Steinerian phrase ('the Christ Impulse'). In his letters to Metner of the second half of 1902 and of 1903 he instead spoke of a 'feeling for Christ' (*chuvstvo Khrista*.) In March 1903 he explicitly connected it with Serafim. It became the focus of his concern with what Metner called 'Christism' (*Khristovstvo*): "Yes, there are people," Metner used to say to me, "who have something Christian in them showing through their paganism; there is Christianity, and there is 'Christism', which relies not on dogma, but on the feeling for Christ . . ."<sup>72</sup> Old friends like the Solov'evs were not at all happy with the new 'Christocentrism' they detected in their conversations with Bely and in the first version of the 'Fourth Symphony' that he read to them in November 1902.<sup>73</sup>

He now felt confident enough about the rightness of his new 'path' to outline his conception of man's spiritual development, imaged in a numerological-colour progression in a long letter to Metner on 30 November 1902. And he felt sustained by his faith in Serafim:

In my inner life as never before there sound the notes of Sarov and 'Diveevos's cherished dream'; almost every day, when everything in the house is asleep, I get up to pray and light a candle before Serafim's icon; and — I pray to him for hours on end; these hour-long prayer-sessions often end with moments of inexpressible bliss and peace; only Petrovsky vaguely suspects my prayers, but — out of delicacy does not raise the subject with me. I reread *The Brothers Karamazov*.<sup>74</sup>

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His confidence was soon to be shaken by a series of shocks in January 1903, a year he remembered as marked by 'the onset of the inner fading of the *dawns*; and then it was entirely shrouded [*oveyan*] by personal misfortunes, difficult experiences and — by fuss and bustle'.<sup>75</sup>

Early in January Bely sent Metner a letter full of confidence in the verity of their shared faith:

... I am writing to you in a way unexpected even to myself, in response to some inner impulse, or even command. And I am writing about what is in my heart. Do not be surprised. I feel that I need to remind you that man's greatest happiness once crept up on him quietly, imperceptibly. It shone forth. It vanished. It left for ever a deposit of sweet sorrow everywhere and on everything. This happiness is Christ. Christ is for everyone. Nobody does He forget. I pray for misfortunes for myself so as to approach nearer to Him. I pray for temptations so as to become worthy of praying to Him . . . Do not forget our Sun. It is nigh. It is always near us . . . I can see clouds building up somewhere; whether they will come upon us or pass us by, I do not know. I know one thing [only] — with Him I am not afraid. I know that with Him there is no fear. I know.<sup>76</sup>

He wrote in a similar spirit to Margarita Kirillovna Morozova (1873–1958): 'Christ is our Sun. The Sun is approaching. It approaches. Our Joy, our Star — It is with us!'<sup>77</sup> But Bely did not have to wait long for the 'misfortunes' for which he had prayed. In the middle of the month, when he stopped by the Solov'ev apartment, he was alarmed to learn that Mikhail Sergeevich was dangerously ill. His condition quickly worsened, and 'beside himself with worry', Bely turned to Serafim:

... all night I pray to Serafim, trusting firmly that he will help M. S.; but suddenly I realize that I ought not to pray, that the outcome is predetermined; the forces of prayer forsake me; and something akin to murmuring arises in me against Serafim. (After that I cease prayer.)<sup>78</sup>

On the eleventh Bugaev senior suffered a second severe attack of angina pectoris, and the doctors informed the family that his condition was hopeless. (He died that year in the early morning of 29 May.) Then on 16 January the Bugaev household was awakened at 3.00 am with the news that Solov'ev had died and that Ol'ga Mikhailovna had immediately taken her own life with a gun. Bely had to carry out the 'terrible duty' of informing their son, who, at the insistence of his mother, had spent the night at the apartment of friends ('I am afraid for Serezha; he doesn't cry').<sup>79</sup> Finally, at the end of the month, Petrovsky, his only close friend still in Moscow (Metner had moved to Nizhniy-Novgorod, Sergey Solov'ev was with relatives in Kiev), informed him

that he had reached the firm decision to become a monk and enter the Theological Academy upon finishing the University in the spring.

Bely had begun corresponding with Blok at the beginning of the year. In a letter to him of 19 January he tried to see the deaths of the Solov'evs, virtually his second parents, as a 'sign' that the 'times were being fulfilled' and that 'all was for the best'.<sup>80</sup> With the coming of spring the ominous 'shadow' hanging over everything throughout February seemed to lift, and he experienced a 'surge of vitality'.<sup>81</sup> On 3 March he wrote to Metner:

Again and again I keep on writing '*about the same thing*': a second wave of evil vibrations has rushed past which, if you keep firm hold of the *white*, the *sky-blue* or the *rose-coloured*, however, are not dangerous at all, except perhaps that they will begin to tear at your clothing — or tear off your hat. . .

I do not know where they come from, these astral clouds passing by one after the other — whole series of clouds, driven by storms. I do not know how things are with you, but, in comparison with last year, I have grown significantly stronger, withstanding all kinds of storms, so that I am already hopeful of controlling, of overcoming the horror *by mockery of it*. As recently as last year the passing storms penetrated, were capable of penetrating the centre of *that which is important to me*. But now they mostly circle around me, trying to catch me from one side. According to A. S. [Petrovsky] there is a storm now in Sarov as well. Spring and the first half of summer will be troubled, but autumn will be peaceful and abundant. . .

More and more frequently I begin to think that the elder Serafim is the only unassailably significant rock needed by Russia at this historical moment. His greatness is so necessary that in relation to him I have often experienced a peculiar, unitary feeling, a feeling for Serafim which at the very least resembles... the feeling for Christ, but is *about something quite different* ... People who know what it is to contemplate Christ in prayer (something that takes place after long prayers appealing to Him) or who feel His sudden arrival, His invisible approach — such people are to some extent conspirators... Are we not conspirators in Christ? Are we not anarchists in relation to all that is directly against Him? . . . I wish that we were conspirators in Serafim also, anarchists in his name.<sup>82</sup>

Bely continued by discussing Serafim in terms of his colour theory, in which black represents the lowest stage. At the eighth and highest stage of development all colours of the spectrum merge in that which is 'beyond colour' (*vnetsvetnoe*):

In actual fact much that is *dark* in relation to Serafim may perhaps be nothing other than the *eighth thing, beyond colour* — *the New Testament, too much the New Testament*. This is an important point, valuable for psychological analysis: where historical Christianity is *black* (terrible) and where it is *beyond colour* (concerning

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the eighth, the Father), i.e. unbearably gentle and dear, all this is ineffable, whereas that which is outwardly uttered seems terrible . . . Isaac of Syria (the ascetic) has much that *seems black, but which is beyond colour*; and now I understand why he is not recommended for reading by neophytes (how can feeble eyes distinguish the *black* from that which lies *beyond colour*?). Here is a question: is the *asceticism* of historical Christianity for the most part black or beyond colour (in its actual realizations)? . . . for inexperienced, but daring seekers after God the *black* (of the first stage) and *that which lies beyond colour* (of the eighth stage) often blend together on the surface of the symbol . . . Christ . . . has made it possible . . . to know that which lies beyond colour through *white* and *sky-blue*.<sup>83</sup>

If Bely had been troubled before by doubts about Serafim's possibly too close relation to 'historical Christianity', he had now resolved them: the elder, like a few early Church Fathers, had attained insights on man's highest potential development and had reached, through Christ, that state himself.

On 19 March Bely finally found himself ready to share with Metner his impression of the burial of the Solov'evs at Novodevichiy Monastery. In a letter that is remarkable for the extent to which Serafim is, for the first time, brought wholly into the image system of Bely's mythology, with its swirling snowstorm, always in his early writings a symbol of the resurrection of the dead, he wrote:

Those were days of blizzards, full of noise and whistling — rushing and sweeping by, blotting out the boundaries between life and death. We endowed this sweet, snowy music with all the significance which it contained: Nikolay Karlovich's 'Snowstorm',<sup>[84]</sup> our own subtly illuminated, new, Christian chaos with shafts of azure — His Dear voice from beyond the storm. They were joyful days. Heaven had come closer. I rejoiced over the Solov'evs' grave. Serafim passed by somewhere quite close to me.

And it rushed and rushed, sweeping by, howling and raising blizzardly raptures. When they were burying the Solov'evs, a snowstorm was raging.<sup>[85]</sup> . . . A pine-tree could be seen. Twice it roared, waving its arms about. This was when the deacon was praying for them. And this awe-inspiring mercy was called sorrow by those who attended. I was laughing to myself. And Serafim passed by somewhere quite close to us . . .

In the Solov'evs I have lost some of the people closest to me. What bliss and joy, joy... . . . And Serafim, Serafim... Yes.<sup>86</sup>

In the passage that follows, Nietzsche and Serafim merge into one iconic figure of a heroic seer and teacher of life:

. . . but what are we to do, Emiliy Karlovich, how are we not to flag, when we hear the joyfully resonant, penetratingly sorrowful music that permeates time.

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This is the leitmotif of Serafim, who gestures to me, now as a white, laughing old man, bent double, now as a sorrowfully silent individual with a soft moustache and wearing a hospital dressing-gown, also in white, also a saint. And then — it gets mixed up: Nietzsche, Serafim. Serafim, Nietzsche... Both have passed — and come again. The one had a ditch dug round a holy place,<sup>[87]</sup> the other was silent for ever, because he had discovered everything. When people began to play a musical instrument, he *would quietly growl, 'knowing' . . .* May God be my judge, if he [Nietzsche] did not exult, when 'they' declared his madness to the whole of Europe. Nietzsche is a saint, and his biography should be '*a saint's life*'.

And now again this resonant, lacerated, joyfully astonished chord from unknown distances has broken the window pane and one wants to cry: '*Serafim, Crucified Dionysos! I come to you.*'<sup>88</sup>

Absent from this letter, with its reconciliation of the Nietzschean antithesis of 'Christ or Dionysos', is any mention of Christianity itself.

Yet in a reply (dated 25 March and never sent) to a letter from Blok of 20 March 1903, in which he informed his friend that Pertsov, editor of *Novyy Put'*, had turned down the article 'On Religious Experiences',<sup>89</sup> Bely accepted the rejection in a specific spirit of Christian stoicism. It was time, he wrote, for silence, a key aspect of Serafim's life and teaching:

One must not *perform the task*, because to me it is clear that, before speaking of the *source*, one must, in absorption, match the high examples of Orthodox and universal Christianity, go into the desert, or pass through the series of spiritual *gates and arches* erected by Nietzsche . . .

Do those people know the real Nietzsche? For me it is clear that they do not. They have visited only the entrance-hall to Nietzsche and then, with the air of experts, pontificate on the mysteries of Nietzscheanism... And the Anchorite Fathers they have never visited at all... Having said which, there is amongst monks, as amongst Nietzscheans, straightforward profundity, absence of eclecticism, intermediacy and other ludicrous horrors.

I have in recent times discovered much and been disappointed in much — I have earned the right to *silence* . . . I have grown tired of the motley bazaar of esoteric discoveries being made these days . . . The pornography being introduced into Christianity is frightening. It sickens me.

It is time to open our eyes to where we are going. Before spitting on beauty, something equivalent ought to be given to replace it. The Orthodox Church provides this, the only correct path, the depths of whose significance may not often be known by its guardians, but the latter do at least have enough sense to cry out against the *débâcles* towards which Christian theurgists would sometimes drag us . . . The theurgists have too high an opinion of themselves. They are only one branch of universal Christianity, a branch which can grow straight only when the theosophists' and the Church's understanding of Christianity develop in parallel with it.<sup>90</sup>

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In a letter sent to Metner on 26 March 1903, i.e. one day after the above letter to Blok was written, Bely's mood is very similar. In it, however, he makes no reference to Orthodoxy or Christianity (he does refer repeatedly to Christ, something missing in the letter to Blok). The disparity between the two letters on this point is striking. Is this nothing more than Bely the 'chameleon', the Bely who, so many commentators have asserted, was incapable of consistency and went through life in a series of abrupt changes? Not at all. As more and more of his letters become available, we realize what a masterful correspondent he was. He worked out a careful language, imagery and thematic core for each of his addressees. Elements of the special code for one addressee might appear in letters to another (so, for example, the references to Nietzsche both to Blok and Metner), yet each tended to have certain hermetic features — topics of conversation shared with only one person (or several like-minded ones). He did not so much write what he knew his addressee wanted to hear (on occasions, of course, he did just that, but all letter writers do) as appeal to their strengths and weaknesses. He was confident, after months of conversation and correspondence, that Metner shared both his own unshakeable faith in Christ (*Khristovstvo*) and his reservations about the forms that historical Christianity had assumed, although they continued to disagree about the role of religion in art. He was not at all sure about Blok's beliefs. He recognized their Solov'evian Sophiological foundation, from which he himself had already shifted. (Thus he wrote to Metner on 26 March: 'even Blok, Serezha Solov'ev and the Merezhkovskys refuse to understand me in much [of what I believe].')<sup>91</sup> But what was Blok's attitude to Christ and Orthodoxy? He therefore adopted in the letter to Blok a 'conservative' Orthodox tone, of which there is not, of course, a trace in the letter to Metner. Blok could not yet be entrusted with his feelings about Christ or Serafim. That area still remained hermetically sealed from all except Metner and possibly Petrovsky and Sergey Solov'ev.<sup>92</sup> Only once, as we shall see, in the autumn of 1903, did Bely make an exception, when he feared that Blok was abandoning Christ altogether and surrendering to the dangers of 'Astarte' that lurked in any exclusive devotion to a Feminine Ideal.

To Metner on 26 March he wrote:

I have returned. How can I describe all my bewilderment and... laughter, when I felt that I had accomplished a spiritual journey through the world to an ancient chaos before time (1-8) and, *continuing my journey*, was born again (9=1) and

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found myself? The circle was closed, the cycle of life completed; I was travelling beyond death — and came back.

I have returned.

And this has happened de facto and not by means of theosophical meditations. Now I see in a completely different light Nietzsche's words '*I have found myself*' . . .

I have returned.

I take comfort in the fact that this return is the coincidence in position of two adjacent and parallel curves of a spiral. I console myself that this is not a circle. Otherwise it would be just too annoying — the repetition, the return would take place always and in everything, in the direction  $\perp$  of the Nietzschean return. I believe that it is a spiral.<sup>[93]</sup>

Nevertheless, my feeling is exactly the same as that other feeling long since departed into the realm of legend — that of Schopenhauerian pessimism. It is not the feeling that I am afraid of — I fear the clouds of horror that precede *the rose-coloured, the white, the sky-blue*. But I shall believe that all this is still nothing but illusion. And that there will not be any repetitions. Be that as it may, I have turned towards myself. I have discovered *the other in myself*. Or perhaps, *my other* . . . has consumed what once was me, but which had to perish after its journey was accomplished (1–8). However it may be, this is a knot unresolved by Schopenhauer, sketched out by Nietzsche . . . And the centre is once again in Nietzsche.<sup>94</sup>

He went on to invite Metner to join the 'union of Argonauts' he and Lev L'vovich Kobylinsky (Ellis, 1879–1947) were about to found in Nietzsche's name to attain the 'Golden Fleece' (*zolotoe runo*, a variant of Bely's invariant 'Khristos-solntse'), and concluded:

After all Nietzsche appeared a madman, whereas he was only someone who has embarked on the journey...

I was profoundly disappointed (I confess — this is between you and me) in both Solov'ev and Merezhkovsky and everybody else who had influenced me. Only Nietzsche, Serafim and Christ are with me . . . I can feel that there has dawned for me a period of *silent journeying* and, at times, of *concealment*.<sup>95</sup>

On 9 April Bely wrote to salute Metner with the coming of Easter. He reminded him of their conversations of the year before:

Yes, of course, on that very evening when you spoke of the Christ feeling, we became conspirators... Yes, the *white* elements in general are conspiratorial. They are, of course, *white* intrigues — a secretly cultivated form of comfort between people . . . and if you live by *white* affections or by *sky-bluish-white with a shade of purple*, then these begin to spread around you *white* vibrations. And you become, willy-nilly, a benefactor giving alms, even if you are not personally aware of it yourself.<sup>96</sup>

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He added that he found the phrase 'but let us begin to *perform* the task (*nachnem zhe delo delat*) 'offensive' (*protivno*), for 'we do not have to do anything (except only to pray)', and concluded: 'Nothing you write about Serafim alters my attitude to him at all. What has been, has been, and as for what *is* — that is a confused, complex question... and *I pass it by*.'<sup>97</sup> Several lyrical letters about the goals of the 'Argonauts' followed, until preparations for his final University exams pushed all else aside.

To be continued.

### NOTES

1. In *Na rubezhe dvukh stoletiy*, M.-L., 1931, p.165 (hereafter: *Na rubezhe*), Bely wrote of *Kotik Letaev*: 'It was not *Andrey Bely* who wrote it, but Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, who pictured naturalistically what he definitely remembered all his life.' See similar assertions in a preface written in 1928 for a never realized re-edition of the work (first published in *Novyy zhurnal*, No.101, 1970, pp.69–70).
2. 'Material k biografii (intimnyy), prednaznachenny dlya izucheniya tol'ko posle smerti avtora', TsGALI, fond 53 (Bely), opis' 2, ed.khr.3, sheet 1 (hereafter: 'Material'). This 'retrospective diary', set down in 1923, but revised as late as 1928, takes Bely's life as far as 1915 only.
3. *Pochemu ya stal simbolistom*, Ann Arbor, 1982, p.17 (hereafter: *Pochemu*). See also *Na rubezhe*, pp.179–80.
4. *Pochemu*, p.16. Bely gives a portrait of Father Markov in *Nachalo veka*, M.-L., 1933, pp.32,100, and in the memoir fragment 'Arbat', *Sovremennye Zapiski*, No.XVII, 1923, pp.162–63.
5. 'Папа-враг всего церковного; он подходит к религии рационалистически.' 'Material', July 1901, sheet 23. Compare *Pochemu*, p.16.
6. *Pochemu*, p.16. V. V. Zenkovsky devotes a page and a half to Bugaev in his *A History of Russian Philosophy*, vol. 2, New York–London, 1953, pp.675–76, and concludes: 'Bugayev's ideas deserve the most serious consideration.'
7. 'Папа относился терпимо к главным догматам теософии (карма, перевоплощение), находя, что в его брошюре "Основы эволюционной] монадологии" эти выводы теософии философски обоснованы.' 'Material', sheet 22.
8. *Na rubezhe*, p.180.
9. *Pochemu*, p.16.
10. 'Сильные первые религиозные переживания.' 'Material', sheet lv.
11. See *Na rubezhe*, p.181 and *Pochemu*, pp.17–18.



12. 'Она же рассказывает своими словами Апокалипсис. Я начинаю ждть кончину мира.' 'Material', November–December 1887, sheet 2. Bely's underlining. See also *Pochemu*, p.20.
13. 'Я начинаю ждть появления Антихриста.' 'Material', February 1888, sheet 2.
14. 'Вспышка странных мистических переживаний.' 'Material', February 1889, sheet 2v.
15. 'Material', autumn 1889, sheet 3.
16. 'Уроки Добронравова интересны: он умеет нас заинтересовать историей церкви своим культурным изложением предмета.' 'Material', January–February 1898, sheet 8v.
17. 'Сплошная, бессмысленная каторга.' 'Material', January–February 1895, sheet 5.
18. '... выявлению "творчества" способствует особая культура, которая откупоривает душу, как бутылку, "штопором"; таким способствующим штопором был для меня дом Соловьевых.' 'Lettre autobiographique à Ivanov-Razumnik' of 1–3 March 1927, published by Georges Nivat in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1–2, p.52.
19. Letter of 9 February 1898, cited in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, tom 92, kniga 3, 1982, p.176.
20. '... мой пессимизм переходит в какую-то зловещую тревогу; за несколько недель до экзаменов со мной происходит очень сильное мистическое переживание на Страстной Неделе, в церкви Троицы, что на Арбате. Во время великолепного богослужения разворачивается картина, как бы пророческая, — огромного будущего: я вижу 2 купола "Храма Славы", к которому возойдет человечество; мне начинает казаться, что в этот Храм придет Антихрист; и, как молния, разрезает мысль, что все неясное и зловеще-смутное, что живет в душе, — налет смутного ощущения пришествия Антихриста; предстает впервые отчетливо мысль о конце всемирной истории (до Владимира Соловьева); потрясенный, я выбегаю из церкви, бегу на Воронухину гору (над Крымским Мостом), и проносится передо мною ряд ослепительных картин ненаписанной драмы-мистерии "Пришедший" (т. е. Антихрист); вечером этого дня я записываю план сцен "мистерии", а в ближайшие дни набрасываю сцену, которая впоследствии (в испорченном виде) была напечатана в сборнике Зьем "Северные Цветы". С той поры я часто ухожу на Воронухину гору, смотрю оттуда на весенние закаты; и думаю о грядущих судьбах человечества и искусства; в эти миги во мне начинает вынашиваться отчетливо моя линия будущей "проповеди символизма": первый сдвиг от пессимизма чрез катастрофизм (конец мира) к религиозному символизму и христианству я пережил в эту грустную весну, удрученный переэкзаменовкой.' 'Material', April–May 1898, sheets 9v–10. See too *Na rubezhe*, p.352.
21. 'Khram Slavy', *Zapiski chudaka*, tom pervyy, M.–Berlin, 1922, pp.94–97.

