

[Treatise]

The Semantics of Blue in Russian Émigré Literature of the First Wave

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1. Introduction

The Russian language has two terms for blue, *sinij* (синий) and *goluboj* (голубой). It is said that the former is for dark blue and the latter is for light blue, though *sinij* covers a quite wide range of tones.¹ This article examines the literary conception of these terms for blue and focuses on the literary texts of the so-called first wave Russian émigrés, who fled after the revolution in 1917.

As the studies of the history of these terms show,² they have developed separately, and have been treated as having different connotations. As stated in Vasilevič's studies,³ *sinij* has been considered a negative color, connoted with the image of ominous water; conversely, *goluboj*, suggesting the sky, has been represented positively. We can confirm that these two terms have completely different, opposite connotations in literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. Blue was a symbolic color indicating, for Russian symbolists, the transcendent deity. So, it should not be dark, but bright; thus *sinij* could never be used as such. V. Solov'ëv, whose philosophy influenced symbolists, writes that the divine female spirit—Sophia's image—appears when “Azure is all about, azure is in my soul,”⁴ or “Penetrated with a golden azure (...),”⁵ and whose eyes are “filled with azure fire.”⁶ Another philosopher who joined the symbolists' movement, P.

Florenskij, affirms Sophia, “the work of God’s creation,”⁷ not to be Light itself, but to be the “passive complement to It,”⁸ writing that Light “illuminates her” and “Sophia looks blue or violet.”⁹ According to him, “she looks blue or violet as the World Soul, as the spiritual essence of the world.”¹⁰ The blue is not the light itself of the World Soul, but it reflects it. Thus, the poets-symbolists reiterated that blue, representing the abstract deity, should hold light inside of it and that *lazurnyj* or *lazorëvyj* (лазурный or лазорёвый), which means azure, and sometimes *goluboj*, became the terms for this image.

The symbolist A. Blok also writes that, “the flower is light blue, the sky is light blue, the moon light is light blue, the magic Kingdom is light blue (or azure for Turgenev), and the smoke in which all Maeterlinck’s tale and every tale about something unattainable should be light blue, but not dark blue.”¹¹ Blue has one term in French, as in English and German. Russian symbolists were also inspired by German romanticism and French symbolism, but they adjusted what Europeans had created to their literary possibilities. Blue for the Germans and French might initially include both light and darkness. In Goethe’s theory of colors, blue is said to be a color rather “bringing a principle of darkness with it,”¹² which is opposite to yellow—“always accompanied with light,”¹³ and “this color has a peculiar and almost indescribable effect on the eye. As a hue it is powerful—but it is negative and, in its highest purity is, as it were, a stimulating negation. Its appearance, then, is a kind of contradiction between excitement and repose.”¹⁴ It is evident that blue is rather dark and its indescribable nature is understood in its contradiction, and not exclusively in its deific aspect. So, bright blue as the symbol of transcendent nature is unique to Russian symbolists, whose language has two terms for this color, and whose culture obviously distinguishes the one from the

other.

However, concerning émigré literature, while we can find separate research on each writer or poet, the whole tendency has not been yet studied enough. Therefore, in this article, we analyze several émigré writers' works in the context of the process of Russian literature in the first half of the twentieth century.

2. From time to space

—— the older generation of the first wave emigration

2-1. Ivan Bunin

First, we will examine the older generation of the first wave emigration who had started their careers in Russia, before emigrating, and tried to preserve their heritage and culture after emigration. One of these, Ivan Bunin, is famous for his picturesque visual images full of colors and tones, among which blue is used. Krasnjanskij proved that the term *sinij* was dominant among other terms of blue, including *goluboj* and *lazurnyj* or *lazorëvyj*, in Bunin's works,¹⁵ which contrasts with symbolism and accords with Russian literature in the nineteenth century. However, *sinij* is not only dark but also light in Bunin's works, with prevailing darkness. For example, the lines from a poem from 1906, "The mole looks white and, happily looking blue, / Sky is shining without clouds"¹⁶ shows that *sinij* can take a happy, bright tone. Blue is not a symbol of something abstract, but a concrete perceptual color which may generate "indescribable" feelings, which is also true of examples where *sinij* is used as a term for a darker color. Such an image of blue as a physical perceptual color demonstrates that Bunin's aesthetic is completely different from that of the symbolists.

