

Mysteries of Eurasia: The Esoteric Sources of Alexander Dugin and the Yuzhinsky Circle

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“My biography is my bibliography” - Alexander Dugin¹

¹“Aleksandr Dugin on freedom beyond liberalism”, *The Nexus Institute* (7/11/2017) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk52o-khc-E>].

Introduction

“The Most Dangerous Philosopher in the World”

Understanding and apperception tend to lag behind events and figures in the history of ideas. More often than not, ideas and their actors are active in historical processes for a considerable deal of time before they are noticed by scholars. Even when detected and subjected to the first attempts at analysis, there is often yet another gap of time and space before the sources, origins, and trajectory of such ideas and actors are uncovered and treated in their historical context. The present study is devoted to bridging precisely this gap in the case of the contemporary Russian intellectual Alexander Gel’evich Dugin (1962-).

Over the course of the past four decades, Alexander Dugin has become, as one leading Western scholar put it, “the best-marketed of all Russian ideologists, both in Russia and in the West.”² The widespread impression of Dugin encountered across numerous media is that he has risen from the depths of the Soviet underground to the heights of the Russian academic³ and political establishments, and has since drawn attention on a global scale, recently being deemed “the most dangerous philosopher in the world”⁴ and “one of the most dangerous human beings on the planet.”⁵ In 2014, *Foreign Policy* deemed Dugin to be among the world’s 100 “leading global thinkers.”⁶ Across a plethora of international media, Dugin

² Laruelle, “Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism”, in Mark Sedgwick (ed.), *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 155.

³ In 2000-2001, Dugin attained the title of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences from Rostov State University (now Southern Federal University) with the dissertation “The Evolution of the Paradigmatic Foundations of Science (A Philosophico-Methodological Analysis)”, and in 2004-2005 acquired a doctoral degree in political science from the same university with the dissertation “The Transformation of Political Structures and Institutions in the Process of the Modernization of Traditional Society.” In 2008, Dugin was appointed professor of sociology at Moscow State University, where he founded the Center for Conservative Studies, and in 2009 became the acting head of the Department of Sociology of International Relations. In 2011, Dugin acquired a doctorate in sociology from Southern Federal University (where he held the position of Visiting Professor) with the dissertation “The Social Structures of Society in the Theoretico-Methodological Context of the Sociology of the Imagination.” Dugin was discharged from Moscow State University in 2014 for his political activism around the war in Ukraine, particularly over an interview on the May 2014 Odessa violence. The majority of Dugin’s books continue to be published by academic publishing houses in Russia, and Dugin remains listed with Russia’s ISTINA (“Intellectual System for the Case Study of Scientometric Data”) academic registry service. In addition, Dugin holds the title of Honorary Professor at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University in Astana, Kazakhstan. In November 2018, Dugin became a Visiting Fellow at Fudan University in Shanghai, China.

⁴Paul Ratner, “The Most Dangerous Philosopher in the World”, *Big Think* (18/12/2016) [<https://bigthink.com/paul-ratner/the-dangerous-philosopher-behind-putins-strategy-to-grow-russian-power-at-americas-expense>].

⁵Glenn Beck, “What You Need To Know About Russian Leader Alexander Dugin - Glenn Beck Program”, *YouTube* (13/1/2015) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KuRmiXjAgg>].

⁶“A World Disrupted: The Leading Global Thinkers of 2014”, *Foreign Policy* (2014) [<http://globalthinkers.foreignpolicy.com/#agitators/detail/dugin>]

has been called “Putin’s Brain”⁷, “Putin’s Rasputin”⁸, “crazy Russian mystic”⁹, “Kremlin Guru”¹⁰, and a variety of other epithets, which, despite controversies as to their accuracy or persuasion, are endemic of what one scholar has called a prevailing “Western obsession with him” and “have kept him in the media spotlight both in Russia and abroad.”¹¹ Most notably in this respect, the American journalist Charles Clover’s recent book, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia’s New Nationalism*, published by Yale University Press and based on extensive interviews with Dugin, paints a picture of Dugin as the “inventor, architect and impresario of Eurasia”, as a radical ideologue who has pivotally contributed to the envisioning and constructing of contemporary Russian politics in a “conquest of reality.”¹² Clover’s biographical account climactically portrays Dugin as an extremely instrumental political figure, and passionately warns that Dugin is a “Machiavellian manipulator” and “conspiracy theorist” whose influential ideology is based on a “forgery that has superseded the original - not because it is a good forgery, but because it is so audaciously false that it undermines the true.”¹³

The understandings of Dugin that have been constructed and debated in scholarly literature have been more complex. In particular, the body of existing scholarship on Dugin has revolved around key taxonomical disputes, namely, the assessment of Dugin’s real political impact and representation, and the classification of Dugin’s complex philosophy. The latter field of research has mainly grappled with the fact that Alexander Dugin has repeatedly self-identified his worldview as “Traditionalist”¹⁴ and “Eurasianist.”¹⁵ In the

⁷Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, “Putin’s Brain”, *Foreign Affairs* (2014) [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-31/putins-brain>]; Anton Shekhovtsov, “Putin’s Brain?”, *New Eastern Europe* 8-9 (2014) [<https://www.eurozine.com/putins-brain/?pdf>].

⁸Sean MacCormac, “Alexander Dugin: Putin’s Rasputin?”, *Center for Security Policy* (4/3/2015) [<https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/03/04/Alexander-dugin-putins-rasputin/>]; Henry Meyer and Onur Ant, “The One Russian Linking Putin, Erdogan and Trump”, *Bloomberg* (3/2/2017) [<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-02-03/who-is-alexander-dugin-the-man-linking-putin-erdogan-and-trump>].

⁹James Carli, “Alexander Dugin: The Russian Mystic Behind America’s Weird Far Right”, *The Huffington Post* (26/8/2017)[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/Alexander-dugin-the-russian-mystic-behind-americas_us_59a1fca2e4b0d0ef9f1c14ac].

¹⁰Goce Trpkovski, “Kremlin ‘Guru’ Rouses Anti-Western Feeling in Macedonia”, *Balkan Insight* (5/3/2018) [<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kremlin-guru-rouses-anti-western-feeling-in-macedonia-03-05-2018>].

¹¹Laruelle, “Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism”, 155.

¹²Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia’s New Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 330, 331.

¹³Ibid., 189, 190, 332.

¹⁴See Dugin’s autobiographical statements quoted on p. 49 below.

¹⁵Dugin describes himself as an “ideologist and practitioner of Eurasianism” in: Vyacheslav Altukhov, “Dugin breaks year of silence: ‘We are at a new impasse’” (20/10/2015) [<https://www.fort-russ.com/2015/10/dugin-breaks-year-of-silence-we-are-a/>]. See: Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (London: Arktos, 2014).

1990's and early 2000's, Dugin would be positioned as the "cult author of Russian Traditionalists"¹⁶, and attempted to impart his theories of Traditionalism to a number of intellectual and political milieus, becoming in the late 20th and early 21st centuries the most industrious, vocal, and visible publisher and advocate of Traditionalism in Russia. Simultaneously, Dugin has been recognized by scholars to be "the principal theoretician of Neo-Eurasianism"¹⁷ supposedly enjoying a *de facto* monopoly on Eurasianist ideological entrepreneurship in the early 21st century. It is precisely tracing and contesting these doctrinal characterizations, and assessing the realities of Dugin's self-proclaimed and attributed advocacy of such, that have preoccupied established scholarship on Dugin.

The leading Western scholar of Eurasianism, Marlene Laruelle, has most recently argued that Dugin is an "ideological bricoleur" and "intellectual chameleon" whose combination of prolific authorship, doctrinal sophistication, and high "adaptability" more often than not avoids rigid classification and has led to miscalculations of Dugin's real commitments and influence in Russia.¹⁸ Be that as it may, in terms of mainstay ideological markers, Laruelle suggests that Dugin is best conceptualized as "the main introducer, translator, mediator, and aggregator of radical Right theories in post-Soviet Russia"¹⁹, among which Laruelle distinguishes five main currents: "völkisch occultism", Traditionalism, the Conservative Revolution, the French New Right, and Eurasianism.²⁰ Laruelle summates that, by combining these doctrinal references to "elaborate a (pseudo-)philosophical metanarrative that is unique in its syncretism...Dugin epitomizes the space created in contemporary Russia for ideological entrepreneurship."²¹ In Laruelle's analysis, Dugin is therefore examined as an eclectic, "marketing-oriented" thinker whose sources are best seen as different "business cards"²², with Traditionalism being "his main intellectual reference point and the basis of his political attitudes"²³, but with Eurasianism and geopolitics being Dugin's most successful

¹⁶ Thus reads the author bio in the (second) edition of Dugin's *Znaki velikogo Norda. Giperboreiskaiia teoria* (Moscow: Veche, 2008).

¹⁷ Laruelle, "Alexander Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?", 6. Dugin is the founding leader of the International Eurasian Movement, established in 2003.

¹⁸ Laruelle, "Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism", 158.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 158, 166.

²² Laruelle, "Alexander Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?", 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

intellectual and political conduits. Considerable scholarly attention has accordingly been devoted to Dugin in the context of Classical and Neo-Eurasianism.²⁴

The significance of Traditionalism to Dugin, and of Dugin to Traditionalism, has also been highlighted in academic literature. Mark Sedgwick's seminal monograph on Traditionalism identified Dugin as a "centrally important Traditionalist"²⁵ who is "responsible for the last major modification of the twentieth century, equipping Traditionalism for the European East"²⁶ as well as revitalizing and channeling Traditionalist ideas into mainstream Russian politics through his unique brand of Neo-Eurasianism.²⁷ Sedgwick affirms that "a form of Traditionalism that is both distinctively Soviet and distinctively Russian...lies at the heart of Dugin's politics."²⁸ Contextually situated, Sedgwick qualifies that the discourse of Traditionalism can be seen as providing a compensation for "Soviet despair", is "redolent of Soviet culture", serves as a "power of the idea" replacement for since dethroned Soviet Marxism, and is converted by Dugin into "post-Guénonian Eurasianism."²⁹ In Sedgwick's view, Dugin is contextualized among a constellation of contemporary political ideologists responsible for "instrumentalizing" and "smuggling" Traditionalist ideas into changing Russian and Western political paradigms in which "the classic left-right shape of the political contest no longer holds."³⁰ More specifically, Sedgwick credits Dugin with "reorienting" Traditionalism to the "non-Western world"³¹ and identifies Dugin in the line of both "hard Traditionalism" through engagement in radical political projects "à la Evola", as well as "soft Traditionalism", through sophisticated theoretical publications devoted to spreading Traditionalist discourse.³² Thus: "his [Dugin's]

²⁴ See: Jafe Arnold, "Poland's Place in Eurasia: Eurasianism as an Analytical Framework and the Polish Question" (BA thesis, University of Wrocław, 2017); Mark Bassin and Gonzalo Pozo (eds.), *The Politics of Eurasianism: Identity, Popular Culture, and Russia's Foreign Policy* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017); Mark Bassin, Sergey Glebov, and Marlene Laruelle (eds.), *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); Sergey Glebov, *From Empire to Eurasia: Politics, Scholarship, and Ideology in Russian Eurasianism, 1920s-1930s* (DeKalb; Northern Illinois University Press, 2017); Marlene Laruelle (ed.), *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

²⁵ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 221.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 221-237.

²⁸ Mark Sedgwick, "Occult Dissident Culture: The Case of Alexander Dugin", in Birgit Menzel, Michael Hagemeyer, and Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (eds.), *The New Age of Russia: Occult and Esoteric Dimensions* (München/Berlin: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2012), 273.

²⁹ *Ibid.* On Dugin's notion of "post-Guénonism", see: Jafe Arnold, "Alexander Dugin and Western Esotericism: The Challenge of the Language of Tradition", *Mondi: Movimenti simbolici e sociali dell'uomo* 2 (2019).

³⁰ Mark Sedgwick, "The Ideology of the New Paradigm", *Tank* 18:3 (2017), 248.

³¹ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 264.