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22. In the *Zapiski mechtateley* version of his reminiscences of Blok, Bely called Mikhail Solov'ev 'определенно православно настроенный' (No.6, 1922, p.10).
23. 'Material', October–December 1898, sheet 11: '... в эту пору я вижушь чаще чем в другие года с Вл. Соловьевым (у Соловьевых), кажется в это время вернувшись из своего 2-го путешествия по Египту; в эту пору, если память не изменяет, он часто бывал в Москве; и часто показывался у Соловьевых; с ним там встречался и раньше я, но теперь весь облик его мне является окрашенным в ином свете.'
24. 'Material', January–February 1899, sheet 10v.
25. 'Естествознание до такой степени поглощает меня, что я и у Соловьевых проповедую мной придумываемую философию естествознания; Соловьевы удивлены пафосом моего неопитства.' 'Material', September–October 1899, sheet 13.
26. "'Заратустра" производит теперь лишь головокружительное впечатление . . . В таких напряженных разнообразных переживаниях застаёт меня переломный 1900 год.' 'Material', November–December 1899, sheet 13v.
27. *Zapiski mechtateley*, No.6, p. 9. Of the years 1899–1900 he wrote: 'в моем мирозерцательном облике произошла перемена: философия созерцания сменилась исканиями религиозного порядка' (pp.10–11).
28. 'Material', January–March 1900, sheet 14. In *Na rubezhe*, pp.401–02, Bely noted that Mikhail Solov'ev judged the first version of the 'mystery' more successful than his brother's work. That redaction is described in A. V. Lavrov, 'Yunosheskaya khudozhestvennaya proza Andreyaya Belogo', *Pamyatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiya. Ezhegodnik 1980, L.*, 1981, pp.110–11.
29. 'В это время (в конце апреля, в начале мая) произошла встреча моя внутренняя с Вл. Соловьевым и разговор мой с ним в день, когда он читал у Соловьевых свой третий разговор с "повестью об Антихристе"; в этом разговоре мне стало ясно, что мои гимназические "откровения" в троицеарбатской церкви в 1898 году, приведшие к написанию сцен из "Пришедшего" — правда, что конец — "близится"; и надо готовиться к бою с Антихристом и ко встрече с Христом; я должен был в тот же вечер прочесть Влад. Соловьеву мой отрывок, но за поздним часом мы отложили чтение до осени, когда Соловьев должен был быть в Москве. М. С. Соловьев после говорил мне, что мой отрывок ему более нравится, чем "повесть об Антихристе".

С той поры я хожу, как бы перерожденный; и к событиям жизни и переживаний своих я начинаю относиться строго: с точки зрения борьбы в себе начал Христа и Антихриста; в этот май я переживал настроения, родственные настроениям рыцаря 2-ой части "Северной Симфонии"; вместе с тем этою же весною на меня нахлынули старинные детские переживания: кошмары и сказки; но тогда они были снами, а теперь они обступали в яви; как будто сквозь явь я увидел конкретно вернувшиеся "стародавние были".

- которые подстерегали меня на Арбате, на "Девичьем Поле"; мое состояние сознания уподобляемо строкам Блока: "Всему я стал удивляться, на всех уловил печать"; и эта "печать", или вернее печати казались мне "печатями" Христа и Антихриста, накладываемыми на нас в виду скорого появления Антихриста в мир; . . . Обо всем этом я готовился переговорить осенью с Владимиром Соловьевым, к которому после нашего с ним разговора я стал относиться, как к учителю; в одном пункте лишь я был глубоко несогласен с Вл. Соловьевым: в пункте его отношения к Ницше; мне Ницше казался "белым ребенком", мучимым дьяволами; и самую болезнь Ницше объяснял я себе тем, что он был замучен бесами именно оттого, что в последнем ядре души своей он не предал силы света.' 'Material', April–May 1900, sheet 14–14v. See also Bely's reminiscences 'Vladimir Solov'ev. Iz vospominaniy' (1907), published in *Arabeski*, M., 1911, p.394. After the meeting, he wrote: 'я жил чувством Конца, а также ощущением благодати новой последней эпохи благовествующего христианства' (*Zapiski mechtateley*, No.6, p.11).
30. In the 'Material' entry for September–October–December 1900, sheet 15, Bely specifically mentions reading 'O smysle lyubvi', 'Krizis zapadnoy filosofii', 'Kritika otvlechennykh nachal' and 'Filosofskie nachala tsel'nogo znaniya'.
31. '... я шел в одном направлении к трагическому мировоззрению Ницше, с другой стороны . . . к Владимиру Соловьеву' (*Zapiski mechtateley*, No.6, p. 11). In 1901 he wrote in another version of his Blok reminiscences, 'пытаюсь я соединить в своем сердце два полюса (Соловьева и Ницше)' — 'Vospominaniya o A. A. Bloke', *Еропея*, No.1, April 1922, p.138; p.[24] of the Fink Verlag reprint (1969) of the instalments of the reminiscences that appeared in four issues of *Еропея* in Berlin in 1922–23. Further references to this edition will give the pagination of the reprint in square brackets immediately following the page number in the original *Еропея* publication.
32. '... мы с Сережей углубляемся в толкование Евангелия; мы подглядываем действие благодати в современности; наш мистический опыт этого времени — узвание апокалиптических переживаний в связи с "белым" цветом; смеясь, мы говорим друг другу, что мы исследуем "белые начала" жизни; в них — веяние наступающей великой эры пришествия Софии Премудрости и Духа Утешителя . . . ' 'Material', December 1900, sheet 16.
33. On him see *Na rubezhe*, pp.469–73. In the unpublished Berlin redaction of 'Nachalo veka', tom III, gl. 1 (GPB, fond 60, ed.khr. 12), Bely wrote: 'Петровский же был утонченнейшим, образованнейшим и одним из умнейших людей, мне встречавшихся в жизни; он тоже был где-то капризен, весьма привередлив; претихенький с виду и маленький, робко-конфузливый, он за собою носил целый мир — бурь, сомнений, моральных запросов, трагедий; но он превосходною волею подавлял этот мир' (sheet 122).

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34. 'Material', 1901, sheet 16. It was Emiliy Metner who first dubbed 1901 the 'year of the dawn' (*Nachalo veka*, p.80).
35. 'Для А. С. Петровского этот год был годом огромного духовного переворота, происшедшего с ним в несколько дней: из атеиста, скептика, немного циника он превратился в молитвенника, прислушивающегося к голосу Дивеева и Сарова; он стал столбом православия, погрузился в чтение Добротолюбья и Четыи-Миней; с тех пор он стал думать о монашестве. . . ' 'Material', 1901, sheet 16. Compare *Ерореуа*, No.1, p.137/[23]: 'А. С. Петровский ждал света от сосен Сарова.'
36. 'Material', January 1901, sheet 17, and 'Rakkurs dnevnika' as quoted in K. N. Bugaeva, 'Andrey Bely: Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva', GPB, fond 60, ed.khr. 107, entry for January 1901. In *Pervoe svidanie* Bely wrote of the conversations with Petrovsky: ' — "Откуда этот ералаш?"/Рассердится товарищ наш,/Беспечный фронт и вечный скептик:/— "Скажи, а ты не эпилептик?"', Part One, 11. 61–64.
37. 'Третьим большим для меня событием этого месяца [февраля] есть неожиданное, даже пугающее меня обращение Петровского к истокам Православия; совершенно потрясенный, он приходит ко мне и говорит, что какая-то благая рука его ведет к Богу; этот стремительный порыв его к Богу и к церкви после месяцев максимального бунта и розановских, демонических подмигиваний даже пугает меня; как до этого Петровский показывал мне свой "диаволов" язычок, так теперь, обращенный к Богу, он весьма интенсивно переживает нападение на себя "темной силы"; даже в моих словах ему чуются привкусы "антихристовщины"; он подозревает в людях одержание бесами; и его жест — покаяние, смиренная молитва и боязнь заглядываться в "бездны"; а — "бездны ужаса" роятся вокруг него; он приходит ко мне в этих настроениях, просиживает до 2-х часов ночи, и наши разговоры о Боге и диаволе переходят порою в какие-то мистические сеансы, когда мне начинает казаться, что "бесы", его окружающие, прилипают ко мне; в нем для меня явная нота "Гюисмансовщины". Он поднимает во мне всегда лейт-мотив беса, Антихриста.' 'Material', February 1901, sheet 17v.
38. See *Росмети*, p.32. Compare *Ерореуа*, No.1, pp.140–41/[26–27]: 'А. С. Петровский отчетливо утверждал: времена приближаются; Антихрист рождается в мир и "соловьевство", пожалуй, есть ересь . . . я и Сережа оспаривали Петровского.'
39. 'Material', March 1901, sheet 18v. In a letter of 3 September 1901 to Blok's mother, O. M. Solov'eva called Petrovsky 'очень странный, мистический и фантастический молодой человек' (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.3, p.175). See also her description of him in a letter of 29 March 1902 published on p.180 of the same volume.
40. ' . . . с А. С. Петровским мы чаще и чаще беседуем о Серафиме, Сарове, Серафимо-Дивеевской обители, где у него в монашках

сестра; я читаю биографию Серафима и все более и более проникаю в дух апокалиптический Дивеева; А. С. переписывается с Дивеевым; так традиция Дивеева начинает входить в мою душу; одновременно: я читаю все, что можно прочесть об Оптиной Пустыни и о старце Амвросии, перечитываю "Братьев Карамазовых": "Алеша" мне видится "белым"; я читаю и биографию, написанную К. Леонтьевым "Отец Зедергольм". Монастыри, затвор представляется мне желанною тихою пристанью; так А. С. все более и более влияет на меня в нем развивающимися монашескими нотами.' 'Material', March 1901, sheet 18v. The biography of Serafim could be *Zhitie startsa Serafima*, izd. Sarovskoy pustyni, SPb., 1863; 4-oe izd. 1893, or *Skazaniya o podvigakh zhizni startsa Serafima*, izd. ierom. Ioasafa, SPb., 1849; 2-oe izd. 1856. Bely refers to Konstantin Leont'ev's *Otets Kliment Zedergol'm Ieromonakh Optinoy Pustyni*, M., 1882 (izd. vtoroe; reprinted by YMCA Press, Paris, 1978).

41. *Smysl tvorchestva*, second edition, Paris, 1985, p.204. The first edition appeared in 1916.
42. 'Material', February 1901, sheet 17v.
43. ' . . . мы с А. С. Петровским переживаем незабываемые вечера грозных предчувствий какого-то огромного будущего; А. С. в эти годы всегда поднимал во мне переживания грозного, над нами нависшего "конца"; гром апокалиптических событий из будущего ясно чувствовался . . . я считаю, что в некоторых фразах этой "Симфонии" есть провидение; . . . старец Иоанн, появляющийся на страницах "Симфонии", сложился во мне под впечатлением наших разговоров с Петровским о Серафиме, Дивееве; в нем отразился взгляд Петровского того времени на Православие; некто же "пассивный узнающий", А. С. Петковский, просовывающийся в "Симфонии", есть та сторона в А. С. Петровском, которая в то время влияла на меня в моем самоопределении в сторону ортодоксального православия; таким "знающим" виделся в те дни Петровский О. М. Соловьевой; а в Поповском отобразилась та сторона в А. С., с которой я в те дни боролся: своего рода "esprit mal tourné", всюду видящий только соблазны, дьявола; А. С. не доверялся учению Вл. Соловьева о Софии; ему виделся тут эротизм и "халдейство"; он говаривал: "Соловьев был халдей . . ." 'Material', May 1901, sheets 19–20. In the *Symphony* Petkovsky is called 'passivnyy i znayushchiy'. In *Na rubezhe*, p.473, Bely characterized Petrovsky's inner world as a 'lestnitsa antinomiya'. For an English translation of the *Symphony*, see A. Bely, *The Dramatic Symphony. The Forms of Art*, tr. R. and A. Keys and J. D. Elsworth, Edinburgh, 1986 and New York, 1987.
44. 'А "Алексей Сергеевич Петковский" [—] мой товарищ по университету, верней 1/2 его; а другая 1/2 его → Поповский; и это — между нами. Петковский — А. С. Петровский, ныне антропософ, некогда мой товарищ по университету и наш соучастник в "Соловьевских беседах"; в то время он пережил очень мучительный кризис от

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материализма и скептицизма к "мистическому" сознанию, которое в нем в то время двоилось: и он то становился "подозревающим церковником", а то чистым и просветленным мистиком; так как симфония писалась для "своих", для интимного круга, то я и выразил педагогически свое отношение к двум сторонам моего товарища, изобразив одну, как Поповского, а другую как Петковского; это разъяснение, конечно, между нами, потому что ни Поповский, ни Петковский не Петровские . . . ' TsGALI, fond 1782, opis' 1, ed.khr. 5 (letters of 1915). In the same letter Bely continued: 'Петровский же был в Дух. Академии (по окончанию Университета), дружил с Флоренским, не выдержал тамошней атмосферы, ударился в нищезанство; потом ушел в мистику, перевел "Зорю" Бёма и был инспиратором всей орфейской линии "Мусагета", пока он не стал настолько явно выраженным антропософом, что "Мусагет" начал теснить его.'

45. In August (?) 1901 Bely jotted down the following in a notebook: 'Если бы можно было соединить учения Ницше с взглядами Соловьева и присоединить сюда же Достоевского, то мы получили бы грандиозное учение-религию. Это учение должно было бы соединить достоинства всех трех философов без их недостатков' — A. V. Lavrov, 'Yunosheskie dnevnikovye zametki Andreya Belogo', *Pamyatniki kul'tury. Novye otkrytiya. Ezhegodnik 1979, L., 1980, p.127*. Among the 'nedostatki' were 'Nietzsche-antichrist', Dostoevsky's 'exaggerated aversion for the Western Church' and Solov'ev's 'excessive striving for asceticism'.
46. ' . . . в общем во мне намечается изменение в моей безусловной позиции по отношению к философии Соловьева; во первых: Соловьев, как философ, мне кажется абстрактным; во вторых: К. Леонтьев с его строгим взглядом на "путь монашеский" несколько сдвигает мою позицию в сторону церкви и старчества; необходим строгий путь, путь подлинного эзотерического опыта; мне еще неясно, есть ли это путь теософического "гнозиса", или "умное деланье" православного старчества, но ясно одно: "путь" — нужен; а Вл. Соловьев еще не дает "пути" (в смысле пути молитв, или духовных размышлений); кроме того: нужно точное толкование "Апокалипсиса", а не одно только невнятно-мистическое изживание его текстов; кроме того: труды Розанова и исследование Мережковского кажутся мне "гностически" конкретнее Вл. Соловьева в разрушении [так! следует быть: разрешении] основ подлинного пути; и Розанов, и Мережковский мне кажутся врагами, которых не отразишь одной отвлеченной концепцией Вл. Соловьева; Соловьев "опыт" имел, но унес его с собой в могилу; и нам нужно решать наши новые религиозно-философские проблемы по своему . . . конец "Симфонии" — превращается в пародию на крайности наших же мистических переживаний весны 901 года. "Скепсис" Петровского по отношению к "нео-христианской" романтике крепнет во мне.' 'Material', July 1901, sheet 22v-23.

47. 'В августе во мне окончательно созревает план: "сорвать" апокалиптическую романтику "Симфонии". Я ее кончаю сперва нотою максимального пессимизма картиною вымирания всего человечества . . . вся апокалиптическая идеология Мусатова есть "первый блин комом". Безнадежную, последнюю сцену "Симфонии" я заменяю сценой в "Девичьем Монастыре", где ясно, что ничего не погибло, что "много светлых радостей осталось для людей"; выясняется, что погиб лишь Мусатов и "присные", скороспелые апокалиптики: батюшка Иоанн, символ Иоаннова начала и старчества, один знал заранее об ошибках в гнозисе Мусатова, — но таил про себя свое знание; некто "знающий", старушка Мертваго (ортодоксальная православная) и батюшка Иоанн (начало эсотеризма в Православии) утверждают: "И разве вы не видите . . . близится" ("Симфония" 4-ая часть). Что же близится? На это отвечают деревья в палисаднике за окном; они "под напором свежего ветерка ликовали и кричали нараспев: 'Се жених грядет в полунощии'" (idem). Жених — Христов. Близится 2-ое Пришествие — вот неясно сознанием оформленный итог всех внутренних узваний этого года. Тайны Софии, Ее Пришествия суть лишь — вестники главного события: II-го Пришествия Христа. В этой ноте, которая отныне крепнет во мне, весь стиль моей идеологии уже в нюансе отличается от идеологии Блока, мне еще незнакомого; для Блока — альфа и омега его узваний — ожидание Пришествия Софии; для меня же с этой осени самая София — риза Христова; пришествие Ее — знак главного события: пришествия Христа. В 'Симфонии' старец Иоанн это знает, а Мусатову это неотчетливо; оттого-то он и гибнет.' 'Material', August 1901, sheet 23–23v. Citations from the *Vtoraya simfoniya*, as printed in Bely's *Sobranie epicheskikh poem*, kn. pervaya, M., 1917, pp.323–24 (reprinted in *Chetyre simfonii*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, München, 1971).
48. 'Material', August 1901, sheet 24. It is tempting to render Bely's 'dukhovno opytное litso' as 'spiritual adept'.
49. *Samopoznanie*, second revised edition, Paris, 1983, pp.214–15. First published in 1949. Translated into English as *Dream and Reality: An Essay in Autobiography*, London, 1950.
50. *Samopoznanie*, p.214. See 'Material', October 1901, sheet 25v and the *Eropeya* version of the Blok reminiscences, where Bely wrote of the Novoselov circle: 'на собраниях кружка был я несколько раз; атмосфера была реакционная; этот кружок был враждебен нам' (No.1, p.147/[33]).
51. On Auberlen, Swedenborg, Besant, Leadbeater, Mead, Mabel Collins etc. see the annotations to my publication of Bely's 'Kasaniya k teosofii' in *Minuvshee*, No.9, 1990, pp.455–57.
52. Isaak Siriyanin or Isaak Sirin — Isaac of Syria (of Nineveh), died at the end of the seventh century. When preparing notes for a translation of *Peterburg*, I assumed that Bely's mention of 'the Syrian' in Dudkin's list of reading referred to the Syrian Biblical exegete St. Ephraem Syrus (c. 306–73). It is clear, however, from

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this reference to the full name that Bely had the seventh-century figure in mind in the novel. On Russian translations of his works see G. Florovsky, *Puti russkogo bogosloviya*, Paris, 1937 (2nd edition 1981), p.392. Bely seems to have read him in the 1854 edition of the *Tvoreniya sv. Otsov* (izd. Dukhovnoy Akademii). Serafim specifically mentioned his writings, as well as other Fathers of the Church, among his favourite reading (see pp.46, 65, 75 of the Chichagov volume annotated in the next Note).

- 53 '[... в сентябре] моя встреча с Петровским как-то особенно действительна; мы окончательно сближаемся в теме Православия, в желании искать пути; я погружаюсь в толкования Апокалипсиса (между прочим Оберлена), читаю кое-что из томов Сведенборга L'Apopcalypse expliqué; А. С. меня все более и более посвящает в Саров и в Дивеево; дарит образок Серафима и биографию его, написанную Чичаговым (арх. Серафимом) . . . С этого месяца в нашем доме часто начинает появляться Пав. Ник. Батюшков (внучек поэта) и двоюродный брат А. С. Гончаровой; мы просиживаем с ним долгими вечерами и разговариваем о теософии, с которой я уже недурно знаком по книгам Безант и Ледбитера; он мне рассказывает о Миде, о злобах дня Теософ. Общества; я раза 2 в неделю бываю у А. С. Гончаровой, с которой все более и более связывают меня ноты внутреннего развития; "Путь посвящения" становится зовом души: сильнейшие впечатления производит "Свет на пути"; . . . я перешел к чтению в музее отцов Церкви; и главное — к изучению творений Исаака Сириянина, оставлявших в душе моей сильнейшее впечатление; . . . [в октябре] в душе темно . . . мне очень тяжело и мрачно; на этом фоне подымается нота моей Симфонии: "Ждали Утешителя, а надвигался Мститель"; А. С. Петровский подкладывает летопись Серафимо-Дивеевского монастыря; и с этой поры эта книга становится моей настольною книгою; образ Серафима, весь чин молитв его, оживает в душе моей; с той поры я начинаю молиться Серафиму; и мне кажется, что Он — тайно ведет меня; образ Серафима, как невидимого помощника, вытесняет во мне образ покойного Вл. Соловьева; я весь живу Дивеевым и сообщениями из Дивеева сестры А. С. Петровского, монашенки этой обители.' Material', September-October 1901, sheets 24-25v. The biography of Serafim by Chichagov and the 'letopis' Bely mentions are one and the same volume: *Letopis' Serafimo-Diveevskogo monastyrya Nizhegorodskoy gub. Ardatovskogo uezda; s zhizneopisaniem osnovateley ee: prepodobnogo Serafima i skhimonakhini Aleksandry, wrozhd. A. S. Mel'gunovoy*. Sostavil Arkhimandrit Serafim (Chichagov), M., 1896. The second edition (SPb., 1903) was available to me. All further references in the text and the notes will be to this second edition (hereafter: *Letopis* ). Modern books, such as V. N. Il'in's *Prepodobnyy Serafim Sarovskiy*, second revised edition, Paris, 1930 (reprinted 1971) or Valentine Zander's *St. Seraphim of Sarov*, London, 1975, rely heavily on this primary source. In his *Russian Mystics*, Kalamazoo-London, 1977, Sergius Bolshakoff wrote: 'St. Seraphim left no disciples among the monks but he greatly influenced



the nuns of the neighbouring convent of Diveevo which he helped found. To these nuns he left many remarkable counsels. It may be said that the nuns of Diveevo were closer to the spirit of St. Seraphim than the monks of Sarov. The abbey of Diveevo grew and flourished. In 1893, during the rule of the Abbess Mary Ushakov, the number of sisters reached 900. Like Sarov, Diveevo was destroyed by the Soviet Revolution' (p.143).