However, the semantic role of this term changes after his

emigration from Russia. The most significant change concerns parts of speech. Klöver has already mentioned that “the verb *sinet*’ is used with various prefixions 63 times, while verb *golubet*’ is found only once. We can notice that the quantity and significance of the verbs are becoming less as time goes by.”¹⁷ Actually, until the emigration, the verb *sinet*’ occupies 24% of the words with morpheme “sin”, but after the emigration, the ratio is smaller, at only 14%. At the same time, the nouns “*sineva*” or “*sin*” and the adjective “*sinij*” appear more frequently.

The verb *sinet*’ has two meanings, to “become blue” and to “show blue.” Either of these meanings implies that blue is just an attribute which is possible to change with time. In earlier works we can find a lot of examples for this: “Dusk gently became blue in the park, and silver stars appeared over the top of the oak trees”¹⁸ from “At the Dacha” (1895); “Winter days are very short in the woods, and now dusk has been turning blue outside the windows (...)”¹⁹ from “New Road” (1901), and others.

We can also find the image of blue changing in time in post-emigration works, but there are fewer examples than the earlier period. To the contrary, with the frequent use of nouns and adjectives, blue appears as an eternal space. In some works, blue is a background detail. For example, a tale “A Devouring Fire” (1923) reads “How much dazzling whiteness, in all possible kinds of shining things in the heavenly blue, among the blackness of the trees, which have still spaces to see the sky, with emerald flies!”²⁰ And the sky is compared to eternity: “ (...) their eternity that is similar to the eternity of this sky (the air simply showing blue) and this land (of simple sands and stones) ”²¹ from “Waters Aplenty” (1925-26). This is especially prominent in “The Life of Arseniev” (1927-29, 33):

God is in the sky, in the unfathomable height and strength, in that incomprehensible blue which is above us, endlessly far away from earth: the notion appeared in me from the very first days of mine, as well as the fact that, in spite of death, each of us has a soul in his heart, and that this soul is immortal.²²

Here the adjective *sinij* in neuter form “*sinee*” is used to describe something blue that is incomprehensible and never called otherwise. Blue is not just a concrete color of the place where God is, but it is a space that is beyond comprehension. The narrator can see and feel the space, in spite of the infinite distance from the earth. Such a paradox is also in the narrator’s awareness of death and the immortality of the soul. The perception of blue leads him to the realization of the existence of eternity beyond the simple visual perception.

There is also an interesting part in this novel concerning the image of blue:

I was shivering just looking at a box of paints, daubed all over paper from morning to night, standing for hours, looking at the marvelous blue of the sky, turning into lilac, which shows in the heat of the day facing the sun, among the tree tops, as if bathed in the blue, — and I got forever imbued with a deepest sense of the truly divine meaning and significance of the colors of earth and sky. Summing up what life gave me, I see that this is one of the most important things. That lilac blue, thinned the branches and foliage, I shall remember, when dying...²³

Here the noun “*sineva*” is used for blue. It is a concrete color,

which has a purple tinge. However, while the blue in earlier works can be changed with the passage of time to other colors, now the blue represented by this noun is an unchangeable attribute of the sky, even though it has tinges of other colors. And the narrator here again mentions death. Blue may change its tone but, at the same time, it is above temporal change. In other words, blue paradoxically has two natures as a temporal phenomenon on the earth, and as an eternal attribute of the unchangeable sky, and these two natures of existence are one of the most important themes in Bunin's works.

There is also a typical sentence in "Sunstroke" (1925): "(...) the blue summer night has already become blue over Volga (...)." ²⁴ Two terms for blue, a verb *sinet* ("become blue") and an adjective, are repeated in such a short sentence. The verb shows the change, and the adjective shows the unchangeable attribute of the summer night. And, in the post-emigration works, the latter meaning of blue is prominent. In other words, blue semantically shifts from time to space where the flow of time would never change anything. It is not difficult to guess that the shift reflects the change in the life of Bunin. Following emigration, his works are more about unchanged, eternal spaces, which are related to the place of memory, because memory can revive the clear images of the past, even if the real objects have been lost.