³² *Ibid.*, 233, 237.

spiritual practice may be explained in terms of Guénon, and his political activity may be explained in terms of Evola.”³³

That Dugin’s philosophy should be defined as indebted to or representative of Traditionalism has been contested by Andreas Umland and Anton Shekhovtsov, who advocate an altogether different approach. In a joint paper, Umland and Shekhovtsov argue: “Dugin’s form of ‘Traditionalism’ - if one chooses to use this term - has little relation to the philosophical school...Perennial Philosophy serves Dugin as an arsenal of unconventional terms and offbeat notions - freely reagggregated in Dugin’s worldview - rather than as an organic precursor or ideational foundation.”³⁴ Instead, in Umland and Shekhovtsov’s assessment, Dugin’s “amalgamation of Traditionalist concepts” is based on Evolian and European New Right “instrumentalizations of Traditionalism”³⁵, which are said to not be “legitimate successors” to “Guénonian Traditionalism”, or “are at best skewed interpretations of Integral Traditionalism.”³⁶ While Umland and Shekhovtsov admit that “there is no doubt that Dugin has contributed to the development of Russian Traditionalism,” they argue that “he has done so less by thinking or writing than by being an industrious publisher.”³⁷ Thus: “in view of his massive ‘presence’ in Russia, Dugin’s specific interpretation of Traditionalism could be declared seminal...[but] by stretching the notion of Traditionalism to include Duginism, we deprive the term of its heuristic and communicative value.”³⁸ Ultimately, Umland and Shekhovtsov even issue a warning: “An authoritative Western classification as a ‘Traditionalist’ could prove useful for him in this endeavor...Let Dugin and his followers have their pretensions to membership in the world-wide club of Traditionalists; or, if you will, ridicule them for their efforts. But either way, in order to preserve the collective fruits of scholarly research and maintain the efficacy of our communication, we need to classify the ideology of Dugin and his followers with a different generic term.”³⁹ Any classification of Dugin as a Traditionalist is therefore alleged to be “providing Dugin with a pseudo-conservative veil that obscures the revolutionary-ultranationalist - that is, fascist - agenda underlying his publishing activities.”⁴⁰ The American scholar of esotericism Arthur Versluis concurs with Umland and Shekhovtsov’s rejection of the relevance of Traditionalism,

³³ Mark Sedgwick, “Alexander Dugin’s Apocalyptic Traditionalism” (Paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 19/11/2006), 12.

³⁴ Anton Shekhovtsov and Andreas Umland, “Is Alexander Dugin a Traditionalist? ‘Neo-Eurasianism’ and Perennial Philosophy”, *The Russian Review* 68 (2009), 676.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 672.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 665, 666.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 672.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 677.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 676, 678.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 676.

suggesting that Guénon would not “recognize himself at all in Dugin’s violent exhortations.”⁴¹

The Russian scholar of esotericism, Pavel Nosachev, takes a more nuanced approach. While agreeing with Umland and Shekhovtsov that there is an “obvious approximation between Alexander Dugin’s views and fascist ideology” visible, in Nosachev’s view, in various “ambiguous statements” of Dugin’s and in Dugin’s former mentor, Evgeniy Golovin’s “lifelong great sympathy for Nazi aesthetics”, Nosachev nevertheless argues that Dugin’s Traditionalist affinities should not be reduced to “varieties of extreme right political ideology embedded in the spectrum somewhere between the conservative revolution and fascism.”⁴² Alternatively, Nosachev argues that Traditionalism has yet to be properly understood as a current in the history of ideas, and proposes that, although Dugin’s “reinterpretation of Guénon” and inclusion of diverse other ideological sources can indeed be seen as unified around the axis or “leitmotif” of Guénon’s Traditionalism, Dugin might best be characterized as belonging to a unique phenomenon of “Russian Traditionalism” which has yet to be understood by scholars.⁴³ In summary, Nosachev problematizes the debate over what he calls “Duginist theory”, positing: “Revealing contradictions between the views of Evgeniy Golovin, Alexander Dugin, René Guénon, and Julius Evola, we are merely pointing out the ambiguity of the very term ‘traditionalism’ and the even greater ambiguity of so-called ‘Russian Traditionalism.’”⁴⁴

Whether “Eurasianism” is an alternative candidate to encapsulating Dugin’s philosophy is also answered negatively by Umland and Shekhovtsov. Umland argues that “‘Neo-Eurasianism’ is, in many regards a purposefully designed misnomer.”⁴⁵ In his view, Dugin’s Neo-Eurasianism is “not an adaptation of classical Eurasianism to the post-Soviet period, but rather a peculiarly post-Soviet and essentially European ‘new right’ ideology of its own” which is one of multiple labels claimed by Dugin “in order to distance his ideology from fascism.”⁴⁶ Umland therefore insists that “Dugin’s entire ideology is expressly fascist in that it aims for a radically new-born, ultra-nationalistic (though not ethnocentric) Russia and, indeed, world.”⁴⁷ Shekhovtsov qualifies: “Dugin’s Neo-Eurasianism can be interpreted as fascist not only within the analytical framework of Roger Griffin or the academics who

⁴¹ Arthur Versluis, “Review of Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*”, *Esoterica* 8 (2006), 186.

⁴²Pavel Nosachev, “*Integralnyi traditsionalizm: mezhdu politikoi i ezoterikoi*”, *Gosudarstvo, religiia, Tserkov v Rossii i za rubezhom* 4 (2013), 212.

⁴³ Pavel Nosachev, “*K voprosu o russkom traditsionalizme*”, *Tochki* 1:1-2/10 (2011), 183.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Andreas Umland, “Why Alexander Dugin’s ‘Neo-Eurasianism’ is not Eurasianist”, *New Eastern Europe* (8/6/2018) [<http://neweasterneurope.eu/2018/06/08/Alexander-dugins-neo-eurasianism-not-eurasianist/>].

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

subscribe to the ‘new consensus’ in fascist studies, but also according to the model of fascism, constructed by Dugin himself.”⁴⁸ With Traditionalism and Eurasianism discarded as misleading and even deceptive tags, both Umland and Shekhovtsov prefer to characterize Dugin’s ideology as “Fascist”, Dugin himself as a “fascist intellectual”, and contextualize Dugin as a case in the rise of “Russian Fascism.”⁴⁹ This line of argumentation has been joined by the scholar of Eurasianism, Sergey Glebov, who has contended that Classical Eurasianism should be understood separately from “later iterations of Eurasianism...in the politics of contemporary Russian Fascists like Alexander Dugin.”⁵⁰

Finally, and most recently, Michael Millerman has contended, based on Dugin’s more recent works, that both Traditionalism and Eurasianism in Dugin’s thought are subordinate to, or dependent on “the central role of Martin Heidegger’s thought in Alexander Dugin’s political philosophy or political theory.”⁵¹ Thus, Millerman posits: “Any adequate consideration of Dugin’s political theory must be based on the dual recognition that his thought is deeply indebted to Heidegger’s philosophy, on one hand, and, on the other, that it extends it and elaborates it in a more explicit political direction than Heidegger ever did...Heidegger stands at the center of Dugin’s revolutionary political philosophy.”⁵²

Dugin in the History of Esoteric Ideas

The preceding review of established scholarship on Dugin serves to illustrate the fact that existing literature on Dugin has been fixated on attempting to classify Dugin’s thought and intellectual identity in terms of preexisting ideological markers, on which no consensus has emerged. Although these previous studies have contributed to reconstructions of key episodes in Dugin’s intellectual biography and have shed some light on noticeable sources in Dugin’s discourse and corpus, such findings have been subordinated to the task of synchronically identifying Dugin within one or another stream of ideological or political heritage. The present study does not aspire to contend alternative “generic” theoretical perspectives to these terminological discussions. Instead, this thesis proposes to shift to an historiographical, diachronic approach and to, perhaps more fruitfully, concretely identify the major sources in the history of ideas which Dugin encountered in the Soviet underground and early post-Soviet environment, which consistently manifest themselves throughout Dugin’s early, formative publications and activities. More specifically, this thesis proposes to identify and trace those sources of Dugin’s which belong to the historically evolved referential corpus of Western Esotericism, which, as we will see, were ubiquitous in his early, formative milieu

⁴⁸Anton Shekhovtsov, “The Palingenetic Thrust of Russian Neo-Eurasianism: Ideas of Rebirth in Alexander Dugin’s Worldview”, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9: 4 (2008), 506.

⁴⁹ See: Roger Griffin, Werner Loh, and Andreas Umland (eds.), *Fascism Past and Present, West and East* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2006).

⁵⁰ Glebov, *From Empire to Eurasia*, 6.

⁵¹ Michael Millerman, “Alexander Dugin’s Heideggerianism”, *International Journal of Political Theory* 3:1 (2018), 1.

⁵² Ibid., 16.

and across his early publications. In a word, the following is an inquiry into the esoteric sources of Dugin's early philosophy.

The motivation behind this particular field of inquiry is far from arbitrary. "In the beginning", the appearance of Alexander Dugin in the empirically accessible history of ideas can be traced back to his 1980 initiation into the Soviet underground occultist group known as the Yuzhinsky Circle. As will be illustrated in the attempt to reconstruct the historical grammar of the Yuzhinsky Circle which constitutes the first chapter of this thesis, the Yuzhinsky Circle largely preoccupied itself with reading, discussing, and "experimenting" with sources that are inseparable from the corpus and legacy of Western Esotericism. Insofar as this study of Dugin's intellectual biography is historical and diachronic, such contested terms as "esotericism", "esoteric", "occultism", and "occult" are employed here strictly in their historiographical senses as related to the domain in the history of ideas which has been reconstructed as Western Esotericism.⁵³ The "What is esotericism?" document of the Center for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam succinctly summarizes:

The term "Western esotericism" covers a wide spectrum of neglected currents in Western cultural history. As an umbrella term that intends to highlight connections and developments over a long period, from antiquity to the present day, esotericism includes phenomena as varied as Gnosticism, Hermetism, and Neoplatonic Theurgy, Astrology, Alchemy, and Natural Magic, Christian Kabbalah, Rosicrucianism, Christian Theosophy and Illuminism, the currents of modern Occultism, Spiritualism, Traditionalism, the New Age movement, Neopaganism, Ritual Magical groups, and a host of contemporary alternative spiritualities and forms of popular "occulture". In short, esotericism cuts through established boundaries of religion, science, art, and philosophy...At first sight, the only thing esoteric currents may appear to have in common is the experience of having been rejected by mainstream religious and academic institutions in the West. In other words, the study of western esotericism is largely concerned with those traditions and ideas that have lost the battle for hegemony in Western intellectual and cultural history... "Western esotericism" as a scholarly category emerged from such processes of polemical rejection but also of apologetic recuperation.⁵⁴

This thesis will demonstrate that it is precisely this range of currents and field of research in the history of ideas that constitutes the main interests and sources of the Yuzhinsky Circle which Dugin encountered in the Soviet underground and which decisively influenced Dugin's early works. More specifically, it is the submission of this study that two major Western esoteric currents in particular of late 19th and early 20th century extraction can be discerned in the Yuzhinsky Circle's historical-ideational evolution, and can subsequently be found at the core of Dugin's own early ideological pronouncements.

⁵³ On the historiographical conceptualization of and approach to Western Esotericism, see: Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Empirical Method in the Study of Esotericism," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 7:2 (1995): 99-129; Ibidem, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Ibidem, *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

⁵⁴ "Esotericism in the Academy: What is esotericism?", Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents, University of Amsterdam (2019) [<https://www.amsterdamhermetica.nl/esotericism-in-the-academy/>].

Traditionalism in the History of Ideas

The first major esoteric current which we will find to be inseparable from the Yuzhinsky Circle and Dugin's early intellectual biography is Traditionalism. In this context, Traditionalism refers to the intellectual current initiated by the French author René Guénon (1886-1951), who self-styled his doctrines as "traditional" and expounded a perennialist philosophy centered around the concept of the "Primordial Tradition." Traditionalist doctrine as Guénon elaborated it came to be anchored in three fundamental suppositions: (1) the postulation of a Primordial and Perennial Tradition of non-human origin and transcendent quality "of which the various historical traditions and metaphysics are the *membra disjecta*"; (2) Western modernity is the final, "dark age" (the "Kali Yuga") in the present cosmic cycle by virtue of its absolute abomination and inversion of Tradition or, in other words, "never before has humanity been alienated from the latter as seriously as today"; and (3) Tradition can and must be recovered by an "intellectual elite" through "initiation" and "focusing on the common denominators of the various religious and metaphysical traditions."⁵⁵ It is the latter that Guénon considered in his own definition of "esotericism", sometimes rendered as "esoterism", by which Guénon understood the "inner", "hidden", "higher", and "initiatic" level of a doctrine or organization which co-exists and dialectically interacts with the "exoteric", "outer", "open", and "virtual" side.⁵⁶ In Guénon's view, the "esoteric" dimension, being of an "inner" and "higher order", corresponds to the "Traditional principles" derived from the Primordial Tradition and is therefore related to "initiation" and the perennial metaphysics underlying all traditions.⁵⁷

In the history of ideas, the Catholic-raised Guénon's Traditionalism was heavily indebted to and constantly in negotiation with the 19th and early 20th century occult currents with which Guénon was intimately familiar, such as those of Theosophy, Martinism, and Freemasonry, and Guénon himself was immersed in a number of milieus and organizations, where notions of "initiation", a primordial and perennial "esoteric tradition", a metaphysically superior East, and complex narratives on the cycles of Tradition and civilization in anticipation of the end of a spiritual era, were widespread and highly developed.⁵⁸ Guénon's particular rendition of such ideas was distinguished by an adamant, wholesale rejection of modernity, a regressive view of history, and an attempt at formulating a "purist" metaphysics which could function as an "initiatic science" as opposed to both

⁵⁵ Quotes from: Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Tradition", in Hanegraaff et al., *The Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1132. On Traditionalism, see: Jean Borella, "René Guénon and the Traditionalist School", in Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (eds.), *Modern Esoteric Spirituality* (New York, Crossroad, 1992): 330-358; Antoine Faivre, *Western Esotericism: A Concise History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 96-99; Joscelyn Godwin, "Understanding the Traditionalists", *New Dawn* 147 (2014); Peter King, "René Guénon and Traditionalism" in Christopher Partridge (ed.), *The Occult World* (New York: Routledge, 2015): 308-314; William W. Quinn Jr. *The Only Tradition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*.