54. ' . . . болезнь чувствительных нервов на почве женской болезни.' 'Material', October 1901, sheet 25.
55. ' . . . это меня так поразило, что я не мог найти себе места; вечером, затворившись в своей комнате и затеплив свечу перед образом Серафима я начал молиться ему; молился я подряд несколько часов, прося Серафима помочь маме; и вдруг повеяло ясной тишиной; мне почуялось, будто саятой старец со мной рядом; и ясно повеяло от него на меня, что молитва моя услышана и что маме операция не угрожает; на другой день, вернувшись в клинику, мама выслушала от [профессора Ф. В.] Снегирева решение: *операции не быть, потому что настало сильное облегчение болезни* ; я скрыл от всех свою молитву Серафиму, но во мне отложились уверенность, что молитва моя действительно была услышана Серафимом; с той поры я во всех случаях жизни стал мысленно обращаться к святому. И иногда перед образом подолгу молился по вечерам.' 'Material', November 1901, sheet 26.
56. 'Material', June 1901, sheet 22v: 'мне нужна "христианская теософия", а не восточная.'
57. See Sergey Solov'ev's letter to Blok of 14 February 1902 (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 1, p.327) or his mother's letter of 11 April 1902 to Blok's mother (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 3, p.181).
58. 'Material', January–February 1902, sheet 27v.
59. 'Material', May–June 1902, sheets 28, 29.
60. See, for example, Bely's commentary to Blok's letter to him of 20 March 1902 published by Georges Nivat: 'Andrej Belyj: Commentaires sur ma correspondance avec Blok', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1–2, p.89.
61. 'Material', June–July–August 1902, sheet 29.
62. GBL, fond 167, box 1, ed.khr. 1. Further citations from Bely's letters to Metner will be annotated by date alone in the text.
63. 'И тем не менее два раза в небе произошло нечто неизъяснимо-отрадное, выразившееся в своем "внешнем", как синтез несовместимых (или редко совместимых) закатов: синтез розового, религиозного, мистического, женственного заката, символизирующего св. Церковь, Душу Мира, Софию, Lumen Coeli Sancta Rosa (Мережковский) с золотым, ницшеанским, человекобожеским, самоутверждающим закатом . . . не есть ли неизъяснимый синтез двух наиболее типичных и противоположных закатов символ, обращающий на себя внимание . . .'
64. 'В настоящую минуту среди всех цветов и оттенков христианства два заслуживают особого внимания. Это, во-первых, то, которое

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Константин Леонтьев назвал розовым и которого крайность заключается в излишней сентиментальности, сопряженной с ограниченностью . . . Для понимания Ницше необходимо помнить, что он знал христианство розовым. Другое же христианство, то христианство, которое к нам перешло от Иоанна Богослова, — бело, лично, радостно. В то время как розовое христианство дышит пресловутой "мировой скорбью" (?), белое — полно радости близкого воскресения . . . если христианство прошедшего было розовым, христианство близкого будущего — бело.' Lavrov, 'Yunosheskie dnevnikovye zametki Andreya Belogo', pp.126-27. See also an entry for November 1901 cited on p.134.

65. *ibid.* p.139.
66. 'Нужно уметь видеть Бога не только на небе среди звезд, но и в луже, под ногами. А церковники упорно не желают смотреть себе под ноги; забывая о вездесущи Бога, они тянутся к небу так, что становятся на цыпочки. Удивительно ли, что они скоро устают и отстают, ежеминутно спотыкаясь и разбивая носы? Удивительно ли, что они сидят с подвязанными носами?' *ibid.* p.127.
67. '...к сожалению церковники питают нас не церковностью в глубоком, утверждающем смысле, а суррогатом ее — неврастений... "Ныне мы дети Вожни, но неизвестно, что будем" (Иоанн). Что ближе к этим радостным словам Евангелиста: ницшевские ли "Die Welt ist tief" или приводимое ниже стихотворение С. Петербургского молодого поэта А. Блока . . . в котором гениально выражено настроение этой ложной церковности?' In the Russian translation 1 John 3, 2 reads: 'Возлюбленные! мы теперь дети Вожни; но еще не открылось, что будем. Знаем только, что, когда откроется, будем подобны Ему, потому что увидим Его, как Он есть.' The Nietzsche, well-known to concert-goers from its use by Mahler in the *Second (Resurrection) Symphony*, comes from 'The Drunken Song' section of the Fourth Part of *Zarathustra*. Bely included early redactions of five Blok poems: 'Врожу в стенах монастыря . . .', 'Предчувствую Тебя . . .', 'Ищу спасенья . . .', 'Одинокий, к тебе прихожу . . .', 'Эллины, боги бессонные'.
68. When Filaret returned the manuscript of the first life of Serafim, written by ieromonakh Sergiy in 1837 and including the 'Instructions', he wrote to Archimandrite Antoni: 'Я позволил себе переменить или дополнить некоторые выражения, частью, чтобы язык был правильнее, частью, чтобы мысли, не довольно полно или не довольно обыкновенно выраженные, оградить от неправильного разумения и прекословий' (П' in, p.152; П' in cites the 1884 edition of Filaret's letters to Antoni).
69. See Florovsky's *Puti russkogo bogosloviya*, p.413. On 27 January 1883 a certain Vinogradov, supervisor of Moscow's women's high schools, wrote to Pobedonostsev and suggested that the coronation of the new Emperor be marked by the opening of Serafim's relics because of his wonder-working powers and because 'Serafim predstoit pered prestolom Vsevyshnego v like serafimskom' (K.

- P. Pobedonostsev i ego korrespondenty, Pis'ma i zapiski, tom I, Novum Regnum, polutom 1-y, M.-P., 1923, p.358*). Pobedonostsev ignored the suggestion, but Vinogradov's action indicates how widely and how long before the actual canonization Serafim was regarded and treated as a saint. See also *Letopis'*, p. 807: Почитание о. Серафима, так ярко обрисованное в шестидесятих годах, не только не уменьшилось в настоящее время, но, напротив, даже увеличилось . . . к нему обращаются, как бы уже к канонизованному святому.'
70. *Letopis'*, p.50.
71. '. . . чрез опыт "молитв", установленных Серафимом, впервые внутри молитв имею узнание о том, что позднее откроется, как "Импульс Христа". Но предварение этого: переживания июня 1902 года, когда как веяние встало нечто от Пога Пришествия.' *Lettre autobiographique, Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique, 15, 1974, No.1-2, p.60*.
72. "Да, есть люди" — говаривал Метнер мне — "что-то в них есть христианское, проступающее в язычестве; есть христианство, и есть лишь 'христовство', которое опирается не на догматы, а на чувство Христа . . . ." *The Berlin redaction of 'Nachalo veka', GPB, f.60, ed.khr.12, sheet 98*. Compare: 'вместе пытаемся мы определить сущность того невыразимого состояния, которое для меня связано с "Христовством импульсом"; Метнер называет это чувство "Христовом" в противоположность "Христианству" ('Material', September–October 1902, sheet 31v). For obvious reasons Bely made no mention of this topic of conversation in his account in *Nachalo veka* (pp.82–85) of his autumn 1902 visits to Metner.
73. 'Material', November–December 1902, sheet 33: 'я чувствую, что мой отход от ноты "Апокалипсиса" не нравится Соловьевым; моего "Христовства" вместо Христианства не понимают они.'
74. 'Во внутренней моей жизни, как никогда, звучат ноты Сарова и 'Дивеева заветный сон'; почти каждый день, когда все в доме спит, я поднимаюсь на молитву, зажигаю свечку перед образом Серафима; и — часами молюсь ему; эти часовые моления часто кончаются минутами невыразимого блаженства и тишины; только Петровский смутно догадывается о моих молитвах, но — деликатно не заговаривает со мной о них. Перечитываю "Братьев Карамазовых." 'Material', *ibid*. *Diveeva zavetnyy son* is the penultimate line of Bely's verse epistle 'Sergeyu Solov'evu' (January 1909), first published in *Urna, M., 1909, pp.125–27*.
75. 'Material', 1903, sheet 33.
76. '. . . пишу Вам неожиданно для себя по какому-то внутреннему побуждению, даже приказанию. И о том, что у меня на сердце. Не удивляйтесь. Я чувствую, мне нужно Вам напомнить, что величайшее счастье человечества незаметно подкралось когда-то, тихо пришло. Просияло. Улетело. Навсегда оставило оно налет сладкой грусти везде и на всем. Это счастье — Христос. Христос

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для всех. Никого Он не забывает. Молю себе несчастий, чтобы приблизиться к Нему. Молю искушений, чтоб стать достойным молиться Ему . . . Не забывайте нашего Солнца. Оно близко. Оно всегда рядом . . . Вижу, как собираются где-то тучи; идут на нас или проходят мимо — не знаю. Знаю одно — с Ним не боюсь. Знаю — с Ним нестрашно. Знаю.' GBL, fond 167, box 1, ed.khr.7. Further parts of the undated letter of [January 1903] are published in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.3, p.194.; portions also appear in Georges Nivat, 'Histoire d'une "Tératogénèse" Biélyenne: Les rapports entre Emilij Medtner et Andrej Belyj', *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 1977, No.1-2, pp.103-04, but the letter is misdated '1905' and there are several incorrect readings of the manuscript.

77. 'Христос — наше Солнце. Солнце близится. Оно близится. Наша Радость, Звезда наша — Она с нами.' GBL, fond 171, box 24, ed.khr.4.
78. ' . . . всю ночь я молюсь Серафиму, твердо уповая, что он поможет М. С.; но вдруг я понимаю, что — молиться нельзя, что исход — предрешен; силы молитвы — покидают меня; и нечто в роде ропота подымается во мне против Серафима. (С тех пор я перестая молиться.)' 'Material', January 1903, sheet 33v. This reference may be slightly misdated (see next Note). In a letter to Blok of 15 January Bely wrote of Solov'ev's illness and added: Нужно помолиться. Я верю молитве' (Aleksandr Blok — Andrej Bely, *Perepiska*, ed. V. N. Orlov, M., 1940, p.14; hereafter: *Perepiska*).
79. 'Material', January 1903, sheet 34. The 'Material' mistakenly dates their death the ninth-tenth of January. See also *Nachalo veka*, pp.200-03 for an account of their deaths.
80. *Perepiska*, p.15.
81. 'Material', February 1903, sheet 34 and March-April 1903, sheet 34v.
82. 'И опять, и опять я пишу все о том же: пронеслась вторая волна недобрых вибраций, которые однако, если держаться крепко за белое, голубое или розовое, совсем не опасны, а только разве что начнут рвать одежду — сорвут шляпу . . .

Я не знаю откуда берутся эти проносящиеся друг за другом астральные облака — гряды туч, гонимые бурей. Я не знаю, как Вы — я значительно окреп к перенесению всяких бурь сравнительно с прошлым годом, так что уже и надеюсь совладать, преодолеть ужас *насмешкой к нему*. Еще в прошлом году пронесившиеся бури пронизывали, могли пронизывать центр моего главного. А теперь они больше вьются вокруг, задевая сбоку. По словам А. С. [Петровского] теперь в Сарове тоже буря. Весна и первая половина лета будет тревожна, а осень — благодатна и мирна . . .

Все чаще и чаще мне начинает казаться, что старец Серафим — единственно несокрушимо-важная и нужная для России скала в наш исторический момент. Величина его настолько нужна, что у меня неоднократно являлось по отношению к нему, особое, неразложимое чувство — чувство Серафима — напоминающее в меньшей степени... ..Христово чувство, но о другом... Люди,

знающие, что такое молитвенное созерцание Христа (наступающее после длинной молитвы обращения) или чувствующие внезапный приход, невидимое приближение Его — до некоторой степени заговорщики... Не заговорщики ли во Христе мы? Не анархисты ли мы по отношению ко всему, что прямо вопреки Ему? . . . Мне хочется, чтобы мы были и заговорщиками в Серафиме — анархистами во имя его.' Compare Bely's letter to Blok of [beginning of April 1903]: 'Воистину воскрес . . . Какое счастье! Будем же мы заговорщиками счастья' (*Perepiska*, p.30). See also Bely's letter to Metner of 9 April 1903 cited later in my text.

83. 'В самом деле: многое темное, касающееся Серафима есть, быть может, лишь *внецветное восьмое* — *новозаветное слишком новозаветное*. Вот пункт важный и драгоценный для психологического анализа: где историческое христианство *черно* (ужасно) и где оно *внецветно* (о восьмом, Отчее) т. е. невыносимо нежно и мило — несказанно, а внешне высказанно — кажущееся ужасным . . . У Исаака Сириянина (аскета) очень много *кажущегося черным внецветного*; и теперь я понимаю, отчего его неопитам не рекомендуют читать (где слабым очам различать *черное от внецветного?*). Вот вопрос: *аскетизм исторического христианства черен или внецветен по преимуществу (по осуществлениям)? . . . черное (1ой стадии) и внецветное (8ой стадии) часто сливаются на плоскости символа для неопытных, но дерзновенных богоискателей . . . Христос . . . дал возможность . . . познавать внецветным сквозь белое и голубое.'*
84. See *Nachalo veka*, p.84. Nikolay Karlovich Metner (Medtner) (1880–1951, London), the composer, brother of Emiliy Karlovich.
85. See Bely's poem 'Mogilu ikh ukrasili venkami', written in 1903: 'Восторг снегов, крутящийся над нами' (I,3) and 'Последний вздох туманно-снежной бури' (II,2). When published in *Zoloto v lazuri*, M., 1904, p.216, it was dedicated to the memory of the Solov'evs.
86. 'В те дни стояли метели с шумом и свистом — и несло, пронеслось, заметало границы между жизнью и смертью. Мы придавали этой сладкой, снежной музыке все то значение, которое заключено в ней: "Метель" Николая Карловича — наш, утонченно-высвеченный, новый, христианский хаос с просветами лазури — Его Милым голосом из-за бури. Это были радостные дни. Приблизилось небо. Я радовался над могилой Соловьевых. Серафим прошел где-то недалеко от меня.

И несло, и несло — пронеслось, вопя и взвивая снежнometельные восторги. Когда хоронили Соловьевых была метель. . . торчала сосна. Два раза она взревела, взмахнув руками. Это было тогда, когда диакон молился за них. И эту жуткую милость присутствующие называли горем. Смеялся я про себя. И Серафим прошел где-то недалеко от нас . . .

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В Соловьевых я потерял одних из самых близких людей себе. Какое блаженство и радость, радость... . . . И Серафим, Серафим... Да.' Bely would have known from his reading of the *Letopis'* about the miraculous action of pine trees (*sosny*) at a crucial juncture in Serafim's life when he asked for a sign from God about whether he should allow nuns, seeking his advice, to break his isolation (*zatvor*). The next day he found the branches of pine trees bowed to the ground, blocking the path to his monastic refuge (*Letopis'*, pp.60–61). On another occasion a *vekovoe derevo* bowed in answer to his prayer (*Letopis'*, p.315). Serafim's refuge was located in the midst of a pine forest. Bely's letter also reflects Serafim's reaction to death: 'Чего плачете? Радоваться надо!' (*Letopis'*, p.425). See also p.418: 'Что нам с тобой бояться смерти . . . для нас с тобою будет лишь вечная радости!'

87. Bely means the ditch (*kanavka*) Serafim ordered dug at Diveevo as a symbol of its miraculous protection by the Virgin (*Letopis'*, pp.255–59). In digging the ditch Serafim re-enacted, albeit unconsciously, a primary feature of 'foundation rites' in the Roman world: the *mundus* or foundation ditch. In a sense the foundation of the convent and the digging of the ditch acted out the Creation of the world, in this case delimited to the Holy Land and places of pilgrimage. So Serafim pointed out 'Here is my Jerusalem, Athos, Kiev, etc.'

88. ' . . . что же делать нам, Эмилий Карлович, как не поникать, слушая радостно-звонящую, пронзительно-грустную музыку, пронизывающую время.

Это лейт-мотив Серафима, кивающий мне — не то это белый, переломленный пополам смеющийся старик, не то грустно молчащий человек с мягкими усами и в больничном халате, то же в белом — то же святой. И вот — путается — Ницше, Серафим. Серафим, Ницше... Оба прошли — пришли. Один окапывал святое место, другой навсегда замолчал, потому что все узнал. Когда начинали играть на музыкальном инструменте — он тихонько рычал, "зная" . . . Бог мне судья, если он [Ницше] не восхищался тогда, когда на всю Европу "они" огласили его безумие. Ницше — святой, и биография его должна быть "житием".

И вот опять этот звеняще-надорванный, радостно-удивленный аккорд из неизвестных далей пробил оконные стекла и хочется крикнуть: "Серафим, Распятый Дионис! К вам иду".' Nivat's publication on Bely and Metner in *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 1977, No.1–2, p.97, gives a portion of the letter with several misreadings of the text. Bely may have known that in January 1889, after having collapsed, insane, in the Piazza San Carlo in Turin, Nietzsche signed letters and telegrams to bewildered friends with 'The Crucified' or 'Dionysos'. The final sentence of his autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, almost the last thing he wrote, is 'Have I been understood? Dionysos versus the Crucified.'

89. The article has never been published. It is apparently based on the colour symbology Bely had been outlining to Metner in a series of letters beginning with 30 November 1902. The 1903 article 'Svyashchennye tsveta', first published as part III of 'Simvolizm, kak miroponimanie' (*Mir Iskusstva*, No.5, 1904) and

republished separately in *Arabeski*, pp.115–29, represents a radically modified version of the theory.

90. 'Нельзя и делать дело, потому что для меня ясно, что прежде нежели говорить о начале, нужно углубленностью сравняться с высокими образцами православного и вселенского христианства, уйти в пустыню, или пройти сквозь ряд духовных ворот и арок, воздвигнутых Ницше . . .

Знают ли те люди истинного Ницше? Для меня ясно, что нет. Они побывали лишь в передней у Ницше и потом с видом знатоков поясняют о тайнах ницшеанства... А у св. Отцов Пустынников они и никогда не бывали . . . Между тем в монашестве, как и в ницшеанстве, прямолинейная глубина, отсутствие смешанности, серединности — смехотворного ужаса.

Я в последнее время многое узнал, во многом разочаровался — заработал себе право молчания . . . Мне надоел пестрый базар, который устраивают теперь из эзотерических открытий . . . Страшна мне порнография, вносимая в христианство. Тошнит от нее.

Пора открыть глаза на то, куда мы идем. Прежде нежели плевать на красоту, следует дать взамен ее эквивалентное. Оно и дается в Православной Церкви. Вот — единственно правильный путь, углубленность которого часто не ведают его стражи, но у них все же достаточно чутья, чтобы вопиять на те провалы, куда ташат нас иной раз христиане-теурги, . . . Теурги мнят о себе слишком много. Они — лишь ветвь вселенского христианства, ветвь, могущая расти правильно лишь тогда, когда параллельно будет развиваться теософское и церковное понимания христианства.'

V. N. Orlov did not include this letter in the *Perepiska*. It was published for the first time in a note on page 202 of *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.3.

91. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.3, p.197.
92. I have not had the opportunity to examine Bely's letters to Petrovsky which are kept in the archives of Moscow's Literary Museum. Almost all Bely's letters to Sergey Solov'ev were apparently lost (see *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.1, p.335). With Morozova at this stage Bely shared some thoughts on Christ, but not on Serafim.
93. This passage anticipates in a remarkable way two of Bely's most important theoretical articles of 1912 ('Liniya, krug, spiral' — simvolizma' and 'Krugovoe dvizhenie'), another instance of the coherence and organic character of Bely's intellectual world. The articles are discussed at length in Robert Maguire's and my article on *Petersburg in Andrey Bely, Spirit of Symbolism*, ed. J. E. Malmstad, Ithaca and London, 1987.
- 94 'Я возвратился. Как описать все недоумение и... смех, когда я почувствовал, что описал духовное путешествие сквозь мир к довременному (старинному) хаосу (1–8), и пойдя дальше, я вновь родился (9–1), нашел самого себя. Круг был замкнут, цикл жизни совершен; я уходил за смерть — я вернулся.

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Я возвратился.

И это *de facto*, а не путем теософских размышлений. Теперь мне звучит совершенно в ином свете Ницшевское "я нашел самого себя" . . .

Я возвратился.

Утешаюсь, что это возвращение есть совпадение аналогичных положений двух смежных и параллельных звеньев спирали. Утешаюсь — это не круг. Иначе было бы слишком обидно — повторение, возвращение совершалось бы всегда и во всем, но в направлении  $\perp$  Ницшевскому возвращению. Верю, — что это спираль.

Тем не менее чувство совершенно такое же, как давно отошедшее для меня в область преданий — чувство Шопенгауэровского пессимизма. Не его боюсь — боюсь тучи ужаса, предшествующей *розовому, белому, голубому*. Но буду верить, что это еще все только кажется. И повторений не будет. Как бы то ни было, я обратился на самого себя. Я нашел *свое другое*. Или, быть может, *мое другое* . . . поглотило то, что когда-то было мной, но что должно было погибнуть после совершенного им пути (1–8). Как бы то ни было — тут узел неразрешенного Шопенгауэром, намеченного Ницше . . . И центр опять в Ницше.'

95. 'Ведь казался же Ницше безумцем, между тем он был только уплывшим..'

Я глубоко разочаровался (признаюсь — это между нами) и в Соловьеве, и в Мережковском, и во всех кто на меня влиял. Со мной только Ницше, Серафим и Христос . . . Чувствую — настала и для меня полоса *молчаливого плавания, а порой и умолчания*.' Another portion of the letter is cited by A. V. Lavrov in his article 'Mifotvorchesto "Argonavtov"', *Mif-fol'klor-literatura*, L., 1978, p.141.

- 96 'Да, конечно в тот самый вечер, когда Вы сказали о Христовом чувстве, мы стали заговорщиками... Да и вообще *белые* начала суть начала заговорные. Это, конечно, *белые козни* — тайно культивируемая уютность среди людей . . . И если Вы живете *белыми* настроениями или *бело-голубыми с оттенком пурпура* вокруг Вас начинают распространяться и *белые вибрации*. И Вы становитесь волей неволей благотворителем, подающим милостыню, хотя бы Вы лично этого и не сознавали.'

97. 'Все, что Вы пишете о Серафиме несколько не изменяет моего отношения к нему. Что было, то было, а что есть — тут вопрос сложный, запутанный и... *прохожу мимо*.' Again Bely connects Serafim and Nietzsche: the phrase 'prokhozhu mimo' refers to *Zarathustra*, the section entitled in the Russian translation 'O prokhozhdanii mimo', in the work's third part. Further excerpts from the letter, which discusses *The Birth of Tragedy*, are given in Nivat's article on Bely and Metmer, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 1977, No.1–2, pp.98–99, with no indication, however, of the severe cuts made in the citation.