2-2. Boris Zaicev

We will now review another writer as an example for the older generation of the first wave émigré, Boris Zaicev. He is also known as a writer who wrote pieces with abundant perceptual images, especially in his early period. Zaicev wrote, "I started with impressionism. It was then when I first felt the new way to write for myself, plotless poetical short stories, and, as I consider, I have become a writer since then."²⁵

Indeed, his early works are characterized by depictions of nature filled with perceptual images, not only visual but, also, all possible sensory images, which accords with what impressionism aimed to achieve. Terms for blue appear in these works, but blue becomes a notable symbolic color a little later. While still in Russia, Zaicev is influenced by Solov'ëv, and starts to incline to pantheist, religious understandings of the world, and begins to write stories with plots.

Among his works prior to emigration, there is a story named "The Blue Star" (1918). The term for blue here is *goluboj*. The image of the blue star, Vega, appears in some other stories, but it is prevalent here, where the blue-eyed main character cherishes this star as his own. He says, "this star is my star of the protectress. (...) She is the beauty, the truth, the deity. And she is a woman. And she sends me the light of love,"²⁶ seeing "a part of her glow"²⁷ in a girl he likes. It is the symbol of all he values, and it reminds us of Solov'ëv's Sophia and, also, Blok's Beautiful Lady who is "brightened by golden azure."²⁸ Zaicev's character is not too religious to leave the secular life, but it is sure that he shares the image of blue as the color for values of a high order, for what is called Eternal Femininity.

We can also see another term for blue, *sinij*, in this novel. It is used for the depiction of the night sky and night air ("The night was blue, transparent and warm,"²⁹ "it's humid, incense smells, the flow of the warm air, looking blue, is floating."³⁰ "It became lighted, the air, which is sharp and transparent during the daytime and becomes blue by nightfall, soon became tasty"³¹). There is also a sentence drawing our attention to both terms for blue: "The bottomless blue was above them, becoming blue and more clearly showing stars every moment."³² The color of the bottomless sky is *goluboj*, and the latter blue is *sinij* represented by the verb *sinet'*. Here *sinij* is a changeable tone while

goluboj, which is also the color for the star, represents the unlimited depth of the sky. The term *sinij* appears in other works written before emigration, and its image is not necessarily negative or ominous, as it was for symbolists, with whom Zaicev partly shares the romantic image of light blue.

However, in his post-emigration works, blue started to represent new meanings. In one of the most important pieces in the 1920s, “The Golden Pattern” (1925), which is famous for the appearance of religious tones, we can see both two terms for blue being used and it is possible to interpret them as colors symbolizing the character’s search for truth, as Mercalova claims.³³ However, in this work, blue is just one of other symbolic colors. Meanwhile, the most significant blue is in the autobiographic tetralogy “Gleb’s Journey” written in the 1930s-‘50s, where *sinij* appears more frequently than *goluboj*. *Sinij* here is obviously symbolic, repeatedly used as a color for woods, while it was the color for sky until the 1920s. The term appears to describe the color of woods or forests everywhere from the first book named “Dawn” (1937), until the last, “The Tree of Life” (1952), where its symbolic meaning is indisputable. In the last book, which is about émigré life, the woods in Europe are compared to those in Russia (“Forests, real ones ‘as in Russia’, covered Hagendorf”).³⁴ And when Gleb and his wife see Russian woods in the distance, on the opposite side of the Baltic sea, the woods look blue: “he, gazing, saw a narrow strip of land, actually looking blue like bristle, the forest, under dark clouds.”³⁵ Forests are blue when they are far from the eyes. Though they can be seen, you can never physically touch them. Blue is always visible, but untouchable and, in these novels, it symbolizes Russia for the emigrants.