⁵⁶ René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines* (Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004), 107-113.

⁵⁷ Faivre, *Western Esotericism*, 98; René Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation* (Ghent: Sophia Perennis, 2004), 48-55; Quinn, *The Only Tradition*, 19-21.

⁵⁸ Faivre, *Western Esotericism*, *ibid.*; Hanegraaff, "Tradition", 1130-1132; *Ibidem*, *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 39-40; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 39-51, 263-267.

“profane science” and what Guénon called the “pseudo-religions” of modern occultism.⁵⁹ On the one hand, Guénon’s proposed “traditional orientations” took the form of a “teaching” in themselves promising “metaphysical realization” and “to give to the universal esoteric gnosis...the most crystalline and mathematical form.”⁶⁰ In this sense, Guénon’s corpus has been identified as centered on “five fundamental themes: an initial theme of intellectual reform and criticism of the modern world; three central themes, each constituting a particular synthesis of the other two - metaphysics, tradition, and symbolism; and a concluding theme of accomplishment, of spiritual realization.”⁶¹ On the other hand, Guénon’s approach could also be assimilated as a “hermeneutics” for analyzing “traditional data”, and thereby “become an approach to the comparative study of religions and cultures in general, or even a general philosophical perspective on reality as such.”⁶²

The loosely connected Traditionalist “movement”, “discourse”, or “school” launched by Guénon would be taken in a number of different directions by and come to be associated with a diverse range of prominent authors, such as Guénon’s collaborator, the philosopher and art historian, Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), the major Western advocate of Sufism, Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), the “first Traditionalist shaykh” Michel Vâlsan (1907-1974), the similarly Islamic-oriented Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984), the Italian philosopher and proponent of Guénon, Julius Evola (1898-1974), the French Indologist and musicologist Alain Daniélou (1907-1994), the Islamic scholar Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933-), and the historian of religions Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). As Mark Sedgwick remarks: “his [Guénon’s] achievement was to form an entirely new synthesis out of these ideas, and then to promote this synthesis to the point where it could be taken further by others - by Schuon into religious organizations, by Evola into politics, by Eliade into scholarship, and finally by Nasr and Dugin into the non-Western world.”⁶³

The following study will explore how and when Guénon’s Traditionalism, as well as nearly all of the above authors - especially Evola - were discovered and absorbed by the Yuzhinsky Circle of the 1960’s-70’s, and would be assimilated by Dugin as the main ideological and discursive references of his early works. In Guénon, the Yuzhinsky Circle would embrace the rejection of surrounding modernity as a fundamentally negative paradigm, would borrow the notion of Tradition and according metaphysical formulas by which to “systematize”, “approach”, and “critique” many of the other esoteric sources with which the circle was dealing, and, finally, like Guénon and the Traditionalists, the Yuzhinsky Circle’s major figures would each seek to pursue these ideas into formulating their own Traditional(ist) paths for achieving “metaphysical realization.” At the same time, the Yuzhinsky Circle and Dugin would all be heavily influenced by the particularly radical

⁵⁹ Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 37-38.

⁶⁰ Borella, “René Guénon”, 336.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Hanegraaff, “Tradition”, 1133.

⁶³ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 264.

political-philosophical rendition of “hard Traditionalism” and “morphological” narrative of Tradition to be found in Julius Evola and his “revolt against the modern world.”⁶⁴ In fact, the circle’s established affinity for the latter emerges most clearly in Dugin’s early works and activities, and, as we will see, is historically and textually connected to another, contemporary current of esoteric inspirations discovered by the Yuzhinsky Circle and developed by Dugin.

Völkisch Occultism in the History of Ideas

The second major current of esoteric sources to be found in the Yuzhinsky Circle, and ultimately most expressly in Dugin’s early works, is that of “*völkisch* occultism.” Völkisch occultism refers to a corpus of related authors and doctrines that developed in German-speaking countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries out of the synthesis of *völkisch*, Romantic-nationalist, and Pan-Germanic ideas with a number of tropes derived from esoteric and modern occultist currents.⁶⁵ Like the Traditionalists, the *völkisch* occultists rejected the modern world as a state of degradation, and posited an ancient wisdom tradition indigenous to a lost Northern proto-continent and “Golden Age”, whose doctrines have survived through and can be reconstructed by an intellectual elite privy to the “initiatic” elements of religious, mythological, and esoteric and occult sources. Unlike the perennialism of the Traditionalists, however, the *völkisch* occultists committed their doctrines primarily to being the cosmic mission of one subject, the Ario-/Aryo-Germanic *Volk* or Aryan race, which was viewed as in existential conflict with other spiritual and biological races, particularly Slavs and Jews.

The prototypical founding father of *völkisch* occultism, the Austrian author Guido von List (Guido Karl Anton List, 1848-1919), debuted in the 1880’s as an author of *völkisch*-Romantic novels and a journalist and folklorist active in the Austrian Pan-German

⁶⁴ See: Julius Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1995); Paul Furlong, *Social and Political Thought of Julius Evola* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 98-109, 179-187. Hans Thomas Hakl, “Deification as a Core Theme in Julius Evola’s Esoteric Works”, *Correspondences* 6:2 (2018): 145-171; Ibidem, “Julius Evola and Tradition”, in Mark Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 80-102; H.T. Hansen, “Julius Evola’s Political Endeavors”, in *Evola Men Among the Ruins: Postwar Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2002): 1-104; Ibidem, “A Short Introduction to Julius Evola”, in *Evola, Revolt Against the Modern World*: ix-xxii.

⁶⁵ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology - The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany, 1890-1935* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 17-31; Eric Kurlander, *Hitler’s Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 5-10, 14-32; Uwe Puschner, “The Notions *Völkisch* and Nordic: A Conceptual Approximation”, in Horst Junginger and Andreas Åkerlund (eds.), *Nordic Ideology between Religion and Scholarship* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013): 21-38; Peter Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Nazism: Anthroposophy and the Politics of Race in the Fascist Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 1-16; Ibidem, “Esoteric Alternatives in Imperial Germany: Science, Spirit, and the Modern Occult Revival”, in Monica Black and Eric Kurlander, *Revisiting the ‘Nazi Occult’: Histories, Realities, Legacies* (Rochester: Camden House, 2015): 23-41; George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken, 1981); Guy Turlain, *Völkisch Writers and National Socialism: A Study of Right-Wing Political Culture in Germany, 1890-1960* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 1-25.

movement.⁶⁶ By the early 1890's, List had elaborated his vision of an ancient cult of Wotan as the "national religion" and "secret occult national heritage" of the Germanic peoples' Teutonic ancestors, which List sought to revive in his "neo-Germanic catechism."⁶⁷ At the same time, in the 1890's List was heavily influenced by Theosophical ideas of "mystical racial evolution" and the "technique of gaining mystical visions of the remote past", subsequently becoming "the first popular writer to combine *völkisch* ideology with occultism and theosophy."⁶⁸ Following a cataracts operation in 1902 which left him blind for nearly a year, List claimed to have experienced a series of mystical visions which revealed to him the "secrets of the runes", by which he could decipher the primordial language and *Ur-gnosis* of the Aryo-Germanic Volk through "mystical-linguistic and symbological" analyses of Germanic folklore, "folk etymology", and the consultation of Germanic mythology along with esoteric and occult currents, primarily Kabbalah, astrology, Theosophy and Freemasonry.⁶⁹ List posited the existence of an ancient Aryan theocracy turned secret initiatic elite called the *Armanenschaft*, which transmitted the Aryo-Germanic religio-linguistic worldview, or *Wihinei*, said to have historically splintered into an "esoteric doctrine", that of "Armanism", and into a "general religious doctrine of the people (exotericism)", "Wotanism."⁷⁰ While initially adhering to a cyclical view of history in line with Germanic paganism and Theosophy, List ultimately committed to the idea of an apocalyptic, eschatological "Armanist millennium", in which the historical castigation of the Aryo-Germanic Volk would be avenged by the "collective messianic body" of a Greater Germanic Reich.⁷¹ To spiritually prepare for the latter, List founded the Hoher Armanen-Orden in 1911 to doctrinalize and ritualize his reconstruction of the primordial Aryan religion, and from 1915 borrowed the term "Ariosophy" to describe his doctrine.⁷² As we will see, multiple of List's concepts, terms, and "templates", and in general his engagement in revealing the spiritual heritage and cosmic mission of the Volk, will surface in the late Yuzhinsky Circle and in Dugin's early works.

⁶⁶ Stephen E. Flowers, "The Life of Guido von List" in Guido von List, *The Secret of the Runes* (Vermont: Destiny Books/Inner Traditions, 1988), 3-6; Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, "List, Guido Karl Anton (von)", in Hanegraaff et al., *The Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 693; Ibidem, *The Occult Roots*, 36-38; Julian Strube, "Nazism and the Occult", in Partridge (ed.), *The Occult World* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 343-344.

⁶⁷ Flowers, *ibid.*, 8-9; Goodrick-Clarke, "List", 694; Ibidem, *The Occult Roots*, 39-40.

⁶⁸ Flowers, "Sources of List's Ideas" in Guido von List, *The Secret of the Runes*, 29; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 33. See: Isaac Lubelsky, "Mythological and Real Race Issues in Theosophy", in Hammer and Rothstein (eds.), *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 335-355.

⁶⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, "List", 694; Ibidem, *The Occult Roots*, 49-77; Jeffrey D. Lavoie, "The Philosophy of Guido von List (1848-1919): Connecting Gnosticism to Nazism" in Garry W. Trompf et al, *The Gnostic World* (New York: Routledge, 2018): 499-509; Strube, "Nazism and the Occult", 343.

⁷⁰ Guido von List, *The Religion of the Aryo-Germanic Folk: Esoteric and Exoteric* (Bastrop: Lodestar, 2014), 2.

⁷¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 78-89.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 164.

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (Adolf Josef Lanz, 1874-1954), one of the Austrian founders of the Guido von List Society who coined the term “Ariosophy” which List borrowed, developed his own distinct strain of völkisch occultism while contributing to the popularization of List’s. At first a monk of the Cistercian Order, Liebenfels abandoned monastic life in 1899 to develop his own doctrine of “Theozology.” According to the latter, the Fall was the result of the Aryan god-men (*Theozoa*) of prehistory, the bearers of a primal “sexo-racial gnosis” and electrical powers, miscegenating (by Satanic design) with beast-men (*Anthropozoa*), a cosmic catastrophe challenged by “Christ, an Aryan god-man, [who] had come to proclaim the cult of pure race.”⁷³ Liebenfels saw the Aryo-Germanic race as the heirs to the Theozoological gnosis of Ario-Christianity, now tasked with rising in eschatological war against the “apes of Sodom” to restore racial purity and inaugurate a new “Church of the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁴ While List’s Armanism-cum-Ariosophy was decisively archaic, Liebenfels’ Ariosophy was vested in “an extraordinary compilation of theological and scientific ideas”, combining Arian Christology with Social Darwinism, eugenics with astrology and anthropology, and Theosophical ideas with radiology.⁷⁵ Moreover, if List’s doctrine was emphatically pagan, then Liebenfels was profoundly indebted and explicitly committed to Christianity, and he anticipated the Second Coming of Christ as an eschatological end to the earthly hell of Sodom.⁷⁶ In his journal *Ostara* and later publications, Liebenfels reconciled his Theozology with the major works of Theosophy and assimilated primarily Theosophical astrological accounts to “assign to all major countries a planet and a zodiacal sign, the astrological properties of which corresponded to the culture and spirit of their racial stock according to the precepts of the ‘ario-christian’ gnosis.”⁷⁷ In 1907, Liebenfels founded his own “racial-religious order”, the Ordo Novi Templi, modeled in the likes of the Knights Templar, with the purpose of “defending” the “Aryan Church” and “proselytizing the ideology of *Ostara*.”⁷⁸ As we will see in the second and third chapters of the present study, Dugin’s early thought shows no signs of affinity with Liebenfels’ Theozology and sexo-racial worldview, but the notion of an eschatological *Endkampf* centered around the Christian revelation of the Volk resonates strongly across Dugin’s early works, and Dugin will conditionally borrow from Liebenfels both the term “Ariosophy” and Liebenfels’ name for the Northern *Urheimat*: Arktogaa.

Despite their differing ideological preferences, List and Liebenfels collaborated in their own time and space, and were both highly influential in the wider historical context of völkisch occultism which, although pioneered by List and Liebenfels, did not end with them.