# ANDREY BELY AND SERAFIM OF SAROV (PART TWO)

John E. Malmstad

After successfully completing his final examinations at Moscow University the event that Bely so dreaded and of which he had been having premonitions occurred: the sudden death of his father. On 1 June, the day after the funeral, he wrote to Metner in terms reminiscent of his description of the burial of the Solov'evs:

... and here a new, altogether real sorrow: my father died on 29 May. . . I am joyful, ecstatically joyful: what can deprive me of hope? I am just back from the Novodevichiy Monastery, sitting here and writing to you. I look at my black crepe and smile — quietly, serenely... 'Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?' (Ps. 81. 6) (St. John 10.34) — what is death to gods? In the open window — sky-blue infinity and swallows... Their twittering... Their twittering — about the eternally pensive.

*'I said, Ye are gods'...* . . .

That was papa's favourite text, and the swallows cry out about him through the open window.<sup>98</sup>

Two weeks later he and his mother went to Serebryanyy Kolodez'. His maternal aunt, Petrovsky and Vladimir Vasil'evich Vladimirov (1880–1931), a young artist and fellow 'Argonaut' who had been one of Bely's good friends since their days at the Polivanov Gymnasium, accompanied them.

While in the country, Bely was overcome by strange feelings that he might have been mistaken about the past and the course of the future, too quick to see signs of God's intervention in man's phenomenal life. (In the 'Rakkurs dnevnika' Bely went so far as to call his mood one of theomachy ['nota bogoborchestva'].)

... A note of the 'rupture' of my hopes sounds distinctly. . . Yes, the leitmotif of this summer is 'that's not it', 'not it'; I no longer sense that life-giving flow of spirituality in me which for two years had inspired me; A.S. Petrovsky and I are in a state of melancholy and pining; for me — a sharp inner break and disillusionment with myself; even experiences connected with the '*Christ Impulse*' turn into experiences of seduction; at times I begin to think that our belief that we had been chosen before all others is *sui generis* humbug; . . . I don't remember what I said to Petrovsky, but he had the impression that I was

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getting ready 'to declare myself', which in his words meant 'to declare oneself a false prophet'. Vladimirov, who in those days was a lot more self-confident, shrugged his shoulders at us and said: 'What's up, really what sourpusses...'<sup>99</sup>

Vladimirov might well have wondered about his friends' depression, for an event they had all eagerly awaited was about to take place: the canonization of Serafim.

Vladimirov and Petrovsky both intended to witness the opening of the relics and the attendant ceremonies. They planned to go directly to Sarov from Serebryanyy Kolodez', and urged Bely to accompany them. His reaction was unexpected, even to himself:

... how strange: I react with relative indifference to this event; so very recently the cult of Serafim was my cult; now I can no longer pray to Serafim, nor, in general, can I pray to anyone; such experiences bring anguish, anguish, anguish.<sup>100</sup>

In this case Bely's 'Material for a Biography' is not entirely accurate. He raised the matter of the impending canonization with some urgency in several letters of July. In every case the references are, to be sure, tinged with anxiety and doubt. At the very beginning of the month (2, 3, <4> July) he tried to explain to Metner his several weeks of silence:

... The terrible sorrow, which at first I took for mystic joy, only now is growing, slowly, but surely; moreover: the multitude of questions that I never solved and that I avoided by drowning them in musicality, has all of a sudden arisen before me, adding some moral gravity; . . . when I arrived in the country, my spirits somehow immediately fell, and as a result I even got physically sick. Thank God, Aleksey Sergeevich and Vasily Vasil'evich Vladimirov, who were staying with me, were able for a time to alleviate my terrible state, but now it's taking hold of me again. I see my father in my dreams, I hear his voice... . . . I know my *raison d'être*. But it keeps vanishing. . . Soon the relics of Serafim will be opened. That shroud of rushing clouds, about which, remember, I kept warning you in the winter, now keeps stretching out in the sky. . . Dust-storms are now around Serafim — everything is so ambiguous around him. I tensely wait for surprises, which can just as likely go in either direction now: good or evil. For some reason I fear for that enormous crowd and for the Emperor.<sup>[101]</sup> Events of a mystical nuance may *start up* with redoubled strength that *will untie* a great deal of the present situation. Perhaps our hands will come untied, perhaps *everything* will be tied up: I both fear and hope. What is important is that I have premonitions. It even seems to me that this event will not leave untouched that about which Nietzsche the German . . . spoke: '*We have patience and time and overmuch time in which to speak. For one day it must yet come and may not pass.*'<sup>102</sup>

## ANDREY BELY AND SERAFIM OF SAROV

On 6 July Bryusov was informed:

I am waiting for the astral atmosphere either to clear up or at least sharply to define itself when Serafim's relics are opened. I keep thinking — something will happen that will precipitate *events* either in a good or evil direction.<sup>103</sup>

Petrovsky and Vladimirov left for Sarov on 8 July. Bely remained in the country with his mother whom, he explained to Metner, he dared not leave because of the delicate state of her nerves. He read the newspapers every day, but waited impatiently for firsthand news from his friends about the events at Sarov, during which several hundred thousand pilgrims gathered around the monastery. Many credited the personal intervention of the Imperial family, most notably the Empress Aleksandra herself, for the Synod's reluctant decision to allow the canonization. Members of the family took active part in the ceremonies; the Tsar himself and the Grand Dukes carried the bier bearing the saint's relics. (A medallion with this scene was included on one of the Fabergé Imperial Easter eggs commemorating the Romanov dynasty.) As Petrovsky and Vladimirov had to travel through Nizhniy-Novgorod on their return trip, he thought Metner might have heard something:

. . . How did you find Aleksey Sergeevich, what was his epic adventure like? Did my friend Vladimirov visit? I am expecting them here in the middle of August, but I know they both will deceive me.

All the time, beginning with the eighth and ending with the twenties, I tensely kept my eye on the weather conditions. On 11 July a kind of general cleansing discharge of the atmosphere began. There were thunderstorms of a *terrifying* nature, and then, while the ceremonies were taking place, there was a kind of quietening down. After them — the same thing; but on the nineteenth there took place... a rupture... of some sort... I read about miracles, I say aloud '*thank God*', but in my soul — sorrow, sorrow... Perhaps I expected something grand (the resurrection of the dead, a catastrophe), but everything apparently went off *all-right*... just a little bit middle of the road... I don't know what I was expecting, but I am sad.<sup>104</sup>

Bely's disappointment that the dead did not, as he expected, rise to the occasion is entirely understandable in the light of his reading of the *Letopis'*: it abounds in stories of Serafim's visionary powers ('*dar prozorlivosti*') and miraculous cures.<sup>105</sup>

Bely was still waiting for the news on 9 August, when he sent Metner a letter noteworthy only for the practicality with which he discussed a possible trip to Sarov:

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This time I am writing you a purely business letter. I am turning to you instead of to Aleksey Sergeevich because he's wandering about somewhere on the earth, but where exactly at the moment I don't know. In all likelihood he did not receive the letter I sent to him and also that addressed to space, because he is stubbornly silent, despite his promise to inform me about Sarov from first-hand sources and my repeated reminders about it.

Now here's what I'm writing to you about: mama and I are planning a pilgrimage to Sarov, probably at the end of September. You, as a Nizhnenovgorodian (!?!?), all the same know more, and then, Aleksey Sergeevich might have told you something: 1) isn't it too late for a trip? 2) can one safely traverse the sixty versts from Arzamas, which mama is so afraid of doing without other travellers?<sup>[106]</sup> Are there carriages or wagons — in general, what's the transportation situation? 3) are they contemplating pilgrims there toward autumn?

Mama is terribly afraid of everything, and I, on her instruction, am putting all these questions to you, knowing that you scarcely know much about it. Please excuse a certain importunity in my questions.<sup>107</sup>

He was still writing about the journey to Metner in September, but it had then to be put off indefinitely because of lack of money.

Bely at last heard directly from Petrovsky about the events at Sarov. Only a fragment of this letter, sent on 7 August, has appeared in print:

V.V. and I returned from Sarov on 4 August, having set out for there on 8 July and having spent exactly two weeks on the spot . . . We and the whole mass of pilgrims spent 17–19 July around the walls of the Sarov hermitage; hungry and without so much as a place to lay down our heads, we never once got beyond the barrier, not to speak of into the cathedral. . . The night before the nineteenth of July was very meaningful in its fathomlessly deep symbolic character. The opening of the relics was taking place in the cathedral. Vespers and matins were being celebrated — a solemn moment. The whole crowd was distributed around the walls because Cossacks allowed no one inside.<sup>108</sup>

Judging by a remark in one of Sergey Solov'ev's letters to Blok of early September, Petrovsky had witnessed miraculous events during his two-week stay at Sarov. ('I've seen a lot of Petrovsky and learned interesting news about the miracles that occurred at Sarov; he witnessed them with his own eyes, i.e., he saw those who had been healed, although he didn't see the actual process of healing.')109 He would certainly have shared such news with Bely.

All Bely's old millennial confidence sounds in the reply sent to Petrovsky on 18 August ('It's clear to me that the solemn ceremonies at Sarov have proved one thing: *all the same* the end is relatively imminent — more imminent than we think.')110 and in the extraordinary paean to

Serafim composed for Blok on 19 August. He had horrified Bely when he wrote on 1 August:

I still (or already, or never) *do not have a sense* of Christ. *I sense Her*, I sometimes only *understand* Christ. . . . I love your 'esoterism' tenderly. No need to go further. This simply follows from my most important difference from you: you love Christ more than Her. I cannot.<sup>111</sup>

In his commentary to the correspondence with Blok, set down in the 1920s, Bely avowed that in the 'impetuous conclusion' to his reply of 19 August there was 'nothing from the intellect; everything was but from the heart'.<sup>112</sup> Only his need to convince the wavering and sceptical Blok that a 'deed' or 'task' (*delo*) was possible and that the 'deed' must be begun in prayer, the prayer through which Serafim had brought him to Christ, made him reveal his hitherto secret devotion to the saint:

Of course, the centre of the *deed* is not to be found in Petersburg's *mystics-symbolists*, who at times cleverly and giftedly distort texts and erect castles on those distortions. Of course, the centre of the *deed* is not to be found there.

The essence is to be found in a *deed* embodied in the people. And it has begun imperceptibly. The essence is not to be found in trying to take advantage of the *poverty of spirit* of the present official Church representatives, — *the essence is to be found in the untroubled main channel of the Church* — in the events to come that hover over Sarov and Diveevo, where He rests in peace — Serafim, who all his life bowed his head before an icon of God's Mother of Tenderness — '*Joy of All Joys*', 'as he always called her, before whom, on his knees, during prayer, he passed away, as if he had not died at all' (*The Chronicle of the Serafimo-Diveevo Monastery*, p. 207). One has only to learn with what giants of the spirit this giant was surrounded — this quiet little old man, wretched Serafim — to shift the centre of one's searches from religious-philosophical chatter to the centre of *incarnation* — *to the fates of Her Final Cloister* (to Diveevo). Here arise images of people who now burn *like a pillar of fire* and now rush into infinite life like ascended gaiety. Here are deeds. But there are no deeds where sparks of undoubted insights get mixed up *with posturing, with the dubious and the ambiguous*, so that words *about white deeds* at times issue from saffron-coloured swamps and from quagmires of horror.

Serafim, Serafim!..

Only there is peace, where tigers and leopards lie down together, tamed, at one's feet; only there is happiness, Serafim, where the crimson flame of your icon-lamp is lit before a precious grave...

Serafim, Serafim!..

Only there is truth, where silver joy bears one away! Only there, Serafim, is love, where your voice arises from the abyss of timelessness with the summons:

'Come to me, my joy!  
Yes. It is thus.<sup>113</sup>

Blok, Bely added sadly, had not been 'in the mood for me, of course; and even less so for "prayer" and for "Serafim". Silence ensues.<sup>114</sup>

Bely now believed that the quietism he had advocated in the spring had been a fundamental error. Early in July, even before the events at Sarov, he had written to Metner:

quietism à la Goethe, Kant — is shattered. *You won't save yourself 'that way'*. What at *that* time (not so long ago) could be a duty and the height of wisdom is now — *compromise*. And this phrase — 'Oh, how many seas surround me, what dawning human futures! But over me — what rose-coloured stillness!' — shows that the shatterer of equilibrium also knew equilibrium.

He knew and yet...

Here I come to the basis of our principal disagreement: 1) I want to shout about the necessity of a *deed*, 2) about the relationship of religion to art 3) of theosophy to theurgy.<sup>115</sup>

On 9 August he told Metner that he was at work on a lecture he planned to read in Moscow entitled 'About the Great Watershed in Consciousness' ('O velikom perevale v soznanii'), whose concluding point was 'Theurgism. Theurgic Christianity. Three religious channels (church, theosophy, theurgy).' On 20 August, the day after his letter to Blok, he wrote to Metner:

My soul is awakening — it is coming closer to the surface, it is objectifying itself. *The whole world in our eyes must become spirit alone, the objectified soul alone. . . .* My motto is now: popularizing, propaganda in the crowd without the slightest conscience.<sup>116</sup>

He returned to Moscow late in September. Sergey Solov'ev described him as 'definitively *whitened* and filled with a quiet *joie de vivre*'.<sup>117</sup>

Discussion of the meaning and limits of theurgic art dominates his correspondence with Metner throughout the year 1903. He first wrote of it with confidence in July in the article 'O teurgii' (published shortly afterwards in *Novyy Put'*, No.9, 1903). Sharp contrasts between certitude and doubt about its possibility as an active spiritual force and his own ability to reconcile theurgy with Christianity mark the letters ('how can we approach the accomplishment of a religious deed: and how can we express it in forms').<sup>118</sup> Petrovsky now formulated his personal commitment to the 'Argonaut goal' of 'an aspiration for action'

('stremlenie k deystviyu') as a 'monastic exploit' ('monastyrskiy podvig').<sup>119</sup> At his urging Bely began to accompany him on visits to a *starets*, Antony, a bishop who had given up his see for the monastic life, at the Donskoy Monastery. In a letter to Metner of 4 October 1903, Bely described him as 'the one who performed acts of healing at Sarov' and who had shown himself 'fathomlessly deep' in his relationship with Petrovsky and himself.<sup>120</sup>

Antony's words at first to Bely evoked the 'insistent whispers of Sarov's pines',<sup>121</sup> but on 22 October 1903 he admitted to Metner that while he had tried to take his advice about attending church ('I intended to go. I have not been in church for a long time, I so wanted to go'), Antony was not all that he had seemed at first: 'As for Antony, he is fathomlessly deep, but he *did not understand* me in depth... (I saw this clearly during my second visit — *a secret from A.S.*)...'. Nevertheless, when Merezhkovsky and Gippius visited Moscow in November, Bely, who again felt that Merezhkovsky shared his 'Khristovstvo', took them to see Antony:

. . . (My idea. The chemical experiment came off brilliantly.) Something festively joyous resulted. . . Antony obviously *understood absolutely everything* (through providence), he related to Dm. Serg., but especially to Zinaida Nikolaevna, with joy and simplicity... He spoke about love, about joy, about how he wants to found a cloister on a hill, above the Volga, and then he will humbly invite the Merezhkovskys to visit *those beautiful places, where refreshments of apricots and peaches will await them* (?! Something chiliastic!). Merezhkovsky, with complete openness, told him in what his *raison d'être* is to be found, spoke about the insufficiency of the historical church, about hooligans... Bishop Antony only smiled *in a knowing way*, and said in answer: 'Oh, how excitable we are!' And then he thanked him for the explanation of the essence of the word hooligans (those who are possessed), saying that he didn't know what that was, but that he felt '*there was something*' in Merezhkovsky's words... . . . In general, there was something close and joyous... One felt that the Merezhkovskys and Antony *had come into contact* in something (but as though from opposite ends. . .). The fact remains: Antony went into spiritual ecstasy, Merezhkovsky kissed Antony's hands, and I, to myself, rubbed my hands with joy because my experiment had yielded brilliant results.

Then Merezhkovsky, clutching at his head, kept repeating: 'One can't sever oneself from the Church's 2000 year experience.' And to me: 'Abide by Antony.' Incidentally, they have read 'The Chronicle of the Serafimo-Diveevo Monastery', and they saw something dear to them in the Serafim feeling.<sup>122</sup>

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When the Bloks came to Moscow in January 1904, they, too, were taken to meet Antoni, but all of them experienced disappointment with the encounter.<sup>123</sup>

Bely's first actual meeting with Blok and his wife that January had buoyed his spirits, depressed since late November by a sense of the fading of his mystical expectations. At the end of January, Metner received one of those lyrical letters from Bely in which he did not even bother to use a formal salutation:

About happiness, about that which comes and goes, but never abandons us forever — about the white happiness of sorrowful children — that is what I want to write you about, dear, kind Emily Karlovich. No, I will better describe the Signs to you.

Wisps of fog, hurtling at the earth from God knows where, stretched out for a long time. Here and there patches of *azure* drifted by, and then it closed up. Dear Emily Karlovich, remember one of my letters of last year, where I wrote that Serafim was somewhere near, near, and that ashen-coloured wisps of clouds were stretched low from the horizon across the intoxicated azure? I wrote to you, it seems, that one must prepare. And that was the way it was when I wrote to you — at least for me. Then began my exams, the death of my father, terrible nervous disorder, revolts, revolts in the southwest, abandonment, the rupture during the ceremonies for Serafim, the September and October doubts and '*eternal fears*'. I was already utterly exhausted. And then it started to clear up. It ended with a shroud of drifting clouds, whose approach was revealed to me in prayer some three months before '*the horrors*'.

But azure shone forth only on 31 <December, Metner added the month> at 6 o'clock in the evening. I began to marvel and '*to sense*' joyously. Pavel Nikolaevich Batyushkov — a theosophist and saint — was winked at by '*the age-old*' in the midst of the everyday. A cock crowed and the age-old was in the air. Al. Serg. Petrovsky was sitting right there. They left — and there *he* was, on the background of '*the age-old*', with the azure of his eyes, wearing *white*, with the purple of his fiery lips — He again stood by my side. I forgot everything. In the evening we went to church. Everything was soft and sorrowful — age-old. The only thing lacking was a snowstorm, but I sensed that it too was on the way. The priest emerged and spoke the parable of the virgins and the hour when '*He will come to judge the quick and the dead*'. There was something joyful during our return. '*A good sign*' I said to myself. I arrived home — and Someone, I don't know who, had sent me *lilies and white roses* at midnight of the new year. The next morning Petrovsky informed me that Antoni was planning on coming (but he didn't). I came to a seventy-five-year-old lady, and she was grieving about *happiness*, she kept winking about *the age-old*, *she knew, she wanted white joy*. The old lady, Serezha Solov'ev and I compared ages. Afterwards we stood in the courtyard, and all around us snowy circles whirled a dance of white streamers — and



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Serezha told me something about the Christ feeling (the old lady also knew about everything).

Then I was told (by mama) that at 11 a.m. a man with an amazing gaze, wearing a fur coat turned inside out, barefoot, and with a staff in his hands, was seen on the Arbat. A tin dove was atop the staff. He walked off no one knows where. Who was that? In the evening I ran through the streets searching everywhere — and a snowstorm tore and whirled and wove whiteness, and again joy, *our joy* was drawing nigh. The next day I was at a certain lady's, and again He stood next to me, and I was not the only one who noticed that everything was good. Since then, once again, a happiness returned has begun. . . . And now happiness keeps coming again and again. . . . Yesterday happiness began three times. In the evening P.N. Batyushkov and I were sitting together and heard how something, Someone, came. We kept noticing waves of good vibrations moving back and forth in space. A wireless telegraph formed in my room. The *happiness* of four years past was repeated again. I am writing to you intoxicated and weary from joy — Christ, Our God, be with you. He is among us. Joy be with you. . . .<sup>124</sup>

The intensity of these visionary experiences of Christ and Serafim could not, of course, be sustained, especially given what Bely called, in a letter to Metner of May 1904, the '*horrors — at first mystical, then psychic and finally real*',<sup>125</sup> which occurred in the months that followed. Bely hoped for a measure of consolation from Antony, but he only showed such incomprehension that Bely ended his visits to the Donkoy Monastery.<sup>126</sup>

In July, Bely, Petrovsky and Sergey Solov'ev visited the Bloks at Shakhmatovo. All fell in love with Lyubov' Dmitrievna, Bely in a way which would soon assume anything but 'symbolic' dimensions and which would make him in August once again take up Vladimir Solov'ev and find him, as he wrote to Petrovsky, 'sagacious' (*prozorlivyy*), an adjective he had used before for Nietzsche and Serafim.<sup>127</sup> His mother now decided to make the trip to Sarov they had postponed a year before. Bely again 'heard the call of Sarov's pines', and agreed to accompany her in September.<sup>128</sup>

At the beginning of the month, mama and I travel to Sarov via Nizhniy and Arzamas; it turns cold on the way; between Nizhniy and Arzamas we meet a little old priest; mama takes him with us in our carriage (it's a sixty-verst ride between Arzamas and Sarov); during the whole trip he strangely wraps himself up in a blanket (head included); while we are on the way mama begins to think that his face strangely resembles Serafim. Upon our arrival in Sarov, the priest, having thanked mama, disappeared in the crowd of pilgrims; Sarov produces a strange, almost painful impression on me; during the whole first night in Sarov I read Høffding's *Philosophy of Religion*; and it seemed to me that the

impression produced by Høffding's book surpassed the mood created by the cloister; I didn't like the monks at all; the next day we went to St Serafim's spring, mama bathed there; I was struck by the great number of sick and possessed people we met on the way to the spring; afterwards, toward evening, we travelled to Diveevo; Diveevo, on the other hand, produced the strongest impression on me; I particularly noted the absence of a wall around the cloister and the ditch dug by Serafim, now planted with flowers; A.S. Petrovsky's sister, Elena Sergeevna, a nun, and her friend spent the evening with us in our room: both of us liked them immensely. The next day we returned to Arzamas, from whence, after spending the night, we travelled to Nizhniy; we spent the day with Metner; and returned to Moscow. The trip to Sarov did not leave a very deep impression.<sup>129</sup>

Bely's account of the trip in the *Epopeya* text of his Blok reminiscences, the *only* mention of his devotion to Serafim that he made in his published memoirs, differs in no important way from the account cited above from the 'Material for a Biography'.<sup>130</sup>

Bely continued to pray to Serafim, and credited his help in the victorious conclusion to the battle of 'light over darkness' that he waged with Bryusov at the end of the year.<sup>131</sup> Thereafter he rarely mentioned Serafim. In a letter to Margarita Morozova he recalled his visit to Sarov:

I often remember the Serafim-Diveevo Cloister, and dream (half in jest) about entering the priesthood in time: no need for people, for the city, for distressing interests. One wants to follow life from a distance, to become absorbed in folios when one has the time, and to pray a great deal somewhere in a church that few attend.<sup>132</sup>

He never, of course, seriously considered entering the priesthood. Petrovsky, who had in September 1904 enrolled in the Theological Academy at the Troitsko-Sergievskaya Lavra, where for a time he shared a room with Florensky, left it in 1907 and abandoned Orthodoxy for Rosicrucianism and, finally, Anthroposophy.