In the second book about Gleb’s life, “Stillness” (1948), we

can find another interesting depiction of blue. When Gleb leaves for Moscow to receive a higher education, the text reads: “June, early night is getting blue. In this blue is everything that has one: children’s sorrow, satchels, classes.”³⁶ Blue is the color of the past, lost and unrecoverable, and this image resonates with Russia, which is also lost. There are other impressive representations of blue. One of these is “the blue night”³⁷ when Gleb first reads his writing to his parents, and the color of the dress of Elli, Gleb’s wife, is blue—*sinij*. These things are valuable to Gleb and are related to Russia.

Thus, the two terms for blue are both symbolic colors for Zaicev’s pieces. *Goluboj* was symbolized in the early works as the color of definite abstract values, especially that of love and femininity. *Sinij* also represents the absolute value, but it has a more concrete meaning. Blue, as the color of things that are never touched, corresponds to the image of Russia for emigrants. Russia exists unchangeably, the past cannot be changed, and it may stay so in the mind’s eye; nevertheless, the past would never return to the people who lost it.

Zaicev’s blue is a color for space, which is shared with Bunin’s emigration period. But for Zaicev the space stays still and static, just like the forests, it is there in the past and never returns to reality. While, for Bunin, who wrote more about the revival of memory, the blue that was in the past comes back to the present; the image of blue is invigorated, as the narrator of “The Life of Arseniev” says, he will remember the blue he saw in his childhood. Zaicev focuses on loss and the past, but Bunin wrote on the dynamic revival of the past in the present.

3. The blue of lost Russia and freedom of creation

—Georgij Ivanov

Georgij Ivanov belongs to the older generation of the first wave of emigration, but at the same time, his works written in France are thought to represent what is known as the Paris Note of the younger generation. The Paris Note poetry was about death, despair, isolation in foreign countries, and it used simple images, with the minimum expression of emotion. Markov writes that “with Ivanov, we don’t need the Paris Note. Because his poetry has all what Adamovič wanted and much more than that. (...) The Paris Note is the footnote to Ivanov’s poetry.”³⁸ In Ivanov’s blue, we can see not only what is characteristic of the older generation, the sorrow for a lost past in Russia, but also what the younger generation aimed for. He is a poet who could continue to refine and develop poetical images, and blue is a notable image in the evolution of his poetry. Krejd, referring to his first collection of poems in emigration “Roses”, says that “blue would be generally called the color of the Paris Note,”³⁹ but it is necessary to analyze its image in his works in more detail.

Georgij Ivanov actively wrote poems until his emigration, but it was while in emigration that he was recognized as a poet who creates unique and outstanding poetry. And it is also in emigration when the image of blue, especially *sinij*, appears quite frequently.⁴⁰ Researchers have drawn attention to the imagining of blue in his post-emigration works. Tarasova and Kac made clear such symbolic meanings of blue as death, heaven, eternity, and Russia.⁴¹ Rančin refers to the dominance of blue in “Roses,” which is not like his early poetry, pre-emigration, filled with colors,⁴² and describes the blue in Ivanov’s prose “Disintegration of the Atom” (1938) as a parody of the Silver Age

of Russian poetry.⁴³ These views are appropriate and convincing when we read his works from the 1920s-‘30s. However, he stopped writing for several years after finishing “Disintegration of the Atom”, and it is important to emphasize this to understand the evolution of Ivanov’s poetry. We find few terms for blue in his works once he restarted composing verses. In short, *sinij* is not just the symbol related to the period of emigration, but it characterizes the first two post-emigration decades of Ivanov’s poetry.

It is obvious that the image of blue is related with eternity. There are such lines in a poem written in 1931 (“Word after word, line after line ...”) as “Drop after drop — blood and water — / Into your eternity, forever.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, what is important for the image of blue is that it appears very often together with a term that means “only” (“*tol’ko*”). The following is one of the examples where blue represents the eternity that remains:

Only stars, only blue air —
Blue, eternal, made of ice.
Blue, grand, blue-star-hued
Over you and over me.

Quiet, quiet. Beyond the Polar Circle
They sleep, hand in hand,
A true friend with an inseparable friend,
With a dead friend — a dead friend.