⁷³ Goodrick-Clarke, “Lanz von Liebenfels”, in Hanegraaff et al., *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* (2006), 674.

⁷⁴ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 98.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 93-95, 100-105. See: Stephen Michael Borthwick, “Heresiarch of the Master Race: Lanz von Liebenfels, Catholicism and Occultism in *fin de siècle* Austria” (University of Chicago: MA thesis, 2011).

⁷⁶ Borthwick, “Heresiarch of the Master Race”, 39-40.

⁷⁷ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 100-104.

⁷⁸ Borthwick, “Heresiarch of the Master Race”, 29-30.

In 1916, the List-inspired secret order in Germany, the Germanenorden, received into its ranks Rudolf von Sebottendorff (Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer, 1875-1945?). Having spent the early 1900's studying Sufi (Bektashi), Rosicrucian, Freemasonic, Kabbalistic, astrological, and alchemical sources in a Freemasonic lodge in Turkey, Sebottendorff was introduced to the works of List and Liebenfels by the Germanenorden, the Bavarian network of which Sebottendorff subsequently built into the Thule Society in 1918.⁷⁹ While Sebottendorff's major works would mostly be dedicated to the occult sciences, Sufism, and Freemasonry, through the Thule Society Sebottendorff played a considerable role in disseminating a rather Listian "Aryan religion" which particularly accented the runes and initiatic "Aryan symbolisms", such as the swastika, the eagle, and references to the Northern *Urheimat* as Thule.⁸⁰ Another völkisch occultist influenced by List, Liebenfels, and initially Freemasonry, Karl Maria Wiligut (1866-1946), developed his own runic system and Aryanist doctrine of "Irminism", which "blended the Teutonic archaism of List with the Ario-Christianity of Lanz."⁸¹ Wiligut devised a complex sacred history and mythical genealogy for the "Irminist religion of Krist", deemed the universal faith of the Aryo-Germanic *Volk* of Nordic provenance.⁸² In 1933, Wiligut met then Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler (1900-1945) and was inducted into the SS under the name "Weisthor", subsequently being appointed head of the Department for Pre- and Early History of the Race and Settlement Main Office of the SS.⁸³ Wiligut seems to have developed a close advisory relationship with Himmler, but was forced to resign in 1939 following the publicizing of his past internment in a mental institution from 1924-1927 for his proselytizing insistence that he was a descendent of Wodan.⁸⁴

Examined together in terms of their common historical context, lines of transmission, and doctrinal inspirations, List, Liebenfels, Sebottendorff, and Wiligut are prototypical case studies of the current of völkisch occultism. In the history of ideas, this current was distinguished by its indebtedness to and combination of völkisch and occultist ideas, synthesized into doctrines detailing the spiritual heritage and mission of the Aryo-Germanic Volk and attempting to reconstruct one form or another of the "primordial Aryan tradition." All of these authors will turn up in the early Dugin's esoteric grammatology, and thereby seem to have represented prototypical precedents of what we will see to be Dugin's own formulation of an eschatological spiritual identity and mission for Russia. As we will see in chapters two and three, Dugin's direct conceptual borrowing from the völkisch occultists is

⁷⁹ Flowers, "The Life of Rudolf von Sebottendorff", in Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorff, *Secret Practices of the Sufi Freemasons: The Islamic Teachings at the Heart of Alchemy* (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2013): 10-32. Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 135-145; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 95-96; Strube, "Nazism and the Occult", 342.

⁸⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 145.

⁸¹ Ibid, 180.

⁸² See: Stephen Flowers, Michael Moynihan, *The Secret King: The Myth and Reality of Nazi Occultism* (Los Angeles/ Waterbury: Feral House/ Dominion Press, 2007); Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 181.

⁸³ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 183.

⁸⁴ Strube, "Nazism and the Occult", 340; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 190.

necessarily limited, but his familiarity with these sources was substantial, and in many respects multiple of Dugin's early works betray an apperception strongly resembling a characteristically völkisch occultist perspective.

At the same time, this study will demonstrate that one of the most central, if not the single most frequently referenced source to be found in Dugin's early publications, is the works of another prolific völkisch-inspired author who, while displaying heavy thematic and contextual convergences with the völkisch occultism of List, Liebenfels, Sebottendorff, and Wiligut, cannot be accurately historiographically identified as an Ariosophist or völkisch occultist *sensu stricto*. The source in question is the vastly understudied Dutch-German scholar Herman Wirth (Herman Felix Wirth Roeper Bosch, 1885-1981). Educated in Germanic studies and musicology in the Netherlands and Germany, Wirth debuted as an organizer of Frisian and Dutch folk-music concerts around 1908, attaining his doctorate with the dissertation *Der Untergang des niederländischen Volksliedes* at the University of Basel in 1910.⁸⁵ After lecturing in Dutch philology at the University of Berlin, serving in the German Army in the First World War, and being granted the honorary title of Professor by Emperor Wilhelm II in 1916, Wirth was active in founding a number of völkisch- and Pan-Germanic-inspired initiatives, such as the German-Flemish Society and the Rural League of Germanic Migratory Birds, and ultimately joined the Nazi Party from 1925 to 1926.⁸⁶ Also over the course of the early 1920's, Wirth developed his own complex theory of the Nordic origins of civilization and primordial Nordic "*Gottesweltanschauung*."⁸⁷ In his 1928 magnum opus, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der Atlantisch-Nordischen Rasse*, Wirth argued that the bulk of humanity's languages, writing-systems, and religious and mythological traditions are derived from a primordial "Nordic-Arctic" or "Nordic-Atlantic" race, the "cultural circle of Thule."⁸⁸ The Nordic pre- or proto-Aryan race, in Wirth's history, began to disperse out of the Arctic in the Paleolithic, taking, yet losing some of its "religio-linguistic-symbolic paradigm" along with it. In *Der Aufgang der Menschheit* and its successor, Wirth's 1931-1936 *Die Heilige Urschrift der Menschheit: Symbolgeschichtliche Untersuchungen diesseits und jenseits des Nordatlantik*, Wirth sought to reconstruct the "primordial theology" and "proto-symbolic system" of the Nordic *Urkulturkreis*. In Wirth's theory, the primordial "cosmic-calendrical-hieroglyphic system" was a complete "cosmo-monotheistic" worldview reflecting a perfect harmony

⁸⁵ Eberhard Baumann, *Herman Wirth: Schriften, Vorträge, Manuskripte und Sekundärliteratur* (Toppenstedt: Uwe Berg Verlag, 1995), 8, 21-22; Joscelyn Godwin, "Herman Wirth and Folksong", *Tyr* 2 (2004): 263-283; Andrei Kondrat'ev, "*German Feliks Virt i 'Khronika Ura Linda*" (Moscow, Veche: 2007), 14-15; Bernard Mees, *The Science of the Swastika* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 136.

⁸⁶ Kondrat'ev, "*German Feliks Virt i 'Khronika Ura Linda*", 15-21; Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 136-138.

⁸⁷ See: Horst Junginger and Andreas Åkerlund (eds.), *Nordic Ideology between Religion and Scholarship* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2013).

⁸⁸ Joscelyn Godwin, *Atlantis and the Cycles of Time: Prophecies, Traditions, and Occult Revelations* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2011), 132-137; Ibidem, "Out of Arctica? Herman Wirth's Theory of Human Origins", *Runa* 5 (1999/2000): 2-7; Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 142-144; Herman Wirth, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift der Atlantisch-Nordischen Rasse* (Jena: Eugen Diederich, 1928).

between symbols, words, natural phenomena, and theological principles.⁸⁹ Joscelyn Godwin summarizes Wirth's posited Nordic *prisca theologia* and *philosophia perennis* thusly:

The race responsible for this script had perceived the great moral law of the universe as the eternal return, the perpetual coming into being and passing away. They recognized it especially in the annual journey of the Sun; this represented for them the Son of the immutable God who is His revelation in time and space... Thirdly there is All-Mother Earth, to whose bosom the Son/Sun goes each winter, and from whom he is reborn at the Solstice. At the end of the book, after 600 pages of documentation, Wirth concludes that we have learned the world-view of a race that lived in unison with God and the cosmos, in recognition of the great divine law of the eternal return.⁹⁰

Taken together, in Wirth's theories, the theological, linguistic, and symbolic paradigm of the Nordic *Urkultur* is most consistently encapsulated in the calendric Sacred Year.⁹¹ These and other ideas of Wirth's were intimately tied to his conviction that the *Oera Linda Boek*, a manuscript purporting to account for the sacred pre-history of the Frisians, which is widely considered by scholars to be a 19th century forgery, ought to be seen as a partially authentic myth which corroborated - and in all likelihood directly inspired - aspects of Wirth's ideas.⁹² It was in the *Oera Linda Boek* and the Frisian countryside that Wirth saw what he perceived to be particularly pristine remnants of the primordial Nordic culture.⁹³ In 1933, Wirth published his own German translation of the *Oera Linda Boek* with a massive commentary under the title *Die Ura-Linda Chronik*.⁹⁴ The immense visibility and controversy which Wirth's works met among both German academia and Nazi representatives saw Wirth advance to professorship at the University of Berlin in 1933.⁹⁵ In 1935, Wirth was recruited by Heinrich Himmler to be the co-founder and first president of the "Deutsches Ahnenerbe" Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte (The German Ancestral Heritage Society for the Study of the History of Primeval Ideas), which was later (in 1939, after Wirth's departure) integrated into the SS.⁹⁶ In the Ahnenerbe, Wirth sought to institutionalize his *Sinnbildforschung* and "intellectual prehistory" as dominant scientific approaches, but was ultimately forced out of the organization in 1937-1938 amidst a variety of organizational and ideological conflicts.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Herman Wirth, *Die Heilige Urschrift der Menschheit: Symbolgeschichtliche Untersuchungen diesseits und jenseits des Nordatlantik* (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1936), 93.

⁹⁰ Godwin, "Out of Arctica? Herman Wirth's Theory of Human Origins", 4.

⁹¹ Wirth, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit*, 193.

⁹² Peter Davies, "'Männerbund' and 'Mutterrecht': Herman Wirth, Sophie Rogge-Börner, and the *Ura-Linda-Chronik*", *German Life and Letters* 60:1 (2007): 98-115; Godwin, *Atlantis*, 137-141.

⁹³ Heather Pringle, *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* (New York: Hyperion, 2006), 58; Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 151-154.

⁹⁴ Herman Wirth, *Die Ura-Linda Chronik: Übersetzt und mit einer einführenden geschichtlichen Untersuchung* (Leipzig: Koehler & Ameland Verlag, 1933).

⁹⁵ Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 140-142.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 155-156; Pringle, *The Master Plan*, 55.

⁹⁷ Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 156-157. Pringle, *The Master Plan*, 92-93.

It is extremely difficult to determine Wirth's place in the history of ideas unambiguously. On the one hand, Wirth himself frequently claimed authority as an empirical scholar who relied on established scientific data and, indeed, many of Wirth's runological and Nordic postulates and methodologies were well established in antiquarian, Germanic, and Indo-European scholarship in the early 20th century.⁹⁸ Moreover, Wirth explicitly sought to distance himself from the Ariosophists and völkisch occultists (such as Wiligut) whom Wirth derogatively called "Germanicologists", "inspired amateurs", and "national fantasists."⁹⁹ On the other hand, many of the tropes on which Wirth dwelled have clearly been identified as "gnosis of a recognizably völkisch type"¹⁰⁰, leading one scholar to directly call Wirth a "völkisch-esotericist."¹⁰¹ Wirth's reconstruction of a primordial and perennial Aryan religion derived from a Nordic *Urheimat* through linguistic-runological operations and the discussion of metaphysical-cosmic cycles was an endeavor contemporaneous and highly resonant with the völkisch occultism from whom he sought to discursively distance himself. If, as one scholar has put it, Wirth "inhabited that borderland that lies between scholarship and the world of the imagination", then the imagination of Herman Wirth bears clear commonalities with that of the völkisch occultists. Indeed, Wirth seems also to have "brushed shoulders with Theosophists and Anthroposophists", and Wirth's publisher seems to have been the focal point of "neo-pagan", völkisch, and occultist networks.¹⁰² In one particular passage in *Der Aufgang der Menschheit*, Wirth presents the "religion of Nordic man" as an alternative to the "occult religious studies" of Theosophy and Anthroposophy, which, Wirth says, modern man has "fallen back on" in "spiritual need for religious internalization" amidst the "mechanization", "materialism", and "liberalism" of the "Western lands."¹⁰³ These contexts and expressions, combined with a number of emerging biographical details concerning Wirth's activities, suggest that Wirth should not be overlooked or excluded from the scope of our inquiry into the history of esoteric ideas and Dugin's early thought. In his early works Dugin will assimilate Wirth as one of his main sources, and will do so through characteristically and discursively Traditionalist and völkisch occultist lenses.