During the years 1905 till 1911, when Bely again moved from 'mists and horrors' to 'light',<sup>133</sup> he referred in passing to Serafim in several essays.<sup>134</sup> Serafim figures in the conclusion to a January 1909 verse epistle addressed to Sergey Solov'ev ('Take heart: again over the soul / Is the sky before the dawn; / Diveevo's cherished dream / And the awesome pines of Sarov')<sup>135</sup> and in *Peterburg*, where a 'small icon depicting Serafim of Sarov's thousand nights of prayer, kneeling on a stone amidst the pines' hangs over the bed in Dudkin's wretched 'habitation'.<sup>136</sup> Paucity of mention does not mean that Bely had either

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forgotten or rejected the saint. He simply occupied the most intimate chamber in Bely's pantheon. 'The pines of Sarov remained in memory' forever.<sup>137</sup>

The few who knew of this secret devotion were those with whom he was on particularly intimate spiritual terms. In February and early March 1912, as he tried to set his affairs straight before leaving Russia to join Asya Turgeneva in Western Europe, Bely had time for almost no one in Moscow. He made an exception for Sergey Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1877–1944):

. . . those days were particularly filled by conversations with S.N. Bulgakov. . . Ideologically we were far apart; . . . opposites do come together, do have something in common; I had something very obviously in common with Bulgakov; we were drawn together not by our outlook on the world, but by our perception of the facts of consciousness; S.N.'s inclination towards official churchliness alienated me; but, on the other hand, his striving for the concrete realization of spiritual experience drew us together; he, as did Blok and I at that time, really felt the spread of a destructive atmosphere all around; and therefore: he responded with special keenness to themes that were close to Blok and me; to the theme of the coming danger menacing the world; he felt a note of the Antichrist in the air; he would turn the topic of conversation to questions of apocalypse; both of us had the same attitude to the traditions of Serafim of Sarov; I had been in Sarov and Diveevo; at one time the chronicle account of the Serafimo-Diveevo Monastery had been the most precious book to me; S.N. knew of my inner cult of the saint; because of this '*cult*' he forgave my '*heresies*' in the area of mysticism and thought that I was somehow inwardly connected with St Serafim; . . . The outward form of our agreement or disagreement about abstract ideas did not particularly bother him; despite our abstract dissimilarity he always stressed that reality which lay at the core of my personality; he took a calm attitude to my philosophical '*dress coat*', so utterly unlike his attraction for a '*cassock*'.<sup>138</sup>

The two men's paths had intersected, Bely avowed, because they shared the same aspiration: 'to understand the truth of the Spirit'.<sup>139</sup>

Bulgakov had warned Bely of the danger of falling into the 'abyss' of the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.<sup>140</sup> Bely, while convinced that Steiner had the necessary 'experience' (*opyt*) to become a guide, was not yet sure, on the basis of those of Steiner's works that he had read, if he stood under 'the sign of Christ'. Late in April 1912 he and Asya left Brussels, where they had been staying since mid-March, to hear Steiner lecture in Cologne. On 23 April/6 May Steiner's lecture '*Das Christus-Erkennen im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*' resolved all Bely's doubts:

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... he spoke about an impulse with no name, but life-creative; in the twentieth century this impulse is the Christ Impulse; everything he said was very far indeed from the usual church formulation; I understood one thing: STEINER KNOWS THE CHRIST IMPULSE. . . .<sup>141</sup>

After another of Steiner's lectures, he remarked to Margarita Vasil'evna Sabashnikova-Voloshina: 'The dawns of Russian Symbolism are now understandable; everything that once agitated us was not false.'<sup>142</sup> He spent the next three-and-a-half years in the entourage that accompanied Steiner on his lecture trips and in Dornach, the headquarters of the new Anthroposophical Society outside Basel.

Nothing suggests that Bely ever in any way 'identified' Steiner with Serafim. They both, to be sure, represented ideals of spiritual wisdom, but only in so much as they, like Solov'ev, shared a long tradition of Christian mysticism. Bely emphasized that when he wrote a twenty-nine page letter to Morozova from Basel in September 1912 outlining Steiner's teachings and justifying his new belief in their rightness:

My dear, if you remember me, if you know 'my self', if you believe that I cannot renounce Christ, that He is for me '*the Path and affirmation of Truth*', then you will believe that the Rosicrucian path that Steiner preaches is truly the path of pure Christianity. . . . Steiner first and foremost is a *teacher* in the same sense that a spiritual elder can be a teacher for us in Russia. . . . He is the kind of *teacher* who exists once in a century; I know that the tradition of elders is possible because of my former experience with Bishop Antony. But in terms of spiritual experience, what is Bishop Antony compared to Steiner? A dwarf! . . . Truly with no one can I study in Russia. . . . I could study with the strictest monk, but such a monk would lock me up in a monastery. And outside the monastery we have nothing — neither the voice of the Church, nor the voice of a Teacher who speaks for the world, into the world, to the world. . . . Aside from Vl. Solov'ev, the Christian community did not show a single real teacher to those of us aesthetes who are not part of any community.<sup>143</sup>

Bely places Steiner in a specifically Russian tradition, but no more. (Similarly, he had never in any way confused Antony with Serafim.)

Steiner knew a good deal about Serafim,<sup>144</sup> and he and Bely may have discussed the saint, although there is no mention of this in any of Bely's reminiscences or in his recollections of Steiner. There is one passage in the 'Material for a Biography' that shows what a providential role Bely believed Serafim played in his life after his discovery of Anthroposophy. In August 1915, a month Bely called the 'tip of my life' ('ostrie moey zhizni'), he experienced as never before a sense of mission. He feared, however, that it might be delusion and that once

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again, as in the past, he was confusing true spiritual knowledge with its demonic surrogate. He felt oppressed by Ahriman. Steiner, who was preoccupied with rehearsals for scenes from *Faust*, seemed remote. Bely kept thinking of his fate:

. . . the image of *Faust*, who sold his soul to the Devil; the Devil came for his soul, but angels rescued Faust; Faust heard the prayer: 'Christ ist erstanden'. More than once I associated the image of Faust with myself; . . . I, like Faust, was a fallen sage; the Lemures and Mephistopheles had surrounded me; but there *are* angels, who bear off Faust's soul, and there is Pater Seraphicus, surrounded by pure boys. . . . in the theme of Faust's salvation the production itself became connected with the situation being played out in my soul; . . . Soon after that, when I was sorting out the bottom of my trunk, I came across a little package; I unwrapped it and saw a small icon of St Serafim about which I had forgotten and which had been travelling with me since 1912; how strange: St Serafim was exposed to me, and in the mystery the doctor <Steiner> attached special significance to Seraphicus; Seraphicus and Faust, Serafim and I. I recalled the years 1901-1903, when I fervently prayed at length to the saint. I hung the icon over the head of my bed. And fervently said a prayer to the saint: it became easier. . . . The icon, the rehearsals of 'Faust', my prayers, reading the Gospels — all this, as the tenth of August nears, enters my soul as my hope for aid.<sup>145</sup>

Mysterious 'assaults' continued from all sides, but through the continuous prayers to Serafim and by 'meditative reading' of the Gospels, Bely finally felt that he had broken through the evil ring that surrounded him. The long-awaited 'miracle' (*chudo*) was climaxed by a seemingly trivial moment to which he attached special significance. At one of the final rehearsals for the last scene of Part Two of *Faust*, Asya handed him the *white* cloak she had been wearing during the eurythmic performance of the text:

. . . I will remind the reader: Asya headed one of the two ranks of angels who rescued Faust from the Devil and carried him to the abode where three hierophants stood: Pater Ecstaticus, Pater Profundus and Pater '*Seraphicus*', whom I had already connected with Serafim in the days before; Seraphicus was all in white; he stood at the apex of a triangle formed by the three paters: in the depths of the stage, in its middle.

From that moment it was revealed to me: Asya had sewn that cloak so as to wear the colour of my saint, Serafim, near me.<sup>146</sup>

With this reference to 'my saint, Serafim', Pater Seraphicus, and the Angels bearing Faust's soul to Paradise, while intoning 'Wer immer

strebend sich bemüht, / Den können wir erlösen', Bely concludes the 'Material for a Biography'.

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Until now I have given only a kind of chronicle of Bely's encounter with Serafim and some other aspects of Orthodoxy. I have for the most part deliberately avoided elaborating on exactly what in the saint appealed to him, beyond the discussion of his role in bringing Bely to 'Christism' ('Khristovstvo'). There is really little direct evidence from which to draw firm conclusions. We know that Bely read carefully and repeatedly the *Letopis' Serafimo-Diveeskogo monastyrya* and called it his 'bedside book' (*nastol'naya kniga*) — he used the term for only one other book during his early years, *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Yet he made only one precise reference to it, in his letter to Blok of 19 August 1903, giving the page number from the *Letopis'* for a quotation describing the icon of God's Mother of Tenderness (*Umilenie*) before which Serafim always prayed (the icon is pictured between pp.482 and 483 of the 1903 edition).<sup>147</sup>

Hardly more helpful is the one text specifically addressed to Serafim, a poem written in July 1903 at the height of Bely's mystical involvement with the saint:

СВ. СЕРАФИМ

Плачем мы тайно в скорбях,  
грудь ли тоскою теснима —  
в яснонемых небесах  
мы узнаем Серафима.

Чистым атласом пахнет,  
в небе намотанном.  
Облаком старец сойдет,  
нежно разметанным.

'Что с тобой, радость моя, —  
радость моя?..'

Смотрит на нас  
ликом туманным, лилейным.  
Бледно-лазурный атлас  
в снежнокисейном.

Бледно-лазурный атлас  
тихо целует.  
Бледнолазурный атлас  
в уши нам дует:

'Вот ухожу в тихий час...  
Снова узнаете горе вы!..  
С высей ложится на нас  
отблеск лазоревый.

Легче дышать  
после таинственных знамений.  
Светит его благодать  
тучкою алого пламени.<sup>148</sup>

Bely thought enough of the poem to revise it later (he dropped the second stanza) and include it in two editions of his collected verse.<sup>149</sup> But beyond the 'radost' moya', the saint's usual greeting to all, as Bely would have known from reading the *Letopis'*, the 'portrait', as one might after all expect in a lyric poem, comes from the same mythopoeic realm that produced some of the passages on Serafim in the letters. The poem and the letters together, however, do enable us to establish a 'code' for the saint in Bely's early writings. The word *radost'*, for example, invariably signals the Saint's presence, while the poem's reference to 'lilies' and 'secret signs' (*tainstvennyye znameniya*) makes clear that Serafim, although unnamed, underlies the visionary experience described by Bely in his January 1904 letter to Metner. The 'brightly-mute heavens' recall Serafim's teachings on silence, and the 'scarlet flame' (*aloe plamya*) of the last line alludes directly to his name, which in Hebrew means 'fiery' (*plamenny*), as Bely would have known from the *Letopis'*<sup>150</sup> The whole poem is suffused, for obvious reasons, with images of 'whiteness' and 'brightness', placing it firmly within the solar-Christological (not Sophiological) theme that dominates *Zoloto v lazuri* (that title itself alludes to the Sun, i.e. to Christ).<sup>151</sup> Still, we are no closer to specifying the saint's enduring attraction for Bely.

Oddly enough, a remark in the memoirs of Bely's sister-in-law, Elena Nikolaevna Kezel'man, provides the best clue. She once asked him what was most important for modern man. He answered: 'Klares Denken in the head, St Serafim's cellule in the heart' ('Klares Denken — v golove, keleyka sv. Serafima — v serdtse').<sup>152</sup> 'Klares Denken' comes from the first stanza of Rudolf Steiner's 'Ruhiges Verweilen':

Ruhiges Verweilen an den  
Schönheiten des Lebens  
Gibt der Seele Kraft des  
Fühlens.  
Klares Denken an die  
Wahrheiten des Daseins  
Bringt dem Geiste Licht des  
Wollens.<sup>153</sup>

But what did Bely mean by 'St Serafim's cellule in the heart', or, put in a slightly different way, the saint and his message *internalized* in man? Here we must return in greater detail to the experiences of the summer of 1902. In the commentary to his correspondence with Blok, Bely wrote:

I often prayed in 1902-1903; in 1902 there was even the experience of prayer and something from 'interior prayer' [*umnoe delan'e*], done according to the plan recommended by St Serafim of Sarov; and an unexpected recognition about Christ came as a result of this prayer [*delan'e*]; I had not known Christ 'before'; I recognized Him in that *experience*.<sup>154</sup>

The 'Material for a Biography' contains the only long account of just what that discovery of Christ during the summer months at Serebryany Kolodez' meant for Bely:

Every day, at dawn, I experience strange ecstasies of some kind; I perform a special rite of my own service in the fields; this service is directed at that which is to come; I no longer see it only in the theme of Blok's poetry, but in the theme of 'Christ's Second Coming'; correspondence with the Merezhkovskys, my prayers, and the connection with St Serafim that I sense inside myself — all this changes the tonality of my religious experience: from inspiration by Her to intuition in ----- Christ. The 'Feeling for Christ' — that is what cuts through the ecstasy of my merging with the world soul; inside myself I realize that one must pass through this ecstasy as through gates in order to meet with Him in one's own heart — in a stillness beyond ecstasy; a distance beyond ecstasy and beyond our world becomes for me an immanent revelation about Christ; I grasp



not the iconic Countenance of Christ, but the Countenance that arises in the centre of one's own heart; this new and unexpected encounter, the encounter with Christ, fills all my days to overflowing; I begin to think that Apocalypse is something played out in every man's soul; the second coming is not a historical fact, but a supra-historical fact: ascent from the world into that beyond the world is possible in any of life's moments — in stillness, in the voice of Christ that rises out of the depths of my being; for me everything '*apocalyptic*', understood in terms of history as '*the end of universal history*', begins to be only the symbolic ascent of prayers to Christ; '*Apocalypse*' is the '*Apocalypse*' of the soul: the path of initiation into the mystery of Christ's Name; 'She' becomes only the gates to the inner Christ within me: Sophia becomes Christosophia: the outer garment of Christ.

These inner recognitions bring about a retreat, as it were, from the '*Apocalyptic*' of 1901; by comparison with 1900 and 1901, the year 1902 is for me an '*anti-apocalyptic*' year in the sense that within myself I overcome the external apocalyptic; in that external '*apocalyptic*' I see something seductive; this is a 'demon'; this is the 'antichrist' who steals up on the heart; I now view the sphere of my expectations in 1901 as a sphere of seductions that I overcame by finding a point of rest beyond and outside the apocalyptic, a point of rest connected with Christ's descent into our hearts and with the possibility of contact with Him outside the Church, face to face.

I will never forget how the wind blew around me during a walk in the fields (at a blindingly golden sunset) and how it seemed to raise the mystery of the second descent in my soul: '*It has already begun!*' I returned home shaken to the core by this recognition, which changed all external apocalypses for me; during those very days I condensed the voice of Eternity in the words of my Fourth '*Symphony*': 'The days pass... The times are gathering... That without sunsets and without limits of time draws near... It pleads: it's time for me to go to that old world... It's time to pull off the veils... To unwind the shrouds... To swoop down with the wind... To whistle in the ears about the pretemporal...'<sup>[155]</sup> *The pretemporal in the temporal* — that is what Rudolf Steiner later called the *Christ Impulse*.

The *Christ Impulse* first became known to me in 1902. And in connection with this knowledge the very *dawns* of times changed their coloration for me: *they became radiant to the point of... pain*;<sup>[156]</sup> the pain of the loss of something in the very joy of the end — the loss of the end in the end; this pain puts an end to all childish mysticism and naive ecstaticism; this pain is the pain of the beginning of consciousness of the self: it hews my new knowledge that it is '*not I, but Christ in me*'.<sup>[157]</sup>

That summer the meaning of my '*Solov'evianism*' . . . is revealed in a new way; I experience *sui generis* a retreat from the philosophy of Vladimir Solov'ev. . .

I write the first version of the Fourth '*Symphony*' (it wasn't preserved) under the impression of the facts of my inner life; the Fourth '*Symphony*' was supposed to give a new, mystically correct transcription of the Second: to disclose the genuine note of time: the Second Coming is already taking place; it

is not in the thunder of history's apocalyptic events, but in the stillness of hearts, from whence Christ appears.<sup>158</sup>

Eleven years later, i.e. in 1913, Bely re-experienced this 'feeling of Christ' in Anthroposophy, as he recalled in his 'autobiographical letter' to Ivanov-Razumnik:

. . . the year 1913, because of the courses and events that I experienced in Christiania, in Leipzig, in Bergen and in Copenhagen, was my second *realistic* approach to the *Christ* theme; it was as if the *Second Coming* took place in my soul: in the disclosure of the theme of the *Second Coming*; and hence: my Christian experiences of 1902 received the key to their explanation.<sup>159</sup>

Now this, of course, was written in 1927 and the account in 'Material for a Biography' was set down in 1923, long after Bely's engagement with Rudolf Steiner. Passages in letters to Metner already cited make clear, however, that this is no retrospective creation of a spurious autobiographical moment in order to establish a kind of *a priori* connection with Steiner before the actual encounter with the man and his teachings, whose essence, Bely always insisted, he had himself reached before that.<sup>160</sup>

Serafim was convinced of the possibility of God's manifestation to man, and believed that prayer was the most effective means at our disposal to acquire grace of the Holy Spirit, 'the true aim of our Christian life', as he told Nikolay Motovilov, who took down the saint's words ('The true aim of our Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit of God').<sup>161</sup> Serafim continued:

Of course, every virtuous act done for Christ's sake gives us the grace of the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all gives this, for prayer is somehow always in our hands as an instrument for acquiring the grace of the Spirit. You want, for example, to go to church, but there is either no church near or the service is over; you want to give something to a beggar, but there is no beggar near or you have nothing to give. . . you want to perform some other virtuous act for Christ's sake, but the strength or the opportunity is lacking. This in no way affects prayer: prayer is always possible for everyone — rich and poor, exalted and simple, strong and weak, healthy and sick, righteous and sinful. Great is the power of prayer, and it most of all brings the Spirit of God, and it is easiest of all for anyone to exercise. In prayer are we vouchsafed to converse with our Good and Life-giving God and Saviour. . .<sup>162</sup>

When the 'Holy Spirit itself enters our soul', the saint insisted, the 'Kingdom of God' is achieved not as historical fact, but 'in the human heart'.<sup>163</sup>

The official Church during the Saint's life and in the decades that followed his death had an uneasy relationship with his legacy. For some his sayings, as set down by his disciples, and his 'Spiritual Instructions',<sup>164</sup> smacked too much of Hesychasm (about which Serafim knew from his wide reading of the Church Fathers and the *Philokalia*), even the Messalian heresy of the fourth century.<sup>165</sup> Others, like Metropolitan Filaret, feared that the example of his life of mystical prayer and his contemplative regime might be misused in the hands of the inexperienced and might lead to a withdrawal from the Church into solitary mysticism. The Saint's 'Conversation' with Motovilov, with its central tenet that the 'acquisition of the Holy Spirit' was accessible to and destined for all Christians through the efficacy of prayer alone, did not appear in print until July 1903. (In this tenet Serafim only follows the Homilies of St Makarios the Great of Egypt, c.300–c.390, whom Bely had also read in 1902–03.)<sup>166</sup> Bely nowhere mentions the work, but in the summer of 1903 he was, as we have seen, closely following everything connected with the events at Sarov, and the 'Conversation' first appeared in the newspaper *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, which we know he was reading.<sup>167</sup> The 'Conversation' would only have confirmed what he had learned from his own experience of 'inner illumination' during the summer before when he had practised Serafim's counsel on prayer. That counsel is cited repeatedly throughout the *Letopis'* (pp.43, 74–75, 151–52, 363) and in the 'Spiritual Instructions': the constant inner recitation of the 'Jesus Prayer' ('Those who have truly decided to serve the Lord God should practise the remembrance of God and uninterrupted prayer to Jesus Christ, mentally saying: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.').<sup>168</sup>

Bely's practice of the saint's '*umnoe delan'e*' (that is, Hesychasm; Serafim spoke only of '*umnaya molitva*'), to Bely the 'esoteric' aspect of Orthodoxy, brought him to a special inner awareness of Christ. It did not bring him to the Church. On 1 April 1905 he wrote to Metner:

That is why the question of religious sociality, religion's movement, on the one hand, out of individual mysticism (Protestant mystical sects) and, on the other, out of universal dogmatism (Catholicism, Orthodoxy) into social theurgy, is above all the movement to Apocalypse, for here begins the effective and definitive battle with the *Beast* and likewise the formation of a third religion — the religion of mankind: Mankind honoured as an individual being. In the past there were religions of the Father and of the Mother (the Old Testament, so-

called paganism), there was the religion of Godmanhood (the New Testament). The unification of testaments into the *final Testament* is now beginning — the Spirit of the Comforter draws nigh. A total religion of the Trinity is taking shape.<sup>169</sup>

Shortly afterwards, at the beginning of June, he sent the following to Metner:

There is now taking place within me a kind of evolution, which I can't formulate, but which seems to be from Christianity (but not from the Christ) to... music, Nietzsche and Khandrikov's experiences at *Orlovka*...<sup>[170]</sup> I am happy in my freedom, and now dream about uniting theurgy and anthropology. More and more I begin to understand what *man* is: at times every religion now seems to me not an end but a means to finding *my very self*, i.e., finding *man* (not the overman) in myself. Man has been forgotten by all the 'ists', as well as by the mystics, and even by Nietzsche with his overman.