They are at peace, together blessed ...
Quiet, quiet. Don’t breathe.
These are only stars above an empty garden,

Only the blue light of your soul.⁴⁵

In the prose poem “Disintegration of the Atom,” where the narrator claims that all values are lost, the image of the narrator’s dead girl friend and her blue dress repeatedly surface. He stresses the collapse and loss of Russian language and literature, but it is worth paying attention to the fact that the image of blue is related to that of Russian literature. First, as Rančín insists, the blue dress is linked to the image of Russian poetry in the early twentieth century. Rančín considers that it is from Blok’s “blue cloak,” concerning the lover who left the lyric speaker in a poem: “All thought of prowess, valiant deeds and fame...”: “I dream of your blue cloak, remembered always, / In which you walked away into the night.”⁴⁶ It is very possible that Ivanov was conscious of this image. Further, there is an image of a blue dress in N. Gumilëv’s verse, too. Gumilëv was a poet whom Ivanov had a good relationship with, even in private life, and loved his work as well as Blok’s. Gumilëv’s poem reads “Looking at your blue dress, / It’s like the distant sky in Abyssinia, / And decorate your album / With a story about it.”⁴⁷ The blue dress is the image which reminds the speaker of the past. Furthermore, another blue in “Disintegration of the Atom” is also connected with the tradition of Russian poetry. In the sentences “For now we are skimming across life’s surface. Peripherally. Along the ocean’s blue waves,”⁴⁸ the last sentence is a citation from Lermontov.

Thus, *sinij* is certainly used for the image of Russia, especially Russian literature, and this image remains with the narrator even though everything valuable has been lost. However, it is necessary to reiterate that the image barely lingers on. Following the citation from Lermontov, the narrator continues “The appearance of harmony

and order. Filth, tenderness, sadness. Now we'll dive. Your hand, my unknown friend."⁴⁹ Blue is seen by the narrator when he is verging on the "disintegration." This is clear in his later verse:

Gone will be Europe and America,
Moscow and the parks of Carskoe Selo—
An attack of atomic hysterics will
Pulverize everything in the shining blue.

Then above the world will tenderly stretch out
A transparent, all-forgiving smoke...
And He, who could have helped but did not,
Will remain in solitude everlasting.⁵⁰

Blue is the last image left before the "disintegration." And it is also characteristic of Ivanov's poetry that the smoke appearing, after the "disintegration" in blue, is transparent without colors. Blue is rarely seen in his poems after he returned to writing at the beginning of the 1940s and, instead, his poems begin to talk about the loss of color. "How all is colorless, and tasteless, / Dead inside, ridiculous outside, / How I am intolerably sad, / How nauseatingly bored I am..."⁵¹ reads his poem written in 1951. But it does not finish colorlessly. "I" can create and see the colorful scene just by changing the theme: "Myself yawning from this theme, / I change it mid-stride: // —Look how luxuriant the chrysanthemums / In the garden scorched by the autumn— / As if Lermontov's Demon / Is grieving in an orange hell, / As if Vrubel' remembers / Snatches of a creative dream. / And the wave of lilac music / Regally goes into decline..."⁵²

In Ivanov's later verses, creation becomes a more important theme

than loss. As one of the poems reads “As reward for my sins, / Shame and triumph, / There suddenly appear poems — // Just like that... / Out of nothing,”⁵³ poems emerge even when everything has been lost. And with the disappearance of the theme of loss, the image of blue also vanishes. Thus, Ivanov belongs to the older generation, and his blue is also related to lost Russia just as Zaicev’s, but his later works are more about overcoming loss through creation, which brings Ivanov closer to the younger generation, and he becomes free from an attachment to blue.

4. The current present in blue — Gajto Gazdanov

Gajto Gazdanov is one of the writers of the younger generation of the first wave of Russian emigration. While the main theme of the older generation’s works is the past and the losses caused by the revolution, the younger generation, who begins writing in emigration, writes about the life of emigration. They, who are called the “unnoticed generation”, had no chance to publish, lived in poverty and isolation, were interested in the human being itself, and have been studied regarding their relation to European existentialism. Gazdanov was an esteemed writer among the unnoticed generation, and the image of blue plays an important role in his works, representing the major characteristics of his literature.