This study argues that it is precisely these völkisch occultist and Wirthian sources in the history of esoteric ideas that are manifest most prominently alongside Traditionalist sources in Dugin's early philosophy, and these currents can be empirically traced back to the Soviet-era occultist circle in which Dugin discovered them in particularly entangled form.

⁹⁸ Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 160.

⁹⁹ Andrei Kondrat'ev, "German Feliks Virt i 'Khronika Ura Linda'", 23.

¹⁰⁰ Mees, *The Science of the Swastika*, 138.

¹⁰¹ Kurlander, *Hitler's Monsters*, 154.

¹⁰² Godwin, "Herman Wirth on Folksong", 277; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 228, footnote 17; Flowers and Moynihan, *The Secret King*, 33; Staudenmaier, *Between Occultism and Nazism*, 89-90.

¹⁰³ Wirth, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit*, 2, 6.

Back to the Underground

The ensuing excavation of these esoteric sources in Alexander Dugin's early thought is organized in the form of a reconstruction in the history of ideas. In the first chapter, the history and grammatology of the Yuzhinsky Circle are reconstructed on the basis of existing biographical accounts, original documentary and historiographical research, and an analysis of the main esoteric sources discernible in the biographies and corpus of three key thinkers of the Yuzhinsky Circle who exercised the most visible ideological influence on Dugin, namely: the circle's founder, Yuri Mamleev (1931-2015), Mamleev's successor, Evgeniy Golovin (1938-2010), and Golovin's associate who would induct Dugin into the circle c. 1980, Geydar Dzhemal (1947-2016). The first chapter concludes with an analysis of Dugin's first published work of 1989, *The Ways of the Absolute*, written on the cusp of nearly a decade of immersion in the Yuzhinsky Circle. The second chapter is devoted to reconstructing Dugin's ideological trajectory beyond the Yuzhinsky Circle following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Dugin's first independent intellectual initiatives, such as his Arktogeia Association and subsequent publications, including the books *Mysteries of Eurasia* (1991), *Conspirology* (1992/1993), and *The Hyperborean Theory* (1992/1993), as well as Dugin's journals *Sweet Angel* and *Elements*. The third chapter is dedicated to the context and content of Dugin's 1996 manifesto, *The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism*, which is seen as representing the climactic point of departure of Dugin's early ideological development beyond the Yuzhinsky Circle and the esoteric sources that Dugin had inherited therefrom. This study concludes with Dugin's 1999 publication of *Absolute Homeland*, which is situated as the culmination of Dugin's early ideological development reflected in the critical revision and reorganization of his early publications. In the conclusion, we will review the findings of this inquiry into the origins of Dugin's thought and discuss related avenues for further research into reconstructing the legacy of the Yuzhinsky Circle and the early Dugin in the history of ideas and Western Esotericism.

Chapter 1: The Yuzhinsky Circle: Magicians, Sources, and Orientation

Yuzhinsky Alleyway and ‘Soviet-Russian Occulture’

Between 1929 and 1994, Bolshoi Palashyovskiy Lane in Moscow bore the name Yuzhinsky Alleyway (*Iuzhinskii pereulok*) in honor of one of its famous former residents, the Georgian prince turned Russian playwright Alexander “Yuzhin” (real name: Sumbatov/Sumbatashvili, 1857-1927), whose story offers a curious prelude to the later Soviet occultist circle that would bear his name. In 1908, Yuzhin-Sumbatov was one of the first initiates of the “Renaissance” (*Vozrozhdenie*) lodge of the Masonic Grand Orient of France in Moscow, which stood out as a node in a chain of lodges and circles that organized in the “political springtime” following the 1905 Revolution.¹⁰⁴ Yuzhin’s Renaissance milieu was a microcosm of a whole network of secretive circles which became meeting points between radical political visions and esoteric and occult sources, whose members could boast significant contacts and capital in both the establishment, the underground, and abroad.¹⁰⁵ Over the course of the turbulent series of developments that ultimately collapsed the Russian Empire, many of this milieu’s members “found themselves at the summit of political and state structures, often precisely thanks to their masonic connexions.”¹⁰⁶ Yuzhin-Sumbatov himself, a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party, the year after his initiation into the Renaissance lodge was promoted to director of the leading Maly Theater in Moscow and, enjoying an internationally famous career as a “melodramatic” and “mystifying” stage artist, was decorated People’s Artist of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1922.¹⁰⁷ In connection with the latter achievement, Yuzhin had developed a close working relationship with the Soviet People’s Commissar for Education, Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933), himself a practicing occultist with an interest in Theosophy who advocated the establishment of “theater-temples” to impart a spiritual “creativity” to Soviet socialism, and who was instrumental in recruiting occultists to collaborate with the early Soviet establishment.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ludwik Hass, “The Russian Masonic Movement in the Years 1906-1918”, *Acta Poloniae Historica* 48 (1983), 106; A.I. Serkov, *Russkoe masonstvo. 1731-2000 gg. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar’* (Moscow: Rossiiskaiia politicheskaiia entsiklopediia, 2001); *ibidem*, “*Moskva. Lozha Vozrozhdenie*”, *Russkoe masonstvo* [<http://samisdat.com/5/23/523r-voz.htm>].

¹⁰⁵ Hass, “The Russian Masonic Movement”, *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky, *A History of Russian Theatre* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 231; Natalia Pashkina, “*Alexander Sumbatov-Yuzhin: Velikii koronositel’ Malogo*”, *Obshchestvo i zdorov’e* 5 (2007)[https://web.archive.org/web/20141221111846/http://www.maly.ru/news_more.php?number=1&day=14&month=1&year=2009].

¹⁰⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 140, 327; Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 21-22, 385, 400.

While his Soviet-era biography¹⁰⁹ presented Yuzhin as an ardent “realist” who advocated “progress” against “mysticism” in theater, the emerging details of Yuzhin’s “mysterious, unfathomable, and even mystical”¹¹⁰ biography suggest that Yuzhin was far from a “materialist” artist, but rather one who “perceived life through the prism of the theatre”¹¹¹ and strove to cope with uneasy Russian-cum-Soviet political realities by designing a stealthy combination of theatrical metaphors and what the founding father of Russian “parodial theater”, Alexander Kugel (1864-1928) called “optical illusions”¹¹², intended to “instruct and educate the people” through “rituals.”¹¹³ Living between Moscow and France in his later years, Yuzhin can also be seen as representative of the direction of transmission of esoteric sources between the two countries that will be decisive to the later milieus and individuals to whom this study is devoted.

Before Yuzhin’s toponymic enshrinement, Bolshoi Palashyovsky owed its name to the Church of the Nativity in the Broadwords (*Khram Rozhdestva Khristova v Palashakh*, demolished in 1936), whose christening was linked to its 16th century congregation of master weaponsmiths. A 1573 reference to the church spoke of it as “at the Old Executioners” (*v Starykh Palachakh*), an association likely derived from the judicial duels and public torture of criminals that supposedly once saturated its grounds.¹¹⁴ As a scene of physically and mentally intense experiences, a religious gathering-place of weapons-forgers, and as the official residence and memorial street of an artist whose life was emblematic of the intersection of esotericism and politics in 20th century Russian culture, the Yuzhinsky Alleyway’s historical and symbolic associations render it only fitting that it is here that the occultist author, pioneer of “grotesque metaphysical realism”, and mentor of radical ideologies like Alexander Dugin’s, Yuri Mamleev (1931-2015), lived and established the “Yuzhinsky Circle.”

If Yuzhin represented the generation of occult-entangled intellectuals who attempted to partially integrate into the Soviet establishment before the repression and monopolization of occultism by the Soviet state in the context of the Stalin revolution¹¹⁵, then Mamleev was of the generation of underground occultists who, amidst the “Khrushchev Thaw”, were able to transform their clandestine dissidence into semi-formalized “salons”, and to take

¹⁰⁹ D.I. Chkhikvishvili, *Alexander Ivanovich Sumbatov-Yuzhin: Zhizn' i tvorchestvo* (Tbilisi: Tbilisi University/Moscow University, 1982).

¹¹⁰ Pashkina, “*Alexander Sumbatov-Yuzhin*”.

¹¹¹ Leach and Borovsky, *A History of Russian Theatre*, 231.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 232.

¹¹³ Nikolai A. Gorchakov, *The Theater in Soviet Russia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 112.

¹¹⁴ P.N. Miller and P.V. Sytin, *Proiskhozhdenie nazvaniy ulits, pereulkov, ploshchadey Moskvy* (Moscow: Moskovskiy Rabochiy, 1938), 96; M.Iu. Romanov, *Moskovskaia Bronnaia sloboda v XVII veke. Istoriia i liudi* (Moscow: InformBiuro, 2010); M.I. Vostryshev, *Moskva: vse ulitsy, ploshchadi, bul'vary, pereulki* (Moscow: Algoritm/Eksmo, 2010).

¹¹⁵ See: Konstantin Burmistrov, “The History of Esotericism in Soviet Russia in the 1920s-1930s”; Andrei Znamenski, *Red Shambhala: Magic, Prophecy, and Geopolitics in the Heart of Asia*.

advantage of the fact that “in the second half of the 1950s and 1960s, Western esoteric works were not classified as politically subversive and were still freely available at the Lenin Library.”¹¹⁶ In the 1950’s, a new generation of Soviet youth rediscovered esoteric authors and ideas, and employed such to develop worldviews and counter-cultural milieus characterized by an experimentation with heterodox ideas largely tied together by an opposition to the “rationalistic religion” of the Khrushchevite USSR, and by an interest in consciousness.¹¹⁷ Overall, the proliferation of esoteric circles in the underground, the pervasiveness of occult tropes in Soviet literature¹¹⁸, combined with the increasing institutionalization of parapsychology in the Soviet scientific and intelligence establishments¹¹⁹ was extensive enough that several scholars have suggested the application of Christopher Partridge’s concept of “occulture” to the USSR of the 1960’s-’80’s.¹²⁰

While some of the adepts of “Soviet-Russian Occulture” might have established contact with survivors of earlier Russian esoteric currents, most independently formed new, semi-organized literature circles centered around one or a few figures.¹²¹ The latter, greater part of the Soviet occult underground, in which Mamleev and, in turn, Dugin would emerge, has been characterized by Pavel Nosachev as distinguished by three essential hallmarks: (1) a “left-hand path” approach aiming to aggressively subvert and rebel against prevailing reality, authority, and norms; (2) an interest in “esoteric” and “mystical” approaches to existing religious traditions, including the Russian Orthodox Church, and (3) a predisposition towards

¹¹⁶ Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 564, 566.

¹¹⁷ Sergey Elagin, “Sovetskii ezoterizm: kruzhok Iuzhinskogo pereulka i drugie gruppy” in S.A. Panin, *Izuchenie ezoterizma v Rossii. Aktual’nye problemy* (Moscow: Editus, 2017), 125; Birgit Menzel, “The Occult Underground of Late Soviet Russia”, *Aries* 13 (2013), 270.

¹¹⁸ See: Menzel et al. (ed.), *The New Age of Russia: Occult and Esoteric Dimensions* (Munich/Berlin: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2012); Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

¹¹⁹ See: Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York: Bantam, 1970). In 2000 and 2004, the US Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency declassified portions of internal reports on Soviet parapsychology under the titles “Parapsychology in the USSR” and “Soviet and Czechoslovakian Parapsychology Research.”

¹²⁰ Elagin, “Sovetskii ezoterizm”, 125; Menzel, “The Occult Underground”, 273. Partridge writes: “Occulture, as a sociological term, refers to the environment within which, and the social processes by which particular meanings relating, typically, to spirituality, esoteric, paranormal and conspiratorial ideas emerge, are disseminated, and become influential in societies and in the lives of individuals...popular (oc)culture provides a space within which there is an openness to the possibility of metaphysical interpretations.” In Partridge’s specific conceptualization, “occulture” connotes the “popularization of the esoteric”, which has shaped the transmission and subjectification of Western esoteric ideas in the post-Christian West.” See: Partridge, “Occulture is Ordinary”, in Aspren and Granholm, *Contemporary Esotericism* (2013): 11, 116. As will be shown in our reconstruction of the Yuzhinsky Circle’s esoteric grammarology, it is precisely a “West to East” line of transmission that marks the esoteric sources of the circle. Further research into contacts, lines of transmission, and sociological similarities between the contemporary New Age and “occultural” currents in the West and Soviet “occulture” remains promising, but is beyond the scope of a study of Dugin’s esoteric sources.

¹²¹ Mamleev himself insisted that “no organizations whatsoever” emerged out of the Soviet occult underground, but instead that “spiritual aid” was derived from “private friendship” and “private relations” connected only by informal circles - Iurii Mamleev, “Okkul’tizm v Sovetskoi Rossii”, in A. Asejev (ed.), *Okkul’tizm i ioga* 63 (Asuncion, 1976), 35.

radical syncretism.¹²² In the Moscow underground, the “left-hand pathers” were emphatically bohemian, rebellious, and came to be popularly referred to as “schizoid,” which, on the official level, was the name of the diagnosis which Soviet psychiatrists often assigned to such dissidents and, on the emic, underground level, became the “brand-name” by which Mamleev’s Yuzhinsky Circle described its blend of experiments in altered states of consciousness and radical metaphysics.