The human — *that* is the eternal Christ feeling without attribution of it to God. The cult of the Christ feeling in the name of it itself within me and for me. The path of Man sometimes terrifies me in the possibility of rupture, for of all paths this is the most thorny. I am the means, but I am also the end. As the means I am the empirical man, as the end — I am God.<sup>171</sup>

We are here, in 1905, but one step, if that, away from Steiner's 'science of man' and the 'ethical individualism' that man attains when filled with the Christ Impulse.<sup>172</sup>

At the beginning of the century, neo-Orthodox thinkers like Bulgakov, Florensky and Berdyaev, to name the most prominent, had sensed that the official Church stood at a moment of profound crisis, dangerously compromised by identity with the values and the social and political milieu in which it had become exclusive, privileged, and, in a word, decadent. They were able to resist the temptation to preserve tradition by an obscurantist fidelity to received formulae that could only call down anathema on every manifestation of modern thought. Instead they could re-imagine continuity by means of new language and new concepts deployed to reaffirm ancient beliefs. It is a mark of Bely's alienation from 'historical Christianity', i.e. Orthodoxy, that he could only see these as new forms of old, static dogma:

They will say, so why didn't I join the religious-philosophical movement; individual details in the Orthodox line were close to me: the tradition of elders: Amvrosiy<sup>[173]</sup> and Serafim, who were wider, deeper and freer in their experience than the dogmatic Orthodox mounting that was put on them; to me the consciousness of the historical Church was a consciousness that relies on a theological prop; but for me theology was only bad metaphysics, a negative

## ANDREY BELY AND SERAFIM OF SAROV

discipline; for me theological dogmatism was the 'negatio' of the religious experience proper, which is within man and in which the divine is immanent to consciousness; therefore: the divine is in the 'I', not in the 'transcensus' (somewhere out there, above me, in the clouds). The whole history of Christianity seemed 'the fall of Christianity' or the heavy frames over icons that sometimes hide a beautiful picture; a sooty black absence, not a countenance, stares out from the metallic frames; even when I converged, in instances of spiritual experience, with those behind <the journal> 'Put', I always rebelled against dogma; I saw that dogma is the 'shrine' of the symbol; a word grown heavy is dogma; at the time when I took the Church's experience I was with the Merezhkovskys, who proclaimed a new realization of dogma. But when I realized the 'feuilletonisticness' of their whole striving, I moved away from them.

I truly wanted: the unification of faith and knowledge into something that was neither faith nor knowledge, into that which is *faithful knowledge*; thus *spiritual knowledge* drew nigh.<sup>174</sup>

Some, like Berdyaev, who was for a time attracted to Anthroposophy, believed that in Steiner's 'spiritual knowledge' Bely himself had fallen into the worst kind of dogma, an un-Christian teaching in which Christ is 'merely a cosmic agent, only a moment of cosmic evolution'.<sup>175</sup> Bely would sharply have disagreed with such conclusions. Those who made Steiner's teachings into a blind faith always repelled him.<sup>176</sup>

Bely saw no conflict between Anthroposophy and his Christianity. In November 1915 he wrote to Ivanov-Razumnik that 'the science of the spirit and Christianity are now synonyms for me',<sup>177</sup> and in January 1927, in one of his last private lectures for friends, his topic was 'Steiner as a Christian'.<sup>178</sup> He believed himself to be a Christian until the day he died, as the memoirs of his wife and sister-in-law testify. It is hard, however, not to agree with the conclusions of one highly sympathetic critic of Bely: 'To those of a more traditionally religious cast of mind it [Anthroposophy] appears as fundamentally un-Christian in its disregard of the idea of grace and its lack of transcendence'.<sup>179</sup>

At various periods of his life Bely was 'tempted' (his word) to put the ecstatic insights he had gained in the summer of 1902 into *external* practice, a theurgic path wherein vision is accompanied by human activity to effect restoration of the cosmos. All such attempts — with the 'Argonauts', with the group around 'Musaget', 'Vol'fila', and finally with the Anthroposophical Society — had ended in frustration, disillusionment, even nervous collapse. Always he returned with new hope to his early intuition that 'crisis' could be overcome only *within the individual*. He put it most succinctly in the Berlin redaction of 'Nachalo veka', as he described the sense of 'catastrophe' which he,

Blok, and Vyacheslav Ivanov had shared in the opening decades of the century:

In my opinion the axis of catastrophe passes right through the 'I' in man; therefore: the crisis of personality in the psychological and physiological regeneration of man's 'I' (every 'I' is full of cracks); a shift of life is the result; . . . The way out of the crisis lies in working on the creation of the self itself, in a revolution of the life of consciousness. . . . my zeal is for a personal path, and I devote myself to it as I would to a deed done for all men; the purified consciousness of the individuum is the only lever that can lift the burdens; I believe in the radioactive power of consciousness: the consciousness of ten, twelve or fifteen *really new people* can do more than thousands of social palliatives. . . . for me a revolution is only part of the world revolution: the revolution of each 'I', of all; the 'I' changes; I hearken to the self, not the earth.<sup>180</sup>

The transformation of the self, the constant theme of Bely's life and art and the goal of all mystical teachings, certainly of Serafim and Steiner (despite the obvious and profound differences between them), must for Bely lie in the direct experience of Christ, whether as Serafim's 'acquisition of the Holy Spirit', the Kingdom of God within the human heart, or Steiner's realization of Christ within (the 'Ego proper' within the lower ego).<sup>181</sup>

In 1912 Bely wrote to Morozova: 'It is not enough to wear the Cross, Christ's Cross must be inflamed within you'.<sup>182</sup> Only the theurgic praxis of prayer advocated by Serafim and then of Steinerian meditation allowed the *process* of *zhiznetvorchestvo* to begin, the 'creation of life within the self' (*tvorchestvo zhizni v sebe*).<sup>183</sup> Bely always felt constricted by the (to him) static doctrine that 'in the beginning was the Word'; he preferred the more dynamic 'in the beginning was the ACT': "'Let it be" — this is the original act of creation. . . Thus it was on the first day of creation. Thus it is. Thus will it be'.<sup>184</sup>

In 1926, another 'critical' (*perelomnyy*) year in his life, Bely once again set out on that 'path' with hope for the future and inscribed the names of Serafim and Steiner under the date in his 'autobiographical letter' to Ivanov-Razumnik.<sup>185</sup> Only they, of all the 'guides' and system-makers Bely had tried and found wanting over the years, remained 'guiding stars' (*putevodnye zvezdy*), men who by the example of their lives provided models and, in their teachings, a means for 'internal Apocalypse', the 'Apocalypse of the soul'.<sup>186</sup>

Near the end of a long life of incessant, sometimes quixotic questing, as he wrote what was to be his last novel, *Maski*, Bely may have recalled Serafim's 'Instructions':

Spiritual peace is acquired through sorrows. . . . Nothing so fosters the acquisition of inner peace as silence and, insofar as it is possible, constant conversation with the self and the rare conversation with others. . . . The mark of spiritual life is when a man plunges his mind within himself and has secret activity in his heart. The grace of God overshadows such a man, and he is first in a peaceful state, and then, by means of this, enters a most peaceful state: peaceful, that is, with a good conscience; most peaceful when his mind beholds within itself the grace of the Holy Spirit, according to the word of God: *And His place is in peace* (Ps. 75,3). Can one, seeing the sun with one's sensuous eyes, not rejoice? But how much more joyful it is when the mind sees with its inner eye the Sun of Justice, Christ!. . . When a man enters into a peaceful state, he can pour out from himself and upon others light for the enlightenment of reason.<sup>187</sup>

Bely had achieved that wisdom: 'the cellule of Saint Serafim in the heart'.

None of Bely's fictional characters was 'closer and dearer' to him, his widow averred, than the hero of *Maski*, Professor Korobkin, and none shared more of his own inner experience.<sup>188</sup> And when he created the woman who nurses Korobkin back to health after the sinister Mandro's tortures in the 'Moscow' novels, the woman who brings him to morally significant knowledge and who points the way to spiritual transformation, he named her — Serafima.

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## NOTES

98. . . . а тут новое уже настоящее горе: у меня скончался папа 29го мая . . . Я радостен, восторженно радостен: что может меня обезнадежить? Сейчас из Девичьего Монастыря сижу вот и пишу Вам, гляжу на свой черный креп и улыбаюсь — тихо, ясно... "Иисус отвечал им: не написано ли в законе вашем 'Я сказал: вы боги'" (Пс. 81.6) (Ев. от Иоанна 10.34) — что смерть богам? В открытом окне голубая бесконечность с ласточками... Их визг... Их визг — о вечно-задумчивом.

"Я сказал: вы боги"... . . .

Это любимый папин текст и о нем кричат мне ласточки из открытого окна.' This passage from the Gospel of St John underlies the

Orthodox doctrine that man is an affected state of the divine, partaking of God's divine nature.

99. '... звучит явственно нота "срыва" надежд... Да, — лейт-мотив этого лета — "не то", "не те"; я уже не ощущаю в себе того живительного тока духовности, который окрылял меня эти два года; мы с А. С. Петровским пребываем в тоске и в томлении; у меня — надрыв, разочарование в себе самом; даже переживания, связанные с "Христовым Импульсом" обертываются мне переживаниями соблазнительности; мне начинает порою казаться, что наша предызбранность есть *sui generis* самозванство; ... я не помню, что я говорил Петровскому, но у Петровского осталось впечатление, что я собираюсь "объявиться", что на его словах означало "объявить себя ложным пророком". Владимир, который в эти дни был бодрее нас пожимал на нас плечами и говорил: "Что вы, в самом деле киснете...".' 'Material', June 1903, sheet 39.
100. '... странно: я отношусь сравнительно равнодушно к этому событию; так недавно еще культ Серафима был моим культом; теперь — я уже не могу молиться Серафиму, как вообще не могу никому молиться; в таких переживаниях — боль, боль и боль.' *ibid.*
101. On 9 April Bely had written to Metner from Moscow: 'У нас Государь. Не знаю — радоваться или печаловаться. Все таки радуюсь. Почему-то я особенно люблю Николая IIго. От него добрые вибрации. Он знает и белое и голубое — мне так кажется. Насколько Аледсандр III при всей своей разумности феноменальной был нуменально не то что глуп, а...уп..., настолько Николай IIой нуменально осмыслен, если не осведомлен.'
102. '... ужасное горе, оказавшееся сначала, как мистическая радость, и только теперь возрастающее медленно, но верно; кроме того: множество вопросов, никогда не решенных, которых я избегал, топя их в музыкальности, внезапно встали <так> предо мной, прибавляя нравственной тяжести; ... Приехав в деревню, я как-то сразу пал духом и от этого заболел даже физически. Слава Богу, Алексей Сергеевич и Вас. Вас. Владимир, гостившие у меня, на время как вы облегчали мне мое ужасное состояние, а вот теперь обуревают. Я вижу во сне отца, слышу его голос... я знаю — мой *raison d'être*. Но она улетает... Скоро откроют мощи Серафима. Теперь все тянется та пелена проносящихся туч, о которых, помните, я предупреждал Вас зимой. ... Теперь вокруг Серафима пылевые смерчи — все так двусмысленно вокруг него. Я жду напряженно неожиданностей, которые теперь вероятны как в хорошую сторону, так и в дурную. Почему-то я боюсь за всю эту многотысячную толпу, за Императора. События мистического оттенка могут завязаться с удвоенной силой, что развяжет многое из современного. Может быть развяжутся руки, может быть все



будет связано: я и боюсь и надеюсь. Важно то — что у меня есть предчувствия. Мне даже кажется, что это событие не оставит без влияния то, о чем Ницше-германец . . . говорил: "У нас для разговора есть терпение, и время, и излишен времени. Но некогда оно должно же прийти и не может пройти мимо".' The citation is from 'The Honey Sacrifice', the opening section of the Fourth Part of *Zarathustra*. It continues (in the Kaufmann translation): 'What must come one day and may not pass? Our great *Hazar*: that is, our great distant human kingdom, the Zarathustra kingdom of a thousand years.'

103. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, t.85 (Valery Bryusov), M., 1976, p.358.

104. ' . . . как Вы нашли Алексея Сергеевича, какова его эпопея? Был у Вас мой товарищ Владимиров? Я жду их в половине августа к себе, но думаю, что оба меня обманут.

Я все время напряженно следил за погодой, начиная с 8го и кончая 20тыми числами. 11 июля началось какое-то генеральное очистительное разряжение атмосферы. Грозы ужасающего характера, а потом, в дни торжеств какое-то усмирение, после торжеств — то же, а 19го какой-то... срыв... Читаю о чудесах, говорю вслух: "слава Богу", а в душе — грусть, грусть... Я ждал, быть может, большого (воскресения мертвых, катастрофы), а все сошло повидимому благо-получно... чуть чуть срединно... Я не знаю, чего я ждал, но мне грустно.' Letter of 25 July 1903; other portions of the letter appear in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 3, pp.200-01. Compare the 'Material', July 1903, where Bely misdates the events at Sarov as '6-8 July': 'В дни саровских торжеств . . . я наблюдаю закаты, но они мне кажутся какими-то официальными, церковными, очень пышными и торжественными, но — холодными' (sheets 39v-40). The rites started on 17 July with the arrival of the Imperial family. Canonization took place on the eighteenth, and on the nineteenth, the anniversary of his birth, the saint's relics were placed in a marble shrine.

105. Chapter XVI of the *Letopis'* is devoted to Serafim's powers of healing (pp.398ff describe his many cures of those near death). To Bely the hope for resurrection of the dead was closely connected with his belief in the imminent Second Coming: ' . . . наши ожидания какого-то преобразования светом максимальны; мне начинает казаться, что уже мы на рубеже, где кончается история, где за историей начинается "Восстание мертвых"' ('Material', February 1901, sheet 17).

106. 'Саровская Пустынь . . . находится в Тамбовской Епархии, в Темниковском уезде, в 38 верстах от г. Темникова, на границах Нижегородской и Тамбовской губерний, на расстоянии от Москвы в четырех стах, от города Арзамаса в шестидесяти, от Нижнего во ста семидесяти, а от города Муром Владимирской Епархии во ста двадцати верстах, в лесу, на возвышенной горе, между двумя речками Сатисом и Саровкою, соединившимися вместе под монастырем' (*Obshchezhitel'naya Sarovskaya Pustyn'*, M., 1884, p.7).

107. 'На этот раз пишу Вам чисто деловое письмо. Обращаюсь к Вам вместо Алексея Сергеевича потому, что он вообще ходит под солнцем, но где именно в настоящую минуту, не знаю. Отправленное письмо к нему, а также и то, что адресовано в пространство, он по всей вероятности не получил, ибо упорно молчит, несмотря на обещание сообщить мне о Сарове из первых источников и неоднократные напоминания об этом.

Вот о чем собственно я пишу: мы с мамой собираемся ехать в Саров на богомолье вероятно в конце сентября. Вы, как нижегородец (!?!?), все таки больше знаете, да и Алексей Сергеевич, быть может, говорил Вам что-либо: 1) Не слишком ли это поздно 2) 60 верст от Арзамаса, которые мама так боится проехать без попутчиков, можно ли безопасно проехать? Есть ли там экипажи, линейки — вообще каково там сообщение 3) Предполагаются ли богомольцы к осени?

Мама ужасно боится всего и я по поручению ее задаю Вам все эти вопросы, зная, что Вы вряд ли знаете что-либо. Простите за некоторую назойливость этих вопросов.' Sergey Solov'ev was also expecting news about Sarov from Petrovsky: see his letter to Blok of 3 August 1903, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 1, p.335.

108. Cited in a note in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 1, p.335.  
 109. *ibid.* p.339.  
 110. Only portions of the letter are given in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 3, pp.204–05.  
 111. *Perepiska*, pp.44–45.  
 112. *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1–2, p.102.

113. 'Конечно, центр дела не в петербургских мистиках-символистах, подчас остроумно и талантливо передергивающих тексты и на этих передержках строящих замки. Конечно, не здесь центр дела.

А в народно-воплощенном деле суть. И оно незаметно началось. Суть не в стремлении воспользоваться ницетою духа современных официальных представителей Церкви, — суть в незамутненном главном русле Церкви — в событиях грядущих, носящихся над Саровом и Дивеевом, где почиет Он — Серафим, склонявшийся всю жизнь у иконы Матери Божией Умиления — "Всех Радостей Радости", "как он ее всегда называл, пред которой на коленочках во время молитвы и отошел, словно будто и не умер" (Летопись Серафимо-Дивеевского монаст<ыря>, стр. 207). Стоит только узнать, какими великанами духа был окружен этот великан — маленький тихий старичок, убогий Серафим, чтобы центр исканий перенести от религиозно-философской болтовни в центр воплощения — к судьбам Ее Последней Обители (к Дивееву). Тут встают образы людей — то как огненный столб горящих, то как воснесенное веселье мчащихся в жизнь бесконечную. Тут дела. А не там дела, где искры несомненных прозрений перемешаны с позой, сомнительностью, двусмысленностью, так что

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слова о белых делах раздаются подчас из шафранных болот и трясин ужаса.

Серафим, Серафим!..

Только там мир, где тигры и леопарды ластьются, усмиренные у ног, только там счастье, Серафим, где пунцовый огонек твоей лампадки засвечен пред драгоценной могилой...

Серафим, Серафим!..

Только там истина, где серебряная радость уносит! Только там, Серафим, любовь, где твой голос призывно поднимается из бездны везвременья:

"Гряди ко мне, радость моя!"

Да. Это так.' *Perepiska*, p.48 (several mistakes corrected from the manuscript). The saint always referred to himself as 'ubogiy Serafim'. V. N. Orlov cut a long section in the letter (indicated by a row of dots) before the passage on Serafim begins. It is published for the first time in an appendix to this article. It shows Bely the masterful epistolary strategist: before revealing his devotion to Serafim, he set down a no less passionate hymn to Sophia, knowing how this affirmation would appeal to Blok and 'soften him up', as it were, for what was to follow, the paean to Serafim. For, as he concluded the section on Sophia, Blok's faith in Her was 'correct', but insufficient.

Of the passage on Serafim Bely wrote in his commentary to the correspondence with Blok (see previous Note): 'Ответ, сказанный от сердца: "Молитесь ли? Если нет, — попробуйте: сами узнаете внутри молитвы и 'что', и 'как', и в 'каком смысле'." Отсюда же косноязычное и очень стыдливое (в намерении), но косолапо проявленное желание нечто сказать о Серафиме, игравшем во внутр<енней> жизни Бориса Бугаева слишком большую роль, о которой — ни с кем ни слова (кроме Петровского!). Этим и объясняется неожиданный для Бугаева — бурный конец письма' (p.102). Bely's only other reference to Serafim, at least in so far as we can tell from the *Perepiska* and some subsequent fillings in of unpublished letters, occurs in a letter of <19 July 1904>: 'Сегодня день Серафима, голубой и прозрачный... Ласточки кричат' (*Perepiska*, p.103). Bely discussed his 'chuvstvo Khrista' in a letter to Blok of 20 June 1904 and prayer in a letter of 17 July 1904. Neither was included in the *Perepiska*; both are published in an appendix to this article.

114. *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1-2, p.102.

115. '... квинтизм à la Гёте, Канта — нарушен. "Этим" не спасешься. Что могло быть обязанностью и вершиной мудрости в то (еще недавнее) время, то теперь — компромисс. А эта фраза <из Ницше>: "О как много людей вокруг меня, что за сумрачная будущность людей! А надо мной — что за розовая тишина!" показывает, что нарушитель равновесия знал и равновесие.

Знал и тем не менее...

Тут попадаю на почву нашего принципиального разногласия: 1) хочу кричать о необходимости дела, 2) об отношении религии к

искусству, 3) теософии к теургии . . . ." Letter of 2, 3, <4> July 1903. The word 'kompromiss' is underlined twice. The citation is the closing sentences of 'The Honey Sacrifice' section of *Zarathustra* (Fourth Part).

116. 'Душа пробуждается — вернее приближается к поверхности, объективируется. *Весь мир должен стать в наших глазах только духом, только объективированной душой . . . .* Мой девиз теперь: популяризация, пропаганда в толпе без совести.'
117. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 1, p.341.
118. *Ерореуа*, No.1, p.182/[68].
119. 'Material', October 1903, sheet 41v.
120. Bely described these visits in his reminiscences of Blok, where he called Antoniyy 'prozorlivyy episkop na pokoe . . . lichnost' zamechatel'naya i odarennaya prozreniem' (*Ерореуа*, No.1, p.182/[68]; see also p.224/[110]).
121. *ibid.* p.182/[68].
122. '. . . (Моя выдумка. Химический опыт блистательно сошедший). Получилось что-то пиршественнорадостное . . . Антоний видимо все понял до дна (провиденьем), радостно и просто относился к Дм. Серг., а особенно к Зинаиде Николаевне.. Говорил о любви, о радости, о том, как он хочет образовать обитель на горе, над Волгой, и тогда покорнейше просит Мережковских к себе в прекрасные места, где будет ждать их угощение из абрикосов и персиков (?!! Что-то хилястическое!) Мережковский совершенно откровенно сказал ему, в чем его *raison d'être*, говорил о недостаточности исторической церкви, о хулиганах... Еп. Антоний только улыбался *знающе*, да сказал в ответ: "Ишь вы какие пылкие!" А за объяснение сущности слова хулиганов (одержимых) еще и благодарил, говоря что не знает что это такое, но чувствует в словах Мережковского, что "что-то есть"... . . . . Вообще что-то близкое и радостное... Чувствовалось, что Мережковские и Антоний в чем-то *соприкоснулись* (но как будто с обратных сторон . . .). Факт остался фактом: Антоний пришел в духовный восторг, Мережковский целовал у Антония руки, а я про себя потирал руки, радуясь что мой эксперимент дал блестящие результаты.
- Потом Мережковский, хватая себя за голову, все твердил: "Нельзя разрывать с 2000тним опытом Церкви". И мне: "Слушайтесь Антония". Между прочим: они читали "Летопись С<ерафимо-> Д<ивеевского> Монастыря" и увидели в Серафимове чувстве нечто близкое.' Letter to Metner of <beginning of November 1903>. See also Bely's letter to Blok of <first half of November 1903>, *Perepiska*, p.65.
123. See *Zapiski mechtateley*, No.6, p.64, *Ерореуа*, No.1, p.224/[110] and *Nachalo veka*, pp.297–98.
124. 'О счастья, о том что уходит и приходит, но никогда не покидает навеки — о белом счастье грустных детей — вот о чем я хочу Вам писать дорогой, милый Эмилий Карлович. Нет, лучше я опишу Вам Знамения.