Previous research pointed out that blue was prevailing among other colors and was influenced by art at the beginning of the twentieth century,⁵⁴ and that this blue represents death.⁵⁵ We will clarify such an image of blue in more detail and in the context of Russian émigré literature.

As is true for the other émigré writers and poets, blue in Gazdanov’s works is *sinij*. This blue is said to be the symbol of death,

but we need to precisely understand the idea of life and death in his works to clarify this image of blue. The blue which is for Gazdanov most often the color for water, rather than sky, is related to an idea of immobility, which is discussed in one of Gazdanov's masterpieces "The Spectre of Alexander Wolf" (1947). The first-person narrator, explaining the thoughts of Alexander Wolf, says that "his philosophy is characterized by the lack of illusions: personal fate is unimportant, we always carry our death, i.e. the cessation of the normal rhythm, most often instant (...)." ⁵⁶ Wolf also compares life to a journey on the train, saying "this slowness of the personal existence, closed in rapid external motion, feigned security, illusion of continuity, at an unexpected second, a bridge collapses or a rail gets out of joint, then the rhythm exactly halts, which we call death." ⁵⁷ Death represents immobility, as is reiterated in the story. ⁵⁸ But it is always with people even while they are alive. In other story named "Night Roads" (1941) the narrator says "I feel the specter of someone else's inevitable death near myself, maybe at the door, maybe farther." ⁵⁹

Sinij is the term he uses to describe the color of water, and the current, ⁶⁰ which is opposite to the idea of immobility. But as we have already seen, motion or life holds immobility or death inside. ⁶¹ It is significant that, in "The History of a Journey" (1934), a train, whose image was compared to life in "The Spectre of Alexander Wolf", carries a man who is to die, and its color is blue: "a train which had carried him away came back and left again the same Westbahnhof, but the smiling face of Max with a little moustache and shaven temples was never seen through the glass of the blue car of 'Compagnie internationale des Wagons-lits et grands express europeens'." ⁶² Blue is the color for the motion of life which includes the immobility of death. This is why, in "An Evening with Claire" (1929), blue (*sinij*), changes its tones

between dark and light: “I noticed that the blue color of the wallpaper in Claire’s room seemed suddenly brightened and strangely changed.”⁶³ The narrator describes dark blue (*temno-sinij*) as “an expression of some apprehended secret,” and “the comprehension was dark and sudden and just froze before it could have said everything to the end; as if this effort of someone’s soul suddenly had halted and died — then on behalf of it a dark blue background had appeared.”⁶⁴ On the contrary, the bright blue (*svetlo-sinij*) is perceived as “the effort that has not finished yet.”⁶⁵ Blue itself does not disappear, representing “the idea of immobility,” it just changes its tone from dark to bright. The dark blue, which is close to death, represents more obviously “the idea of immobility” and, in the light tone, the narrator sees an effort of a soul that can be understood as a movement, nonetheless blue always remains and never vanishes. This image of blue accords with that of death. Death is not something that comes after life finishes, but it is always with life. This relation of blue and death is also found in “Night Roads,” when Ral’di, a former hetaera, is dying—a bit of the sky seen from a window of her room is depicted as “the blue darkening stronger and stronger was there without motion.”⁶⁶ Blue is related to death, but it is important that death exists within life. Therefore, blue is the image of life which holds death.