Another crucial delineating characteristic of the “schizoid” milieu *à la Yuzhinsky* was the widespread practice of so-called “shock tactics” to induce altered perceptions of consciousness as a gateway to accessing metaphysical and esoteric doctrines. In practice, the “shocking” of seekers was not limited to Mamleev’s own literary jolts, but entailed a broad arsenal of “rituals” ranging from still unidentified but widely referenced practices of “sexual mysticism”, the ritual consumption of extraordinary portions of alcohol, the assignment of unusual, extreme tasks to aspiring members, the staging of theatrical scenes of craze, the establishment of alter egos, and a host of other endeavors aimed at inducing *marazm*, or a kind of “mad gnosis.”¹²³ *Bezumie*, or “madness”, is frequently used to describe the desired mental state of the Yuzhinsky schizoid underground’s adepts, seen as the “only realm which was out of reach of the eye of the state censors - the realm of purely mental experience.”¹²⁴ In a memorial essay on Mamleev’s “successor”, Evgeniy Golovin, Dugin claims, in typically “shocking” terms, that Golovin called this milieu a caste of “perverted angels”, or “inflamed metaphysical souls of the Yuzhinsky schizoid underground with a strung chord of high spirit...with the ruthless abysses of criminal transcendental suspicions.”¹²⁵ The outspoken “social deviance” of the Yuzhinsky Circle and its contemporaries, their syncretistic orientation, their informal institutionalization and reception of “seekers”, all against the backdrop of official state atheism, also render the founding context of the Yuzhinsky Circle highly consonant with Colin Campbell’s notion of the “cultic milieu.”¹²⁶

Yuri Mamleev and ‘Metaphysical Realism’

It is with these contextual and ideological attributes that the Yuzhinsky Circle was thus founded circa 1958 by Yuri Mamleev, the son of a professor of psychiatry, a graduate of the Moscow Institute of Forestry, and a night-school mathematics teacher who debuted as an author “by reading his novels to a narrow group of admirers who met at the Lenin Library

¹²² P.N. Nosachev, “*Prolegomeny k izucheniiu sovetskogo esotericheskogo podpol’ia 60-80-kh gg. XX v.*”, *Vestnik PSTGU I: Bogoslovie, Filosofia* 4:42 (2012), 59-60.

¹²³ The term *marazm* is attributed to Rovner in Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 152; the Yuzhinsky Circle’s “shock tactics” are referenced in Elagin, “*Sovetskii ezoterizm*”, 126.

¹²⁴ Natalia Tamruchi, “*Bezumie kak oblast’ svobody*”, *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 100 (2009).

¹²⁵ Aleksandr Dugin, “*Auf, o Seele! (Esse o Evgenii Golovine)*”, in E.E. Golovina (ed.), *Gde net paralelley i net poliusev. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina* (Moscow: Iazyki Slavianskoi Kultury, 2015): 76.

¹²⁶ See Colin Campbell, “The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization”, in Jeffrey Kaplan and Helene Loow, *The Cultic Milieu: Oppositional Subcultures in an Age of Globalization* (New York: AltaMira/Rowman & Littlefield, 2002): 12-25.

smoking room and other locations, including Mamleev's tiny one-bedroom flat on Iuzhinskii Pereulok, into which up to fifty people would crowd."¹²⁷ Mamleev's prominent artistic contemporary, Alexander Glezer (1934-2016), testified that "in non-conformist Moscow it was hard to find a person unfamiliar with Yuri Mamleev's works", which were spread across *samizdat* channels and underground reading circles.¹²⁸

Mamleev's authorship was characterized by a profound interest in deconstructing the human psyche, combined with a deep disdain for Soviet society, the antidote to which, as portrayed in raw, often highly sensual form in Mamleev's novels, was the inducing of "extreme experiences" that could "grant access to a metaphysical reality", "transcend the mediocrity of everyday life", and "drive human beings to their internal state of logic, revealing the fundamental absurdity of the human condition."¹²⁹ Clover's synopsis of Mamleev's literary-philosophical *modus operandi* paints the following picture:

Mamleev was an enthusiast of the occult, and specialized in taking the Soviet reality of official spangled mythology and pinpointing the black holes and dark matter at the edge of the bright lights of the socialist future. Mamleev's characters were zombies, mass murderers, demented primitives who lived outside the city centres, in a countryside still stricken by shortages and alcoholism - dark-thinking, isolated provincials who inhabited a metaphysical universe of their own making. Normal Soviet life was transformed into a dark fantasy world, with just enough of the everyday detritus for the reader to find a connection...The everyday realism was a carefully served ingredient of the fantasy and occult. Mamleev's literary creations were all characterized by their neurotic rejection of the physical reality surrounding them, the conviction that the outer world either simply did not exist or must be subordinated to the inner one.¹³⁰

The genre of Mamleev's assaults on "Soviet despair" and his appeal to an alternative dimension of reality acquired the appellation of "metaphysical realism." Mamleev would become a cult author, later earning the epithets of "the Soviet Kafka", "the Russian William Burroughs", and even be compared to Dostoyevsky.¹³¹ Mamleev would be described by the major Russian occultist and one-time Yuzhinsky Circle member, Arkady Rovner, as "our Virgil, leading the way through the Soviet hell."¹³² However, just as or even more curious

¹²⁷ 1958 is the date given in Mamleev's official Russian state media biography: "*Biografiia Iurii Mamleeva*", *RIA Novosti* (25/10/2015) [<https://ria.ru/spravka/20151025/1308005157.html>]; Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 565.

¹²⁸ Inna Tigounstova, "A New Russian Rafflesia from Baudelaire's Garden: Yuri Mamleev's Literary Origins and the Poetics of the Ugly", *Ulbandus Review* 8 (2004), 49.

¹²⁹ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 566.

¹³⁰ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 151-152.

¹³¹ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 566; Phoebe Taplin, "Meet Yuri Mamleev: Insanity, murder, and sexual depravity on the quest for divine truth", *Russia Beyond the Headlines* (14/4/2014) [https://www.rbth.com/lit/raturre/2014/04/14/meet_yuri_mamleev_insanity_murder_and_sexual_depravity_on_the_quest_for_35879.html]; Nikolai Klimontovich, "*Izdan 'Golyi zavtrak' William'a Burroughs'a*", *Kommersant* 141 (30/7/1994) [<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/85316>].

¹³² Arkadii Rovner, *Vspominaia sebja: Kniga o druz'yakh i sputnikakh zhizni* (Penza: Izdatel'stvo Zolotoe Sechenie, 2010), 84. Quoted in Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 152.

than Mamleev's literary profile were the esoteric sources of his genre, milieu, and philosophy. The "way through the Soviet hell" by which Mamleev and his "metaphysical realism" shaped the nascent Yuzhinsky Circle exhibited several key esoteric doctrinal references which would figure crucially in Mamleev's corpus, the Yuzhinsky Circle's development and, ultimately, Dugin's intellectual trajectory.

First of all, it can be established that Mamleev had a long-standing interest in "Eastern metaphysics", particularly Hindu and Buddhist doctrines, as well as Western esoteric and New Age interpretations of such, all of which were prominent throughout the Soviet occult underground. Mamleev's autobiographical novel, *The Moscow Gambit*, reflects back on Yuzhinsky-era discussions of the realization of the self through the Hindu notion of Atman, traversing the "tried Hindu path of knowledge and meditation", the pursuance of Hinduism and "other Eastern metaphysical currents" into "spiritual practice", "spiritual yoga", and mentions discussions of Zen Buddhism.¹³³ Furthermore, when Mamleev would emigrate around 1973/1974, first to New York and then in 1983 to Paris, he promptly "became one of the mediators between the Eastern and Western occulture by contributing to and helping smuggle the journal *Okkul'tizm i ioga* ["Occultism and Yoga"] into Russia."¹³⁴ *Okkul'tizm i ioga* itself was founded in 1933 by Alexander Aseev (1902-1993), a correspondent of the major Russian occultist and artist Nicholas Roerich, and was published under the close supervision of Roerich's wife, Helena Roerich (1879-1955).¹³⁵ The Roerichs, personally and ideologically tied to Theosophy and Anthroposophy, synthesized an "Indo-Slavic esotericism" which saw Russia as the center and spiritual leader of the world and the cradle of the rebirth of Eastern wisdom.¹³⁶ Whether Mamleev's knowledge of "Eastern metaphysics" in the 1950's-'60's was derived more from such Western esoteric and occultist sources than from actual primary Hindu and Buddhist texts is an unresolved question. However, Mamleev's established familiarity and even reputed authority on such topics can be seen in his appointment as a lecturer at the Parisian Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales in the 1980's and his subsequent position as a lecturer on Indian philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of Moscow State University from 1994-1999. The title of what is frequently treated as Mamleev's seminal philosophical work, *The Fate of Being: Beyond Hinduism and Buddhism*, not only explicitly identifies its origins as the "spiritual situation of the '60's-70's in the unofficial culture in the USSR," but also establishes the "East" as the conclusive totality of the metaphysical questions posed in Mamleev's earliest literature.¹³⁷

¹³³ Iurii Mamleev, *Moskovskii gambit* (Moscow: Zebra-E, 2008).

¹³⁴ Menzel, "Occult and Esoteric Movements in Russia from the 1960s to the 1980s" in Birgit Menzel, Michael Hagemeyer, and Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (eds.), *The New Age of Russia: Occult and Esoteric Dimensions*, 163.

¹³⁵ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 567.

¹³⁶ Osterrieder, "From Synarchy to Shambhala"; Nemanja Radulović, "Slavia Esoterica between East and West", 85-89; Znamenski, *Red Shambhala*.

¹³⁷ Iurii Mamleev, *Sud'ba bytiia. Za predelami induizma i buddizma* (Moscow: Enneagon, 2006).

Mamleev was deeply interested in “reconciling”, or pointing to the metaphysical affinity of Russian Orthodox Christianity and Hinduism, was avid to call on Russia to turn to the “East” and, in more practical terms, to establish a close alliance with India.¹³⁸ “Mamleev insists, in his last public statements, that the source of his ‘metaphysical realism’ is the encounter between two traditions, Russia and the East.”¹³⁹ Near the end of his life, this would manifest itself in Mamleev’s becoming a member of the executive committee of the Society for Russian-Indian Friendship. This appeal to a metaphysical “East”, in connection with a concern for Russia’s spiritual identity, constituted one of the major vectors of Mamleev’s Yuzhinsky Circle, the results of which will be explored further and ultimately seen in full force in Dugin’s philosophy later.

The second key theme of the Yuzhinsky Circle in Mamleev’s upbringing of it was a “Gnostic perception of physicality as evil and a very strong experience of the ‘infernal’ and illusory quality of the world.”¹⁴⁰ Mamleev admitted that his “philosophy was born out of a negative assessment of the world” and posited that his works describe “a hell on earth [or ‘earthly hell’], spiritual calamities, and hidden, unordinary sides of the human soul.”¹⁴¹ The characters of Mamleev’s novels, the subjects of his philosophy embodied in the “schizoid” realm, are dysfunctional seekers of the Transcendent who “find themselves in extreme, exceptional situations (on the border or in the ‘gap’ between Being and Non-Super-Being (*Ne-Sverkh-Bytie*); they are obsessed with a striving towards the mysterious, the ineffable, the transcendent, they mull over Eternity and Infinity, Death and Immortality, they seek the ‘road to the Abyss...’”¹⁴² In Mamleev’s vision, humans are beings imprisoned in a fundamentally negative, disrupted reality; but they harbor within themselves “depths” or “kingdoms” which are related to the “Divine world”, and are capable of overcoming the “threatening reality” by recovering their true Self and supreme knowledge through the excruciating but cathartic subversion of the straits on the “human metaphysical situation.”¹⁴³ The “black night of the spirit” is thus a “necessary stage of ‘initiation’ into the world, into God, and into catharsis.”¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Mamleev, *Moskovskii gambit*, 441.

¹³⁹ Leonid Heller, “Away from the Globe. Occultism, Esotericism and Literature in Russia during the 1960s-1980s”, in Birgit Menzel, Michael Hagemester, and Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (eds.), *The New Age of Russia: Occult and Esoteric Dimensions*, 206.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 207.

¹⁴¹ Quoted in Roza Semykina, “*Kto est’ Ia? Metafizicheskaiia antropologiia Iuriiia Mamleeva*”, *Oktiabr’ 3* (2007).