Долго тянулись клоки тумана, мчавшегося на землю Бог весть откуда. То здесь то там проплывали обрывки лазури и снова затягивалось. Дорогой Эмилий Карлович, помните одно мое прошлогоднее письмо о том, что Серафим где-то близко, близко, что с горизонта по опьяненной лазури тянутся низкопепельные клоки туч. Я писал, кажется, Вам, что надо готовиться. И все было так, как я писал Вам — для меня по крайней мере. Наступили экзамены, смерть отца, ужасное нервное расстройство, бунты, бунты на югозападе, оставленность, срыв во время Серафимовских торжеств, сентябрьские и октябрьские сомнения и "вечные боязни". Я уже изнемог. И вот стало редеть. Это кончалась пелена туч, проплывавших, которых приближение мне открылось в молитве еще за три месяца до "ужасов".

Но лазурь блеснула только 31го <декабря; месяц добавил Метнер> с 6 часов вечера. Я стал удивляться и радостно "чувать". Павел Николаевич Батюшков — теософ и святой — среди обыденного подмигнул "старинным". Пропел петух и пахло старинным. Тут же сидел А. Серг. Петровский. Они ушли — и вот Он на фоне "старинны" с лазурью глаз и в белом с пурпуром пожарных губ — опять стоял Он рядом со мной. Я все забыл. Вечером мы пошли в церковь. Все было мягко и грустно — старинно. Недоставало метели, но чуялось, что и она приближается. Вышел священник и сказал притчу о девах и о часе, в <котором> "Он же грядет судити живых и мертвых". Что-то радостное было, когда возвращались. "Доброе знамение" сказал я себе. Прихожу — и Кто-то, неизвестный, прислал мне лилий и белых роз в 12 часов нового года. На другое утро Петровский мне сообщил: Антоний собирался к нам (но не был). Я пришел к 75 летней старушке, и она грустила о счастье, подмигивала старинной, знала, хотела белой радости. Старушка, я и Сережа Соловьев мы сравнялись возрастами. После мы стояли на дворе и вокруг нас плясали снежные круги танец белых серпантин — и Сережа мне сказал что-то о Христове чувстве (старушка знала тоже обо всем).

Потом рассказывали (мама) что 11 часов утра на Арбате видели человека с удивительным взором в вывороченной шубе с жезлом в руках и босиком. На жезле сидел жестяной голубь. Прошел неизвестно куда. Кто это был? Вечером бегал по улицам, высматривал — а метель рвала и мела, и плела белизну, и опять приближалась радость, наша радость. На другой день я был у одной дамы и опять Он стоял рядом и не я один заметил, что все хорошо. С тех пор началось опять вернувшееся счастье...

И вот все опять и опять приходит счастье. . . . Вчера 3 раза начиналось счастье. Вечером мы сидели с П. Н. Батюшковым и слышали как пришло что-то, Кто-то. Отмечали волны добрых вибраций перекатывающиеся в пространстве. В моей комнате

- образовался беспроволочный телеграф. 4-годнее опять повторилось счастье. Пишу Вам, опьяненный, усталый от радости — Христос, Бог Наш да будет с Вами. Он между нами. Радость с нами. . . . ' Letter of <not later than 25 January 1904>. See also Bely's letter to Petrovsky of 26 January, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn. 3, p.211.
125. Letter of <first half of May 1904>. A long excerpt is given in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*, 92, kn.3, p.213, where the editors note that some of these 'horrors' were connected with Bely's turbulent affair with Nina Petrovskaya. Nivat gives another excerpt in his publication on Bely and Metner, *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 18, 1977, No.1-2, pp.104-05, where he misdates the letter '1905'.
126. See letter to Blok of <April-May 1904>, *Perepiska*, p.90. K. N. Bugaeva, in 'Kratkoe sodержanie i vyderzhki iz pisem Andreya Belogo k A. S. Petrovskomu', TsGALI, fond 391, op.1, ed. khr. 69, notes a letter of 4 May 1904 with 'Ob Antonii: "Nashi dorogi raznye".'
127. Letter to Petrovsky of 10 August 1904, cited in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*. 92, kn. 3, p.216. Compare 'Material', August 1904: 'Август я провожу в озарении воспоминания о Л<юбови> Д<митриевне>; . . . теория символизма должна сочетаться с чтением о Софии Владимира Соловьева . . . в полях снова я созерцаю "зори"; но эти зори мне говорят исключительно о Л. Д.' (sheet 48).
128. 'Material', August 1904, sheet 48v.
129. 'В начале этого месяца мы с мамой едем в Саров через Нижний и Арзамас; в дороге начинаются холода; между Нижним и Арзамасом мы встречаем старенького священника; мама берет его с нами в коляску (от Арзамаса до Сарова верст 60 на лошадях); всю дорогу он странно кутается в плед (с головой); в дороге маме начинает казаться, что он странно походит лицом на Серафима. По приезде в Саров священник, поблагодарив маму, скрылся в толпе богомолцев; Саров производит на меня странное, почти тягостное впечатление; всю первую ночь в Сарове я прочитал "Философию религии" Геффдинга; и мне казалось, что впечатление от книги Геффдинга превысило настроение от обители; очень мне не понравились монахи; на другой день мы отправились к источнику св. Серафима, мама там выкупалась; меня поразили больные, бесноватые в большом количестве встречавшиеся по дороге к источнику; после мы к вечеру уже поехали в Дивеево; Дивеево, наоборот, произвело на меня сильнейшее впечатление; особенно отметил отсутствие стены у обители и канавка, вырытая Серафимом, обсаженная цветами; вечером у нас в номере сидела сестра А. С. Петровского, Елена Сергеевна, монашка — со своею подругой: обе нам чрезвычайно понравились. На следующий день мы вернулись в Арзамас, откуда, переночевав, поехали в Нижний; день провели с Метнером; и вернулись в Москву. Поездка в Саров не оставила слишком глубокого впечатления.' 'Material', September 1904, sheet 48v. In the June 1904 entry Bely wrote: 'натываюсь на "Психологию" Геффдинга, которая мне особенно нравится;

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Геффдинг становится одним из моих любимейших психологов' (sheet 46). The Danish philosopher and psychologist Harald Høffding (1843–1931) had, after a long study of Kierkegaard, experienced a religious crisis which ended in a radical break with Christianity. His *Outline of Psychology* (1881) and *Philosophy of Religion* (1901) were widely translated and used as textbooks. His stress on the Will and his view that the basis of all religion is a desire for belief in the existence of values would certainly have appealed to Bely at this period (and may, in part, underlie his own theory of Symbolic value), especially since Høffding, although himself an agnostic, never showed any hostility to religion.

130. *Эпопея*, No.2, September, 1922, pp.108–09/[163–64].
131. 'Material', December 1904, sheet 51v ('Я чувствую, что силами молитв, обращенных к Серафиму, я стряхнул с себя наводнение').
132. 'Часто вспоминаю Серафимо-Дивеевскую обитель и мечтаю (в полушутку) со временем поступить в священники: не надо людей, города, волнующих интересов. Хочется издали следить за жизнью, углубляться в фолианты на досуге, и по-многу молиться где-нибудь в малопосещаемом храме.' The letter, GBL, fond 171 (Morozova), box 24, ed. khr. 1a, sheet 101, is among Bely's many undated letters to her.
133. 'Material', 1905, sheet 51v.
134. See, for example, 'Emblematika smysla', in *Simvolizm*, M., 1910, p.141: 'странно было бы называть поучения Серафима Саровского . . . "трактатами по психологии".'
135. 'Мужайся: над душою снова — /Передрассветный небосклон; /Дивеева заветный сон /И сосны грозные Сарова.' 'Sergeyu Solov'evu', *Urna*, p.127.
136. *Peterburg*, M., 1981, p.242. The Berlin edition of the novel (1922) excises the specific reference to the saint's most famous spiritual exploit, the thousand successive days and nights when he spent the better part of his time kneeling on a stone not far from his cell, constantly calling out to God with the prayer of the publican: 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' See *Letopis'*, p.82.
137. *Эпопея*, No.2, p.109/[164].
138. '. . . особенно полны те дни разговорами с С. Н. Булгаковым . . . Идеологически мы были друг другу далеки; противоположности сходятся, перекликаются; перекликался с Булгаковым я очень явственно; сближало — не мировоззрение, а восприятие фактов сознания; в С. Н. меня отдаляло склонение к официальной церковности; наоборот, — с ним сближало стремление к конкретному осознанию духовного опыта; он, действительно, чувствовал, как мы с Блоком в то время, — разлитость губительной атмосферы вокруг; и поэтому: откликался особенно чутко на темы, нам близкие с Блоком; на тему грядущей опасности, угрожающей миру; он чувствовал в воздухе ноту Антихриста; на апокалипсические вопросы сворачивал разговор: оба мы одинаково относились к традициям Серафима Саровского:

я был в Сарове и в Дивееве; летопись Серафимо-Дивеевского монастыря одно время был для меня драгоценнейшей книгой; С. Н. знал о внутреннем моем культе святого; за 'культ' он прощал мои 'ереси' в области мистики и думал, что внутренне связан я как-то со св. Серафимом; . . . внешняя форма согласия, или несогласия в отвлеченных идеях не слишком его волновала; при нашем абстрактном несходстве всегда он подчеркивал то действительное, что лежало в ядре моей личности; к философскому 'фраку', вовсе не сходному с тяготением его к 'рясе', он относился спокойно.' The unpublished 'Berlin redaction' of 'Nachalo veka', t.III, gl. 10, signed '1922-23. December-January', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 103 (in the section 'Predot'ezdnye dni'). Bulgakov became an Orthodox priest in 1918.

139. *ibid.* sheet 107.
140. *Perepiska*, p.295.
141. 'Nachalo veka', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 124. This portion of the memoir was published under the title 'Bel'giya' in *Beseda*, No.2, 1923, p.104.
142. *ibid.* sheet 179.
143. 'Милая, если Вы помните меня, если Вы знаете "мое", если верите, что от Христа я не могу отречься, что Он — для меня "Путь и утверждение Истины", то Вы поверите, что розенкрейцерский путь, проповедуемый Штейнером есть воистину путь чистого христианства. . . . Штейнер прежде всего учитель в том смысле в каком может быть учителем у нас, в России, старец например . . . . Он учитель такой, какие бывают раз в столетие; что старчество возможно, знаю я по опыту бывшего общения с еписк. Антонием. Но что такое по духовному опыту еп. Антоний сравнительно с Штейнером? Карлик! . . . . учиться мне в России воистину не у кого. . . . Учился бы у схимника: но схимник запер бы меня в монастырь. А вне монастыря у нас нет: ни голоса церкви, ни голоса Учителя, говорящего для мира, в миру, к миру. . . . Кроме Вл. Соловьева христианская общественность не явила нам, необщественникам-эстетам, ни одного реального учителя . . . . Letter to Morozova of <September 1912>, GBL, fond 171, box 24, ed. khr. 1v, sheet 18. Compare Bely's account of a conversation with Asya in a Brussels café when they were trying to decide whether to write to Steiner or not: ' — "Вот еслибы были в России, нашел бы я путь к совету; здесь — и спросить то ведь не у кого совета: ни у кого нет духовного опыта, нужного нам". (Знал: в России, в Зосимовой Пустыни — СТАРЕЦ есть; и есть — в Оптиной Пустыни)' — 'Nachalo veka', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 121; *Beseda*, No.2, 1923, p.99. When Asya asked him if he believed that Steiner possessed such 'opyt', Bely answered yes, and they decided to go to Cologne to hear Steiner lecture.
144. See Margarita Woloschin (Sabashnikova-Voloshina), *Die grüne Schlange*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1985, pp.247-61 ('Mysterium des Schweigens'). She writes on page 247: 'Rudolf Steiner wußte alles von ihm



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- [Serafim] und sagte mir: "Der heilige Seraphim ist eine der größten Individualitäten, aber in dieser Inkarnation hat er nicht durch das Denken gewirkt. Man muß auf seine Taten schauen. Gehen Sie dorthin, wo er gelebt hat. Sie werden dann schon wissen, wie Sie über ihn schreiben sollen". Voloshina visited Sarov in 1912, accompanied by her father. Her short book on the Saint (*Svyatoy Serafim*) appeared in Moscow in 1913.
145. 'Material', August 1915, sheets 74/148v-75/149 (pages in this portion of the manuscript have dual numbers, that of Bely and that of the archive). This portion of the 'Material' appeared in my publication 'Bely i Antroposofiya', *Minuvshee*, No.9, 1990, pp.425-26.
  146. 'Material', August 1915, sheet 83/163v; *Minuvshee*, No.9, pp 448-49.
  147. G. P. Fedotov remarks: 'It is not without significance that Seraphim's favourite icon, before which he prayed even at the hour of his death, was not one of the classical Byzantine-Russian madonnas representing the Divine Mother but one of the Western type representing a Holy Virgin of "Tenderness" (*A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, N.Y., 1948, p.244; the engraving of the saint at prayer included in Fedotov's anthology between pp.272-73 clearly shows the image). See also Pavel Florensky's *Stolp i unverzhdenie istiny*, Berlin, 1929, pp.355-58, 763-64.
  148. *Zoloto v lazuri*, pp.217-18. The poem bears no date in this first publication. The revised text, included in the Berlin *Stikhotvoreniya* (1923), p.32, is dated '1903. July. Serebryanyy Kolodez'.' Bely removed the original dedication to Nina Petrovskaya in this publication. The Soviet 'biblioteka poeta' volume (1966) does not include the poem.
  149. See A. Bely, *Stikhotvoreniya III. Primechaniya k stikhotvoreniam*, ed. J. E. Malmstad, München, 1982, p.80.
  150. *Letopis'*, p.51.
  151. Bely would have been struck by Steiner's writing of Christ as a 'solar Being', as the 'Great Sun Spirit' ('der große Sonnengeist').
  152. E. N. Kezel'man, 'Zhizn' v Lebedyani letom 32-go goda. Vospominaniya', in K. N. Bugaeva, *Vospominaniya o Belom*, ed. J. E. Malmstad, Berkeley, 1981, p.293.
  153. Rudolf Steiner, *Wahrspruchworte*, Dornach, 1969, p.204.
  154. *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1-2, p.102. 'Kratkoe molitvennoe pravilo prep. Serafima dlya miryan' was published in *Skazaniya o podvigakh zhizni startsa Serafima...*, izd. ieromonakha Ioasafa, SPb, 1849 (2nd ed. 1856). See Il'in, pp.198-200.
  155. Slightly misquoted from *Kubok meteley. Chervertaya simfoniya*, M., 1908, p.95.91
  156. See the final line of the 1902 poem 'Vse tot zhe raskinulsya svod': 'Zachem svetozaren...do boli?' (*Zoloto v lazuri*, p.22).
  157. Bely's words echo the Pauline 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Galatians, 2, 20). In Russian: 'И уже не я живу, но живет во мне Христос.'
  158. 'Каждый день я на заре переживаю какие-то странные экстазы; я свершаю в полях особый чин своей службы; эта служба обращена к грядущему; грядущее уже не видится мне лишь в теме поэзии

Блока, а в теме "второго Христова пришествия"; переписка с Мережковскими, мои молитвы и внутренне ощущаемая связь со св. Серафимом, — все это меняет тональность моего религиозного опыта: от инспирации Ею, к интуиции в — Христе. "Чувство Христа" — вот что прорезывается сквозь экстаз слияния с мировой душой; я внурти себя осознаю, что сквозь экстаз надо пройти, как сквозь врата, чтоб встретиться с Ним у себя в сердце — в за-экстазной тишине; за-экстазная, потусторонняя даль становится мне имманентным откровением о Христе; я постигаю не иконописный Лик Христов, а Лик, встающий в середине своего собственного сердца; эта новая, неожиданная встреча, встреча со Христом, переполняет все дни мои; мне начинает казаться, что Апокалипсис есть нечто, разыгрываемое в душе у каждого; второе пришествие есть не исторический, а сверх-исторический факт: восхождение из мира в за-мирное возможно в любую минуту жизни — в тишине, в голосе Христа, поднимающемся из глубины моего существа; все "апокалиптическое", понятое исторично, как "конец всемирной истории" начинает быть для меня лишь символическим восхождением молитв к Христу; "Апокалипсис" есть "Апокалипсис" души: путь посвящения в тайну Христова Имени; "Она" становится лишь вратами ко внутреннему Христу во мне: София становится Христософией: ризой Христовой.

Эти внутренние узнания в душе производят как бы отбой от "Апокалиптики" 1901 года; 1902 год для меня по сравнению с 1900 и 1901 годами — "анти-апокалиптический" год в смысле внутреннего преодоления в себе внешней апокалиптичности; в этой внешней "апокалиптичности" я вижу нечто соблазнительное; это — "бес"; это — подкрадывающийся к сердцу "антихрист"; сфера чаяний 1901 года есть теперь для меня сфера соблазнов, преодолеваемых найденной точкою за-апокалиптического, вне-апокалиптического покоя, связанного с сошествием Христа в сердца и с возможностью вне-церковного общения с ним с глазу на глаз.

Никогда не забуду как на прогулке в полях (на вечернем, ослепительно-золотом закате) меня обдул ветер, как бы приподнявший в душе тайну 2-го сошествия: "Оно уже началось!" Потрясенный этим узнанием, отменяющим для меня всю внешнюю апокалиптику, я вернулся домой; в эти же дни я уплотнил голос Вечности в словах 4-ой "Симфонии": "Дни текут... Времена накаплиются... Надвигается — незакатное, бессрочное... Просится: пора мне в этот старый мир... Пора сдернуть покровы... Развить пелены... Налететь ветром... Засвистеть в уши о довременном..." *Довременное во временном* — то, что впоследствии Рудольф Штейнер назвал Христовым импульсом.

Впервые Христов Импульс мне стал ведом в 1902 году. И в связи с этим ведением сами зори времен переменили для меня

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свой колорит: стали светозарны до...боли; боль утраты чего-то в самой радости конца — утрата конца в конце; эта боль — ликвидация всякой детской мистики и наивной экстаичности; эта боль — боль начала самосознания: она-то и высекает новое знание о том, что "не я, а — Христос во мне".

В это лето по-новому открылся . . . смысл моего "соловьевства"; я переживаю *sui generis* отбой от философии Вл. Соловьева . . .

Под впечатлением фактов моей внутренней жизни я пишу первую редакцию 4-ой "Симфонии" (не сохранилась); 4-ая "Симфония" должна была дать новую, мистически правильную транскрипцию 2-ой: раскрыть подлинную ноту времени: второе пришествие уже происходит; оно не в громе апокалиптических событий истории, а в тишине сердец, откуда появляется Христос.' 'Material', June-July-August 1902, sheets 29-30. (See also *Zapiski chudaka*, t.I, pp.53-55, 105.) Bely adds: 'сохранились лишь куски от первой редакции во второй части <Кубка метелей> (все об обители и о видении Тугариной Светловой Христа; тоже в отрывках "Пена колосистая", "Золотая Осень"); эта редакция Симфонии не писалась, а записывалась фразами' (sheet 30). Portions of the 'first redaction' appeared in 1903 in the Moscow *Al'manakh Grif* ('Otryvki iz 4-oy Simfonii, 1-5').