There is another interesting part in “An Evening with Claire” where we can find a different depiction of blue. A mountain seems to the narrator to be blue, though it is black. He was accustomed to see it blue in daytime, and “blue has been ready in my imagination.”⁶⁷ This part shows blue as a color in the narrator’s imagination. Blue is more than one of the concrete colors and, in this sense, blue has a positive side in Gazdanov’s works, while it seemingly is a negative color expressing despair when blue represents living with death. In “Night

Roads,” the narrator talks about the difference between the Russians and the Europeans, and says the following:

(...) the Russians have existed in a formless and chaotic changing world (...), while Europeans have lived in the real, practical world that had been established a long time before and had acquired a dead tragic immobility, the immobility of dying or death. (...) Even the love of dreamers to the past, to the old beautiful life in the old beautiful Russia, was born also thanks to the free movement of fantasy, since what they described with an unselfish sincere affection existed only in their imagination.⁶⁸

Life contains the immobility of death, but it still has movement, and what is essential for the movement, motion of life, is imagination and fantasy. The narrator finds such a movement of fantasy among the Russian émigré writers. Let us remember that blue lives in the memory and imagination. Blue represents the movement of life, even though it holds death.

5. Conclusion

When the émigré writers see something eternal in blue, they share this image with the symbolists. However, it is also necessary to point out that this symbolization is not like that of the symbolists since their blue is not the color of the abstract deity. Furthermore, the émigré writers preferred the term *sinij* to *goluboj*, which makes an apparent contrast with the symbolists, since the émigrés never recognized such ideals beyond their reality as were instead embraced by the symbolists.

It is important that blue started to mean not only visual images

exclusively in emigration for those whose aesthetics had not agreed, to a greater or a lesser extent, with those of the symbolists while they had been in Russia. They were realistic enough to refuse fairy tales while émigrés, too, but they consciously or unconsciously symbolized blue as the color of eternity, which can be understood as a response to tradition. The color is not only for the older generation, but also for the younger.

We have seen some examples in the Russian émigré literature of how blue was symbolized. Bunin's blue symbolizes eternity as well as Zaicev's, but the latter is less dynamic than the former. For Zaicev, blue stays in the past but, for Bunin, memory can revive past images. In Ivanov's poetry, blue is linked with the Russian tradition, too. For him, blue was a color for eternal space, often a color related to lost Russia. Gazdanov, as a writer of the younger generation, symbolized his view of life and death in blue. For Gazdanov, blue is a color for water symbolizing current time rather than the sky, but it is connected to the image of Russian older émigrés for whom the feelings of loss could become the energy for creation which blue symbolized.

Thus, in the first half of the twentieth century, images of blue dynamically changed in various ways, inheriting the images of earlier writers and poets. The image of blue shows the very character of each writer's literature. Blue as a color for heaven and the sea universally holds the image of eternity. However, the existence of the two terms for blue makes it possible to analyze their literary use in the context of Russian tradition.

This article did not analyze works in the Soviet Union, and this needs to be studied in the future.⁶⁹ Also, future research should include the works of other writers and poets, especially the most important writer of the younger generation, V. Nabokov.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The difference between the two terms is not always in their degree of brightness. This problem has been studied by researchers of cognitive linguistics. For example, Andrews, David. R., "The Russian Color Categories Sinij an Goluboj: An Experimental Analysis of Their Interpretation in the Standard and Émigré Languages", *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 2-1 (1994), 9-28; Corbett, Gerry, Morgan, Greville, "Colour Terms in Russian: Reflections of Typological Constraints in a Single Language", *Journal of Linguistics*, 24 (1988), 31-64; "Russian Colour Term Saliency", *Russian Linguistics*, 13 (1989), 125-141; Paramei, Galina V., "Singing the Russian Blues: An Argument for Culturally Basic Color Terms", *Cross-Cultural Research*, Vol.39, No.1, (Feb. 2005), 10-34; Wierzbicka, Anna, "The Meaning of Color Terms: Semantics, Culture, and Cognition", *Cognitive Linguistics* 1-1 (1990), 99-150; Winawer Jonathan and others, "Russian Blues Reveal Effects of Language on Color Discrimination", *PNAS*, vol. 104, No.19, (May 8, 2007), 7780-7785.
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- 61 It is not difficult to point out the resemblance of this idea to that of Buddhism which influenced Gazdanov.

- 62 Gazdanov, "Istorija odnogo putešestvija", p. 244.
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- 69 For example, A. Platonov named his collection of the poems "Blue Depth" ("Golubaja glubina") and, in "A Flower on Earth," the flower is blue.