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

This “gnostic spirituality”¹⁴⁵ can also be seen in Mamleev’s activities and publications. In the late 1970’s, Mamleev contributed to and disseminated the journal *Gnozis/Gnosis*, which called itself: “a religious, philosophical, and literary journal in English and Russian which concentrates on Russian spiritual tradition and on world religious and mystical experience”¹⁴⁶ *Gnozis* was published out of New York, where Mamleev lived from 1974-1983, and smuggled into the Soviet Union, some of which would later be published openly in Russian in 1994 as the *Anthology of Gnosis*.¹⁴⁷ In an article in the first 1978 issue of *Gnosis* entitled “The Experience of Restoration”, which lays out Mamleev’s vision of the Soviet occult underground, Mamleev insisted on the fundamentally negative construct of the world, and affirmed the fundamental task of the “spiritual elite of Russia” to be “the return to the source”, the “path to God in one’s own soul”, and the “Absolute” by confronting the “experience of Death” through “bathing in Oblivion.” Mamleev thus hoped to “awaken a religious and even metaphysical self-consciousness among the few.”¹⁴⁸ The reality and path confronting the “seekers of the transcendent”, Mamleev writes, is plagued with archontic beings or forces likened, in an inversion of Alexander Blok’s poem “Nightingale Garden”, to “strange nightingales” or “sinister birds.”¹⁴⁹ This gnostic view of the human condition and metaphysics, and the accompanying striving for spiritual palingenesis, pervade Mamleev’s works. These tropes were laid at the heart of the Yuzhinsky Circle’s ideological matrix, more explicit evidence of which will emerge in the materials of the circle’s later members, including Dugin’s early writings.

The third key element of Mamleev’s Yuzhinsky Circle which would be decisively influential in the ideologies produced therein was a fixation on the civilizational and spiritual fate of Russia. Unlike other milieus who explored consciousness, metaphysics, and the esoteric from the New Ageist apperception of “humanity” or “global consciousness”, Mamleev was interested first and foremost, primarily and essentially, in Russian identity, Russia’s destiny, and the “Russian person” or, as he often put it, the “Russian ‘I.’” As seen above, Mamleev’s perception of the historical role of the Soviet occult underground was that of the “spiritual elite of Russia”, and the almanach *Occultism and Yoga* to which he contributed was itself officially dedicated to “Russia and Slavdom”, explicitly aimed itself towards “the spirit of the Russian people”, and claimed its roots in the “Eastern-Russian

¹⁴⁵ April DeConick defines gnostic spirituality as a “transgressive” spirituality distinguished from “servant” and “ecstatic” spiritualities by five key “ideal characteristics”: (1) “gnosis, or direct experiential knowledge of a transcendent god, is possible”; (2) carefully choreographed rituals designed to induce gnosis; (3) the belief that the human spirit is an extension of the transcendent God”; and (4) transgressive resistance to conventional religious philosophies; and (5) syncretism and/or eclectic seekership.” April DeConick, *The Gnostic New Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 11-12.

¹⁴⁶ *Gnozis/Gnosis* 1 (1978).

¹⁴⁷ A. Rovner, V. Andreeva, Iu. Richie, S. Sartarelli (eds.), *Antologiiia gnozisa. Tom I* (Saint Petersburg: Meduza, 1994).

¹⁴⁸ Iurii Mamleev, “Opyt vosstanovleniia”, *Gnozis/Gnosis* 1 (1978), 48-51.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

esotericism” of Nicholas Roerich.¹⁵⁰ Mamleev’s 1976 contribution, entitled “Occultism in Soviet Russia”, declared a “spiritual renaissance in Russia embracing nearly all spheres: art, religion, occultism, etc.”¹⁵¹ Despite the reign of the Kali Yuga and official Soviet dogmatic materialism, Mamleev was convinced that a “Russian tradition” was being reconstructed through occult explorations, and heralded: “there exist other currents, which are (envisioned, of course, as the chosen ones) linked to altogether profound and little-accessible doctrines, or doctrines still unknown in written form, i.e., the most secret in both in East and West. The situation of these people is no longer determined by any social conditions.”¹⁵² Mamleev likely had himself and his own group in mind in the latter expression, and both Mamleev’s writings and sources were centrally motivated by this synthesis of Russian identity and occult doctrines by an intellectual elite. The ultimate culmination of Mamleev’s meditations on Russian identity would be his “patriotic teaching of eternal Russia”, outlined in a book published just a year before his death, *Eternal Russia*, which posited that Russia is the spiritual center of the world.¹⁵³ In his autobiographical novel, *The Moscow Gambit*, Mamleev related the esoteric explorations of the Yuzhinsky Circle to the imperative of “Russian man”, recounting one particular monologue: “Russian man cannot live without a great faith...Atheism is antithetical to the Russian soul...Russian man has to believe in something, and he needs a living faith.”¹⁵⁴ Following this affirmation, the circle supposedly drank “for Russia, for Russian literature, and for eternal life.”¹⁵⁵ Rather tellingly, Mamleev’s memoir of the Yuzhinsky Circle subsequently concludes with the imperative: “And remember, if what you call Russia disappears from the face of the earth, then this world will become a wasteland.”¹⁵⁶

The distinctly esoteric and occult sources of these themes of Mamleev’s milieu were revealed by Mamleev in his above-cited 1976 “Occultism in Soviet Russia”, in which Mamleev claimed that the “renaissance” of the 1950’s was fueled, rather than by organizations, by rediscovered books. Mamleev cited 25 such sources of the occult underground - in Russian, English, and German - that he encountered in the 1950’s. Among them figure five by the founder of Anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), two by the founder of Theosophy, the Russian-born Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891)¹⁵⁷, four by

¹⁵⁰ Asejev (ed.), *Okkul'tizm i ioga* 63 (Asuncion, 1976).

¹⁵¹ Mamleev, “*Okkul'tizm v Sovetskoi Rossii*”, 46.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵³ Iurii Mamleev, *Rossiia vechnaiia* (Moscow: Biblioteka Vsemirnoi Literatury, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ Mamleev, *Moskovskii gambit*, 457.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 458.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 464.

¹⁵⁷ See: Maria Carlson, *No Religion Higher than Truth: A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

the major French occultist Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1865-1916), two by the “founding father of occultism”, Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse-Louis Constant, 1810-1875), as well as works by the “dissident Theosophist” Édouard Schuré (1841-1929), the occultist “philosopher of mysticism” Du Prel (Karl Freiherr von Prel, 1839-1899), George Ivanovich Gurdjieff (1866-1949), Piotr Ouspensky (1878-1947), Carl Jung (1875-1961), and others.¹⁵⁸ The impression of this range of esoteric and occult authors on Mamleev is obviously gleaned from his works even later in his intellectual odyssey: in his final work, *Eternal Russia*, Mamleev emphatically cited Steiner as a visionary of Russia’s unique spiritual mission.¹⁵⁹

Regardless of the continuities, discontinuities, or critiques which may have developed over the course of Mamleev’s ideological trajectory and that of the circle’s later members, it is clear that the origins of the Yuzhinsky Circle were not merely “literary”, “consciousness-interested”, or generically “metaphysical”, but laid in the engagement of esoteric and occult works (re-)discovered in the Soviet underground of the mid-20th century. This is especially the case in terms of Mamleev and the circle’s discourses on Russian identity: many of the above occult authors known to Mamleev, particularly Roerich and Steiner, assigned a special spiritual significance to Russia and Slavdom in their narratives of human evolution and heralding of a new age, forming part of a larger trend which the Serbian scholar Nemanja Radulović has deemed “Slavic esotericism”, or the synthesis of Western esoteric and occult ideas, particularly “Eastern-oriented” tropes, with Romantic and völkisch discourses on Slavic identity.¹⁶⁰

The above-elaborated contexts, sources, doctrines, and themes that characterized Mamleev’s philosophical arsenal and the readings of the Yuzhinsky Circle he founded are crucial to understanding their later adept, Alexander Dugin, who would join the group at the age of 19 in 1980. However, the span of 22 years that separates Mamleev’s “initiation” of the Yuzhinsky Circle and Dugin’s entry saw further crucial ideological developments that would be extremely influential in shaping the fate of the circle and Dugin’s early ideology derived therefrom. These developments are firstly encapsulated in the arrival onto the scene of the figure and doctrines of Evgeniy Golovin, and have their origins in the years 1962-1963.

Evgeniy Golovin and *The Morning of the Magicians*

One night in 1962, Mamleev was in the middle of reading some lines of his poetry to a Yuzhinsky gathering, when he was interrupted by an unfamiliar voice which interjected: “This is really not bad, really, really not bad!” Mamleev recalls being shocked by the voice’s “intonation of a great connoisseur”, who barged in and began reading his own poetry before Mamleev and the other attendees.¹⁶¹ This voice was that of Evgeniy Golovin, who thereby

¹⁵⁸ Mamleev, “*Okkul'tizm v Sovetskoi Rossii*”, 33-35.

¹⁵⁹ Mamleev, *Rossiia Vechnaiia* (Moscow: Biblioteka Vsemirnoi Literatury, 2014), footnote 1.

¹⁶⁰ See: Nemanja Radulović, “*Slavia Esoterica* between East and West”, *Ricerche slavistiche* 13:59 (2015): 73-102.

¹⁶¹ Iurii Mamleev, “*Zhazhda inogo berega*”, in Golovina (ed.), *Gde net paralelley i net poliisov. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina*, 181.

not only joined Mamleev's Yuzhinsky Circle, but soon became responsible for the group's most formative esoteric discoveries, initiations, and would ultimately take over its leadership. Golovin would become so prominent as the ideologue and "guru" of the Yuzhinsky Circle from its early years on that Sedgwick's pioneering study called the Yuzhinsky Circle "Golovin's Circle."¹⁶²

Evgeniy Golovin was, like Mamleev and many of the pioneers of the Soviet occult underground, a figure whose thought and activities were markedly eclectic, or perhaps more precisely "syncretic." Golovin's "marazmic" ideas and practices were aesthetically aggressive, unified by a burning ambition to deconstruct the human psyche and to condition radical transmutations of consciousness, and translated into a worldview that was profoundly hostile to the surrounding environment of modernity, which Golovin considered a malicious perversion of the human condition and a disenchantment of the world.¹⁶³ Like Mamleev, Golovin was also an author of poetry and literature, and nearly all of his works were published only after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the early 2000's. In a biographical interview with Dugin from 1994, Golovin is grandiosely introduced as "a magus, a poet, a brilliant erudite, the founder of a new current in the Hermetic science, the first to have opened up the horizons of Traditionalism in Russia in the second half of the 20th century, a paladin of the Great North, and the admiral of an invisible fleet of pirates of the philosophical sea."¹⁶⁴

Comparatively less is known of Golovin's biography than that of Mamleev and the later Yuzhinsky Circle's members. By the 1960's, Golovin, educated as a philologist, was earning his living as a translator and literary critic for various thick-journals (*tolstye zhurnaly*), such as the famous *Innostrannaia literatura* ("Foreign Literature").¹⁶⁵ His first ideological inspiration being Nietzsche, from whom he says he developed a "certain distaste for Western civilization", Golovin claims that he had no mentors, and that although he had read the French occultists Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (1842-1909) and Papus in his youth, he was "purely skeptical of esotericism and occultism", preferring instead "passionate mystical poetry and literature."¹⁶⁶ The latter, it turns out, primarily meant the Symbolist works of Gérard de Nerval (Labrunie, 1808-1855), Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-1867), Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), Comte de Lautréamont (Isidore Lucien Ducasse, 1846-1870), Stéphane (Étienne) Mallarmé (1842-1898), and Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), from the

¹⁶² Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 221-223.

¹⁶³ See: Evgeniy Golovin, *Priblizhenie k Snezhnoi Koroleve* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 2003); Ibidem, *Veselaia Nauka: protokoly soveshchaniia* (Moscow: Enneagon, 2006).

¹⁶⁴ Aleksandr Dugin and Evgeniy Golovin, "V poiskakh vechnogo norda: Beseda glavnogo redaktora 'Elementov' Aleksandra Dugina s traditionalistom, poetom, i literaturovedom Evgeniem Golovinyim", *Elementy* 5(1994). [<http://arctogaia.com/public/golovin/golov-1.htm>] / [<http://golovinfond.ru/content/intervyu-elamentam>].

¹⁶⁵ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 568; Nosachev, "Alkhimicheskii mir Evgeniia Golovina", 77; "Voploshchenie", *Golovinfond.ru* [<http://golovinfond.ru/content/voploshchenie>].

¹⁶⁶ Dugin and Golovin, "V poiskakh vechnogo norda";

latter of whom in particular Golovin says he developed an interest in alchemy.¹⁶⁷ This “skepticism towards esotericism and occultism” changed drastically, however, following two immensely impactful discoveries by Golovin dated to between 1962 and 1964.

Around 1962/1963, Golovin reportedly discovered the founding work of the genre of “fantastic realism” by Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier from 1960, *Le Matin des magiciens*.¹⁶⁸ Marlene Laruelle has traced *Le Matin des magiciens*’ transmission into the Soviet Union back to two excerpts published in the journal *Nauka i religii* (“Science and Religion”) in 1966 under the title “*Kakomu bogu poklonialsia Gitler?*” (“What God did Hitler Worship?”).¹⁶⁹ However, “neither Mamleev or Golovin would need to wait for a Russian translation in order to get access to this text, as both could read French and English.”¹⁷⁰ What is more, it is also possible that Golovin’s professional occupation with foreign, especially French literature, granted him somewhat greater ease in obtaining texts from abroad.