159. *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1-2, p.74.
160. This is the thesis of *Pochemu ya stal simvolistom*.
161. The Saint's conversation with Nikolay Aleksandrovich Motovilov as cited in Il'in, p.113. The most readily available English translation, 'A Conversation of St Seraphim of Sarov with Nicholas Motovilov Concerning the Aim of the Christian Life', is in Fedotov's *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*. Fedotov comments (p.245): 'this formula was unusual in Russia; not only to his disciple Motovilov, but to the vast majority of spiritually minded people in Russia, it was in the nature of a revelation.'
162. Il'in, pp.116-17.
163. *ibid.* pp.121, 128-29.
164. No definitive text of the 'Nastavleniya' is possible, as the original manuscript was lost and when first published the text had been 'retouched' by Filaret (see Il'in, pp.152-53). Bely could have known them from the *Letopis'* (Chapter VI, pp.113-48) or as published in an appendix to a brief Life given in *Obshchezhitel'naya Sarovskaya Pustyn'*, M., 1884, sep. pagination 17-30. The text included by Leonid Denisov in his Life (*Zhitie prepodobnogo ottsa nashego Serafima Sarovskogo*, M., 1904) is the most widely reproduced now. Il'in includes it with cuts in his book. The Denisov text has been translated into English and published in book form as *The Little Russian Philokalia*. Vol. I: *St Seraphim of Sarov*, Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, CA., 1980.
165. In *Puti russkogo bogosloviya* Florovsky writes of the Russian Church in the 1820s: 'Из страха мистических заблуждений и чрезмерностей тогда вдруг стали избегать и Макария Египетского и Исаака Сирина, —

- "и умная сердечная молитва уничтожена и осмеяна, как зараза и пагуба" (p.171). Throughout his study of Serafim II'in emphasizes the essentially Orthodox tradition underlying the Saint's statements, but an equally sympathetic commentator, Fedotov, writes that Serafim's 'approach to the world is unprecedented in the Eastern tradition' (*Treasury*, p.243).
166. The Makarian Homilies are now attributed to 'pseudo-Makarios'. St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St Makarios of Corinth included an eleventh-century adaptation of the Homilies in the *Philokalia*. St Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022), whom Serafim and Bely both read, took up and developed their theme of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Serafim knew the *Philokalia* very well in its Russian form — the *Dobrotolyubie*. We know from the 'Material' that Bely read it in 1902–03 and again in January 1913 (see *Minuvshee*, No.6, 1988, p.347).
  167. Sergey Nilus published it in three consecutive issues of *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, Nos 195–97, 18–20 July 1903 under the title 'Дух Божий явно почивший на отце Серафиме Саровском в беседе его с Н. А. Мотовиловым'.
  168. Section 10, 'O molitve', as given in the Denisov text and included in II'in, p.158. See also *Pouchenie Prepodobnogo Serafima Sarovskogo o molitve Iisusovoy* (Iz vlecheno iz zhitiya sego sv. ottsa izdaniya 3, Moskva, 1851), Jordanville, N.Y., 1988. For a fine general study see *The Jesus Prayer*, by a monk of the Eastern Church (Archimandrite Lev Gillet), Crestwood, N.Y., 1987.
  169. 'Вот отчего вопрос о религиозной общественности, выход религии из индивидуального мистицизма (протестантские мистические секты), с одной стороны и из универсального догматизма с другой (католичество, православие) в общественную теургию есть преимущественно выход к Апокалипсису, ибо тут начинается действительная и окончательная борьба со Зверьем, а также образование третьей религии — религии человечества. Человечество читится как индивидуальное существо. Прежде были религии Отчества и Материнства (Ветхий Завет, так называемое язычество), была религия Богочеловечества (Новый Завет). Теперь наступает соединение заветов в Завет последний — приближается Дух Утешителя. Образуется полная религия Троицы.'
  170. Khandrikov is the hero of Bely's *Third Symphony: Vozvrat. III simfoniya*, M., 1905. In the third part Khandrikov is confined to the sanatorium (Orlovka) of Dr Orlov. There he experiences 'the homeland of the spirit', the mythical world of the first part.
  171. 'Теперь во мне протекает какая-то эволюция, которую не умею оформить, но кажется от христианства (не от Христова) к... музыке, Ницше и переживаниям Хандрикова в Орловке... Я счастлив своей свободой и помышляю теперь теургию свести к антропургии. Я все больше и больше начинаю понимать, что такое человек: всякая религия мне кажется теперь иногда не целью, а средством найти самого себя, т.е. найти в себе человека (не сверхчеловека). Человека забыли и всякие -исты, и мистики равно и даже Ницше со своим сверхчеловеком.'

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Человеческое — это вечное Христово чувство без отнесения его к Богу. Культ Христова чувства во имя его самого во мне и для меня. Иногда меня страшит срывом путь человека, ибо из всех путей, это наиболее тернистый. Я — средство, но я же и цель. Я как средство — эмпирич<еский> человек, я — как цель — Бог.'

172. 'The figure of Christ occupies a central place in Steiner's cosmology. . . . The essential recognition of the divine, the higher Ego, within the individual ego, is also spoken of as the meeting with Christ, or as the birth of Christ within the individual' — J. D. Elsworth, *Andrey Bely: A Critical Study of the Novels*, Cambridge, 1983, p.45.
173. Starets Amvrosiy (Aleksandr Grenkov, 1812–1891), spiritual director of the Monastery of Optina for thirty-one years. Dostoevsky modelled Zosima on him, and Solov'ev remembered him as starets Ioann in his *Tri Razgovora*. See John V. Dunlop's *Staretz Amvrosy*, Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1988. 'Mental prayer' (or 'prayer of the heart' or 'interior prayer') is briefly discussed or mentioned on pp.20–21, 27, 31–32, 35.
174. 'Скажут: так почему же не соединился я с религиозно-церковным движением; в линии православия были мне близки отдельные частности: старчество: и Амвросий, и Серафим — шире, глубже, свободнее в опыте догматической православной оправы, надетой на них; мне сознание исторической церкви являлось сознанием приемлющим теологическую подпору; а теология для меня была только дурной метафизикой, негативную дисциплиною; теологический догматизм для меня был "negatio" религиозного опыта собственно, который внутри человека, в котором божественное имманентно сознанию; стало быть: оно — в "я", не в "трансцензусе" (где-то там, надо мной, в небесах). Вся история христианства казалась "падением христианства", или тяжелыми ризами, закрывающими порою прекрасную живопись; вместо лика из риз металлических смотрит копченый и черный провал; я, сближаясь в моментах духовного опыта с деятелями "Пути", восставал против догмы; я видел, что догма есть "рака" символа; слово отяжелевшее — догмат; в эпоху церковного взятия опыта был с Мережковскими, провозглашавшими новое осознание догмата, но когда мне открылась "фельетонность" всего устремления их, я от них отошел.

Волил подлинно: соединения веры и знания. — в то, что ни вера, ни знание в то, что есть *верное знание*; так придвигалось *духовное знание*.' 'Nachalo veka', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 150 (in the sub-section 'Russkie simvolisty'). Bely interprets Christ, in the light of his theory of Symbolism, as the ultimate symbol, where 'this' and 'that' remain themselves, but at their point of intersection become a third unity. This unity partakes of both elements, yet is neither, but a higher identity.

175. 'Tipy religioznoy mysli v Rossii. Teosofiya i antroposofiya', *Russkaya Mysl'*, No.11, 1916, p.10 (second pagination). See also Berdyaev's *Samopoznanie*,

- pp.217–26 and his *Smysl tvorchestva*, pp.346-49. In his 1910 review of *Serebryanu golub'*, 'Russkiy soblazn (po povodu "Serebryanogo golubya" A. Belogo)', *Russkaya Mysl'*, No.10, Berdyaev wrote: В нем <Белом> обостряется все до предела, все влечет к концу. Но в А. Белом чувствуется апокалиптическая женственность, особая мистическая рецептивность, через него проходят апокалиптические дуновения. . . . Мистическая трезвость и есть мужественность духа, неустанное противление всякому медиумизму, всякой расслабляющей податливости женственной стихии. Величайший образец мистической мужественности дан нам в образе св. Серафима Саровского. В хлыстовстве нет этой мужественности, нет никакой мужественности. Нет этой мужественности и в современной культурной мистике. Мужественность св. Серафима должна быть внесена в стихию народную' (p.114, second pagination).
176. John Elsworth has written: 'Anthroposophy does not regard itself as a system of dogma. . . . to memorize the system is not to understand anthroposophy. Steiner held that his system was neither speculative philosophy nor a matter of faith, but an object of knowledge. . . . [Steiner] held that it was possible for anyone, with practice, to develop the faculty of spiritual perception that was given to him. . . . To understand anthroposophy is not to know with the rational mind what the teacher has said, but to attain the faculty of perceiving its truth' (*Critical Study of the Novels*, pp.38–39).
177. 'Духовная наука и христианство для меня ныне синонимы' — letter postmarked 20 November 1915 (TsGALI, fond 1782, op.1, ed. khr. 6).
178. Item No. 897 of 'Sebe na pamyat', TsGALI, fond 53, op. 1, ed. khr. 96, sheet 18v.
179. Elsworth, *Critical Study of the Novels*, p.39.
180. 'Ось катастрофы проходит по-моему прямо сквозь "я" в человеке; так: и кризис личности в психологическом и физиологическом перерождении "я" человека (надтреснуто каждое "я"); создается сдвиг жизни; . . . выход из кризиса — в творчестве над собою самим, в революции быта сознания . . . пафос мой — в пути личном, которому отдаюся, как делу обще-человеческому; только очищенное сознание индивидуума есть рычаг, поднимающий бремена; в радиоактивную силу сознания верю я: сознания десяти, двенадцати, пятнадцати *действительно новых людей* могут более сделать, чем тысячи паллиативов общественных . . . . ведь для меня революция только часть революции мировой: революции каждого "я", всех; изменяется "я"; не к земле, а к себе приникаю.' 'Nachalo veka', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 143.
181. A. F. Dobbie-Bateman in *St Seraphim of Sarov* writes: 'The message of St Seraphim is this message of the eternal Nativity in the bosom of the Church and in the soul of every humble believer. It is the promise and the unfathomable potentiality of union in the two natures, divine and human, the marriage of Heaven and Earth. Herein then is disclosed at its source the transfiguration of

- humanity, the theosis of man, which is the theme of the *Conversation* of St Seraphim with Nicholas Motovilov, the revelation of the simple human soul as the bearer of the Spirit' (as printed in Fedotov's *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, p.262).
182. 'Мало носить на себе Крест, нужно чтобы Крест Христово был в Тебе возжен.' Letter of 1912 from Vitznau, GBL, fond 171, box 24, ed. khr. 1v, sheet 13. An excerpt from this letter is cited in *Peterburg* (1981), p.512, where it is mistakenly dated <Basel 1912>; there are also several misreadings of the text, most seriously 'vyzhzhen' instead of Bely's more expressive 'vozzhen'.
183. 'Nachalo veka', GPB, fond 60, ed. khr. 14, sheet 135.
184. 'Feniks' (1906), *Arabeski*, p.151.
185. *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 15, 1974, No.1-2, p.48. Nothing in the remainder of the letter explains the meaning of the question mark Bely placed beside the names.
186. 'Material', June-July-August, 1902, sheet 29.
187. *Letopis'*, pp.121-22. From section 10 of the *Nastavleniya* ('O mire dukhovnom') as printed there. It is section 24 of the text as given by Denisov (see Il'in, pp.168-70).
188. *Vospominaniya o Belom*, p.148.

## APPENDIX

The three documents published below — an excerpt from a letter and two letters — were written by Andrey Bely to Aleksandr Blok. Vladimir Orlov cut the first and excluded the others from his 1940 edition of the Blok-Bely *Perepiska*. They are published here for the first time from photocopies made of the original manuscripts and kindly provided me by TsGALI (Moscow).

### I

И Осень сказала: 'Да уж сумею, сумею я летние изумруды переплавить в золото и багрец; с той поры началось увядание. На изумрудном фоне показались пятна золота — пурпурного золота, чтоб засохнуть, свалиться, пролететь'. Милый Александр Александрович, накопившиеся времена пролетали тут. Приближался полновременный день — день осенний.

Вот сижу на терассе и пишу Вам. Шумят деревья. Большие желтые листья, срываясь, проносятся. Летят, улетают, как времена. Вечно-грядущая, нежная, милая.

ясная близость пересыпает жемчугами — и брызжут, и бьют в оконные стекла капли эти — слезы осени...

Чье-то похолодевшее лицо так просто улыбнулось, закрыло тонкими пальцами глаза. И шепчет, и шепчет: 'В безвременье... на далекую родину... сквозь мир... улетим — сквозь мир улетим!...' Хочется крикнуть: 'Милая, Неизвестная, Дорогая... Что уж тут — летим!...' В воздухе плещут атласы Ее воздушно-прозрачных риз. Несется. Несутся ветром атласы Ее воздушно-прозрачных риз. *'Она есть дыхание силы Божией и чистое излияние славы Вседержителя, посему ничто оскверненное не войдет в нее. Она есть отблеск вечного света и чистое зеркало действия Божия и образ благости Его. Она — одна, но может все, и пребывая в самой себе, все обновляет, и переходя из роду в род в святые души приготовляет друзей Божиих и пророков. Она прекраснее Солнца и превосходнее сонма звезд; в сравнении со светом она выше... Она быстро простирается от одного конца до другого... Я полюбил ее и взыскал от юности моей, и пожелал взять ее в невесту себе и стал любителем красоты ее. Она возвышает свое благородство тем, что имеет сожитие с Богом, и Владыка всех возлюбил ее: она таинница ума Божия и избирательница дел Его... Чрез нее я буду иметь славу в народе и честь пред старейшими, будучи юношей... Чрез нее я достигну бессмертия и оставлю вечную память будущим после меня... Она во время гибели нечестивых спасла праведного, который избежал огня, нисшедшего на пять городов... Она воздала святым награду за труды их, вела их путем дивным; и днем была им покровом, а ночью — звездным светом'* (Премудрость Соломона).

О, на родину — на далекую родину — все мы несемся... Стоит только раздвинуть атлас Ее фаты — несемся, несемся, мы несемся!... Стоило раз сказать Осени: 'Озолочу', и началось увядание. На изумрудном фоне показались пятна золота — пурпурного золота, чтоб засохнуть, свалиться, пролететь... Накопившиеся времена протекали тут. Приближался полновременный день — день Осенний.

Осень. И опять Осень. И опять дорога Вечность грустных, знакомых слов: *'И плачущие, как неплачущие; и радующиеся, как нерадующиеся; и покупающие, как не приобретающие... Я вам сказываю братья: ибо время близко... Ибо проходит образ мира сего'* (Павел 1 к Кор.). *'Хочу чтобы вы были без забот'*. И мы опять беззаботны, чтоб не быть детьми века сего. Так, как тучи, приходим и уходим. Кто нас задержит, если с нами наша молитва. Если так, с нами восторг. Если так, преобразимся — и пойдем; и пойдем по воздушноглубой дороге. Молитва разорвет времена и



пространства. Вот что предшествует делу... Вот что объявит Имя Неизвестной... Выдержать мировую гармонию, убелиться мягкостью второго неба, не пасть — ведь вот оно что!.. Вот оно наше дело!... Вот какое!...

Мои нервы были разбиты. Кончина отца ошеломила, потрясла, убила меня. Стал сир, и опять молился Ей.

Исцелила — и опять все такое нежное. И не 'один огненный взгляд', не 'один жест', застигающий врасплох. Да: 'вечное призывание стоит меньшего'. Да. Да.

Вы правы, но... не до конца...

(TsGALI, fond 55, opis' 1, ed. khr. 148, sheets 36–37; from Bely's letter to Blok of 19 August 1903; the letter appears on pp.46–51 of the *Perepiska*; the passage published above belongs on p.48, 12 lines from the top, at the <...>, and is followed in the original manuscript by a row of dots. The citation from the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon is taken from the following sections dealing with 'Priroda Premudrosti' and 'Premudrost' v istorii': 7, 25–27, 29; 8, 1–4, 10, 13; 10, 6, 17. Bely later cites First Corinthians, 7, 29–32.)

## II

1/2 часа 1го 20го <июня 1904> Сер<ебряный> Кол<одезь>

Милый, дорогой Александр Александрович,

Спасибо за Твое милое письмо. Знаю, знаю я о том, кто в голубом. Знаю я, кто милый и чуть-чуть страшный. И знаешь ли — все таки этот образ-веяние говорит о Христе. Здесь подход с одной стороны. Милое, голубое — бархатное (не то лапка кошки, те то тигра) и в то же время опьяненное. Вот дионисичность лазури — Чьих-то очей. Все это было бы страшно, все это говорило бы о небывалых провалах, еслиб не строгий изгиб пурпурных уст, строгий и грустный, грустный. Белая, чище снега (но матовой и бархатней) одежда — и опять-таки все было слишком мягко, если б не пурпурная кровь, которая сочится с бледного чела. А кругом — старинная, неизменно вечная стихия, не то небо, не то весенний пейзаж талого снега. Вот образ — подлинный — Христа. Тут каждый цвет — грандиознейший синтез, каждая черточка, увеличенная до колоссальных размеров, уже есть Его веяние. Так: Его лазурь: она слагается из сквозящей стариной (бездной) белизны. Белизна же чудесным образом распадается 1) на все цвета спектра 2) на зеленое и краснопурпурное (зеленый и пурпурный цвет — цвета дионисизма чисто языческого) 3) на золото (желтизна) и лазурь (как цвет спектра) — просветленный, высвеченный дионисизм, где зелень смарагдов (первично земляное,

растительное, физиологическое) переходит в голубизну незабудок (еще бы забыть Его, любовно и ласково смотрящего — тут немецке сказки: Он, как завершитель германизма — сверхчеловек) а краснопурпурное (страсть к миру) в золото (опьянение тем, что над миром) 4) Золото в свою очередь может распадаться на а) Золотое, дионисически-христианское (перегиб — Вагнер, нежные, как раскаяние и тоска звучащие жалобы Ницше) б) Церковное (риза, парча) с) Желтозолотое (хлеба, рожь, нива) d) Янтарное (среднее между золотом и бледнорозовым) е) Жемчужное (среднее между белым и золотом). Что-же касается пурпура, то пурпур 1) Или как Его кровь (всегда способная стать вином — не отсюда ли пурпур, как символ дионисизма?) 2) Или как Отчее: "Я в Отце и Отец во мне" (сюда о пурпуре, как о недостающем, восьмом цвете спектра, сюда же инстинктивные намеки пурпура у иудеев, которые производит Розанов (см. его статью "О иудаизме"). Вот первичный анализ цветов Христовых. Уже отсюда видно, что *Христово Чувство*, будучи самым реальным, в то же время наиболее сложное из всех существующих чувств. Сложность эта при ее абсолютной оправданности (стало быть и чистоте) есть в то же время преодоление всех бездн — и квинт эссенция жизненного.

Вот где уклон признать Христово Чувство = Дионисову. Христос, будучи преодолением всего, мог и может воплощаться в дионисическом, сквозить в нем, но кощунство говорить что дионисизм безусловно равен христианству. Тот, кто пришел ко Христу чрез Диониса должен отрицать, упразднить Диониса, но он может заблуждаться, когда, полагая что его путь единственный, станет утверждать, будто ко Христу нужно подойти преодолением изнутри дионисианства. И обратно, церковник только свой путь и признает. Забывают, что *Христово* надо всех. Вот почему, когда Ты пишешь, что Христос от Тебя далеко, и милый и близкий.. чуть-чуть страшный не Он — не верю, не верю... Скорее — это одна сторона Христова дуновения.

Прежде и я полагал, как Ты. Теперь знаю *Его*, когда Он бывает 1) в пурпурно-голубом и белом 2) Не боюсь Его, Милого, Близкого, Голубого. 3) Люблю белизну 4) Радуюсь строгости, когда пурпурная *Теплота* (после причастия) в груди. Шелковый шелест алого антиминосса и горячий пурпур '*теплоты*'!...

Милый, Христос с Тобою!..

P.S. Наверное буду у Тебя 1, 2, 3 июля. Только что получил Твое письмо.

P.P.S. Ну конечно страшно рад и нисколько никого Ты не стеснишь. Адрес: 1) По Московско-Курской до Тулы с 3

хчасовым 2) В Туле пересадка на Сызрано-Вяземскую до Ефремова. От Ефремова 35 верст на лошадях (лучше напиши заранее дней за 7, чтобы вышли Тебя встретить).

P.P.P.S. Мой привет и уважение всем

(TsGALI, fond 55, opis' 1, ed. khr. 148, sheets 73-76. '19-go' is crossed out in the date, as is 'maya', above which Bely wrote 'iyunya'. It too may be crossed out or is simply blurred by an inkspot. Bely answers Blok's letter of 5 June 1904, pp.95-96 in the *Perepiska*. Blok never made the trip to visit Bely at Serebryanu Kolodez'.)

### III

Москва 17-го июля <1904>

Милый, дорогой,

Не забывай — молись. Еще, и еще, и еще будет неизъяснимое. Быдет. Не уставай — милый. Бедь больше ничего не останется у нас. Ведь бдльшего не дождемся, уходя. Не уходи от 'него'. Милый, мы все устали. Возврата не может быть. Лучше замереть в счастливом ожидании, лучше рыдать в грустной оставленности. Самая оставленность в печаль легкую, в радость неизъяснимую претворяется. Пресуществляй ужас. Грустный лебедь осенних струй, жди Света голубиногo! Всю жизнь, 'больше жизни'. Не для того узнают, чтоб забыть. Не для того дается, чтоб 'не было'. Созиждь Вечность в сердце своем, и Она тебя созиждет. Не для того вино восторга, чтоб не было брачной вечери. Пусть перельется вино на Закат — вино, вино восторга. Мы посмотрим на золотое счастье и взлетит радость, связавшая нас узлом, как горячий солнечный диск с горизонта.

И мы скажем: 'Встало!' 'Ты, Солнце, клубок парчевых ниток. Встало — стали разматывать, и парчевая желтизна сквозной паутиной опутала утренний березняк'.

Мы — утренние березки, затянутые светом. А если так, лучше рыдать в грустной оставленности, чем вернуться. Лучше спеть лебединую песню — последнюю — лебединую песню весенних дуновений. Милый, мы все устали. Милый, милый! Нет ничего в грусти. Только качается грустная поросль лесная — благословение опочило на Ней и пучек золотых, солнечных перстов.

Вечный покой!... И звучит, и звучит: 'И уж нет ничего, некуда возвращаться, а сладкий звон предрассветных ветерков, тихий зов, —

— а Ты, Солнце, тяжелый шар, ком золота, под лазурным колоколом, опрокинутым над миром?

'Золотой, тяжелый язык мирового колокола.

'Золотым языком брякни в лазурь.

'И зазовет мировой колокол, призывая ко вселенской обедне: 'Радуйся, Невеста Невестная!'...

И звучит, и звучит:

'Ты, солнце, винотворец: уксус страданий претворяешь в золото и вино'.

'Радуйтесь, радуйтесь, солнечные пьяницы!'

'Выше, выше орари ваши взметаите, диаконы светослужения!'

'Господу помолимся!'

И орари лучей взметаются.

Твой.

Приезжай.

Любовь Дмитриевна, Бога ради помяните меня в своих молитвах. Будет мне трудно, если никто, сильный, не помолится за меня. Бога ради!...

Многое в будущем моем зависит от молитвенной помощи.

В молитву верю, молитвой надеюсь....

И надежда моя на молитву — тоже молитва.

(TsGALI, fond 55, opis' 1, ed. khr. 148, sheets 77–78. On 18 July Bely broke with Nina Petrovskaya, and on the nineteenth he left Moscow for Serebryanyu Kolodez'. The portion of the letter in quotation marks may be a citation from the first version of the *Fourth Symphony*; compare it with the final text of the *Symphony* (Moscow, 1908), pp.117–18.)