The Morning of the Magicians which Golovin brought to the Yuzhinsky Circle advertises itself enigmatically:

This book is not a romance, although its intention may well be romantic. It is not science fiction, although it cites myths on which that literary form has fed. Nor is it a collection of bizarre facts, though the Angel of the Bizarre might well find himself at home in it. It is not a scientific contribution, a vehicle for an exotic teaching, a testament, a document, a fable. It is simply an account - at times figurative, at times factual - of a first excursion into some as yet scarcely explored realms of consciousness. In this book as in the diaries of Renaissance navigators, legend and fact, conjecture and accurate observation intermingle.¹⁷¹

More specifically, Pauwels and Bergier christened the book’s genre and its “point of view” as “fantastic realism”, inspired by the affirmation that “a powerful imagination working on reality will discover that the frontier between the marvelous and the actual - between the visible and the invisible Universe, if you wish - is a very fine one.”¹⁷² Pauwels, who narrates the adventurous “account” from the first-person and claims that he has been initiated by Gurdjieff, professes a “recourse to several different levels of knowledge: esoteric tradition; avant-garde mathematics; [and] unusual trends in modern literature” in “carrying out a survey on different levels (those of the spirit of magic, of pure intelligence, and poetic intuition), establishing a connection between these three, verifying by comparison the truths belonging to each, and finally putting forward a hypothesis in which these truths will be integrated.”¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.; Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 569.

¹⁶⁸ Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 569; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 221; Ibidem, *Naprekor sovremennomu miru*, 368.

¹⁶⁹ Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 571.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, xxx.

¹⁷² Ibid., xxvi, xxviii-xxix.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 375.

The alternating deconstruction and revelation of “reality” through the exposition of “different levels of knowledge” whose intermingling composes the “fantastic realism” of *Le Matin des magiciens* is expressed in an extremely complex, labyrinthine, and at times seemingly incoherent narrative which aims to convince the reader that modern “progress” is essentially a simulacrum, behind which lurks an “open conspiracy” of “secret societies” which have stealthily orchestrated the course of world history in a multifaceted, planetary conspiracy over human consciousness. In *The Morning of the Magicians*, all the geopolitical machinations of the 20th century, from Nazi operations to the Cold War between the US and USSR, the mysterious history of “occult revelations” from the Rosicrucians to “Nazi occultists” to contemporary parapsychologists, myths of lost and found civilizations from Atlantis to extraterrestrial contact, and a combination of scientific expositions ranging from genetic biology to quantum mechanics, all serve to illustrate the “hypothesis” that a supra-human elite must be “awakened” to rediscover their true potential amidst an immanent evolution in human consciousness.¹⁷⁴ Thus, *The Morning of the Magicians* aims to elaborate both the “esoteric” and “scientific” truths of the anticipatory “myth” of the “New Man”, foreshadowed by the secret abilities and knowledge of the “Mutants” living among mankind in secret, from mathematicians to occultists.¹⁷⁵ In the end, the authors herald themselves as “indeed a part of the strange armies, transparent cohorts, and phantom hordes, heralded by ultrasonic trumpets, which are beginning to descend upon our civilization”¹⁷⁶, thus crowning their grandiose survey with the affirmation of a spiritual elite. In a nutshell, *Le Matin des magiciens* offered a highly elaborate, exhilarating compendium of all the themes which interested Mamleev and Golovin, packaged in a conspirological tale saturated with a profound sense of suspicion and hostility towards surrounding modernity. Containing several hundred references to an immense host of esoteric and occult thinkers, Golovin’s attention was seized by two in particular, which would significantly transform the Yuzhinsky Circle into the matrix into which Dugin would be immersed.

The first major source which Golovin reportedly discovered in *Le Matin des magiciens* was none other than the founding philosopher of Traditionalism, René Guénon. Neither the novel itself nor Pauwels and Bergier could be called Traditionalist, but Mark Sedgwick has pointed out that Pauwels “was responsible for spreading simplified Traditionalism throughout Latin Europe”, as his journal *Planète*, launched the year after *Le Matin des magiciens* in 1961, achieved a wide circulation of as many as 100,000 copies within its first few months, featuring Guénon as the centerpiece of its second issue.¹⁷⁷ *Planète*’s success “directly coincided with a significant increase in the sales of Guénon’s

¹⁷⁴ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, 401.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 400.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 402.

¹⁷⁷ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 208.

works.”¹⁷⁸ Indeed, *Le Matin des magiciens* mentions Guénon explicitly in six different places, in all of which contexts it insinuates that Guénon’s vision not only forbode the greatest “occult conspiracies” of the 20th century - such as Nazism - but in general professed a “magical interpretation of the world” that decisively influenced various secret societies, geopolitical schemes, and an “awakened state of consciousness” among a number of major 20th century figures.¹⁷⁹ Pauwels and Bergier’s novel outrightly calls Guénon the “chief of the antiproggressists”¹⁸⁰, an advertisement which could not have been more attractive to the Yuzhinsky Circle’s members, who “despaired” and radically rejected official Soviet discourse’s ubiquitously resounding proclamation of Soviet socialism being on the frontline of “progress.” In another place, the book says that Guénon “foresaw” and “realized” the “dangers lurking behind theosophy and the neopagan Initiatory groups that were more or less connected with Mme. Blavatsky and her sect”¹⁸¹, also alleged to have contributed to Nazism, therefore ascribing the godfather of Traditionalism a kind of prophetic aura superseding other esotericists and occultists. Most dramatically, however, *Le Matin des magiciens* proclaims that “Hitlerism, in a sense, was ‘Guénonism’ plus tanks.”¹⁸²

These references to Guénon as an esoteric “chief” amidst a global conspiracy of consciousness obviously peaked Mamleev and Golovin’s interests. Around 1963-1964, Golovin discovered Guénon’s seminal 1927 work, *La crise du monde moderne*, in the Lenin Library.¹⁸³ While for Golovin this find was “completely accidental” and “shocking”, in hindsight it is not altogether surprising that Guénon had found his way onto Soviet shelves amidst the relaxation of censorship and flourishing of the occult underground. Indeed, it is known that by 1978, under what still remain mysterious circumstances, Moscow’s Lenin Library had accumulated as many as 17 books by Guénon, six by Evola, 14 by Burckhardt, 12 by Schuon, and 38 by Coomaraswamy.¹⁸⁴

In Guénon, Golovin found an appealing wholesale and elaborate metaphysical rejection of modernity and a call for a besieged spiritual elite to be initiated into the cosmic mission of Tradition. Guénon’s envisioning of a metaphysical East must have resonated with Mamleev, just as Golovin found in Guénon a window onto the “esoteric West.” Golovin thus claims to have finally discovered in Guénon a framework for “logically” comprehending

¹⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 208.

¹⁷⁹ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, 224, 332.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁸³ Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”; Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 569.

¹⁸⁴ Sedgwick, “Additional Notes to Chapter 12”, *Traditionalists* (21 July 2006) [<http://www.traditionalists.org/notes/ch12.htm>].

“esoteric literature.”¹⁸⁵ In Golovin’s words to Dugin: “I want to emphasize once again that my fascination with the system of esotericism began from Guénon and only from Guénon, whose texts I discovered for myself under no instructions from anyone whatsoever.” Over the course of the 1960’s-’70’s, Golovin amassed an “almost complete collection” of Guénon’s works thanks to contacts connected to France, one of whom we will introduce shortly, and was so impressed by Guénon’s 1945 *Le Règne de la Quantité et les Signes des Temps* that he “felt as if he had written it himself”, recounting: “it was as if Guénon’s texts had been dormant in the shadows of my soul.”¹⁸⁶

The discovery of Guénon led Golovin to seek out and translate a whole host of English, French, and German esoteric and occult sources, as well as a number of Eastern texts, ranging from medieval Arabic occult tracts to Vedanta philosophers to Japanese Zen Buddhism, but Golovin “quickly came to the conclusion that medieval European mystical literature baroquely and much more fully reflects the mystical meaning of being for us, Europeans, than any translations of Hindu or Chinese classics.” Inspired by Guénon’s idealization of the European Middle Ages and his portrayal of alchemy as a “traditional cosmological” science in both *The Crisis of the Modern World* and *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, Golovin strove to devour both medieval and early modern alchemical works and authors, such as Paracelsus (1493/4-1541), the 16th century *Splendor Solis*, Sendivogius’ (Michał Sędziwój, 1566-1636) 1604 *New Chemical Light*, the works of John and Arthur Dee (1527-1609, 1579-1651), Eiraneus Philalethes (George Starkey, 1628-1665), Leibniz (1646-1716), and the *Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* (1616), as well as, Golovin claims, “all the literature written on this topic [alchemy] in the 20th century.”¹⁸⁷ Golovin developed an especially profound attraction to Fulcanelli, whose popularization was also thanks to *Le Matin des magiciens*¹⁸⁸, familiarized himself with another French alchemist mentioned in the latter, Eugène Canseliet (1899-1982), and seems to have known Mircea Eliade’s 1956 *Forgerons et alchimistes*.¹⁸⁹ Much of Golovin’s theoretical interest and writings became devoted to a highly individual theorization of alchemy, whose “mystical” and “inner spiritual” interpretation remains one of the only initiatic traditions open to modern Europeans and Russians insofar as, in Golovin’s view, the contamination of modernity has ruined the possibility of practical, laboratorial alchemy and magic.¹⁹⁰ Strongly preferring Western esoteric traditions and alchemy, Golovin eventually acquired the title of “the Russian

¹⁸⁵ Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.; Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 569.

¹⁸⁷ Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”.

¹⁸⁸ Richard Caron, “Fulcanelli”, in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*: 389.

¹⁸⁹ Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”.

¹⁹⁰ See: Nosachev, “*Alkhimicheskii mir Evgeniia Golovina*”; Golovin, *Priblizhenie*, 106-127.

Hermetic Philosopher.”¹⁹¹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was Julius Evola’s 1931 *La tradizione ermetica* that brought Golovin to the radical “pagan” Italian Traditionalist, whom he also introduced to the circle.¹⁹²

Dugin thus claims that Golovin was the first in Russia to read Evola, and was: “the first person in Moscow and Russia who discovered the current of European Traditionalism, completely unknown up to that point in both official (as a matter of course) and underground circles interested in occultism and mysticism.”¹⁹³ Even more emphatically, Dugin credits Golovin with being “the creator of modern Traditionalism in Russia.”¹⁹⁴ Most importantly, Golovin learned of Guénon through the “lens” of *Le Matin des magiciens*, and Golovin enthusiastically made Traditionalism a key source of the Yuzhinsky Circle’s readings.

Thanks to Golovin, now Guénon, Evola, as well as many of the above authors who informed Golovin’s unique blend of Traditionalism and alchemy, were translated, read, discussed, and actively internalized in the Yuzhinsky Circle, thereafter proclaiming itself as, and gaining the reputation of being, “Traditionalist” - including Mamleev himself, who would later claim that Guénon’s “intellectual intuition” and Tradition composed the second major inspiration of his writings.¹⁹⁵ That a Traditionalist apperception was adopted towards other occult sources is evidenced by the fact that Golovin would follow Guénon in denouncing Gurdjieff, who was otherwise popular in the Soviet occult underground and the Yuzhinsky Circle.¹⁹⁶ Thus, while Mamleev’s reputation of launching an intellectual circle guided by “Eastern metaphysics”, antipathy towards modernity, and a striving to achieve spiritual palingenesis, might insinuate that Traditionalism in the Yuzhinsky Circle dates back to the beginning and its founding father, it is most likely that it was Golovin who was responsible for introducing Traditionalism to the Yuzhinsky Circle, to no small extent thanks to *The Morning of the Magicians*, with, as we shall see, all the implications contained therein.

The second major theme which Golovin derived from *The Morning of the Magicians*, which would have a lasting influence on the circle and Dugin, is evoked in the work’s famous proclamation that “Hitlerism, in a sense, was ‘Guénonism’ plus tanks.”¹⁹⁷ Besides fantastic realism, *Le Matin des magiciens* was a pivotal composition in another genre, that of “Nazi occultism.” “Nazi occultism” was a genre of literature, many of whose samples, like *Morning*

¹⁹¹ For example by the famous Russian musician and author Aleksandr F. Skliar, “*Korabli ne tonut, ili skazka dlinoiu v zhizn’*”, in Golovina, *Gde net paralellei i net poliusov. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina*, 189.

¹⁹² Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”.

¹⁹³ Dugin, “*Evgeniy Golovin: intellektual’naiia topika (tezisy)*”, in *Gde net paralellei i net poliusov. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina*, 375; Dugin and Golovin, “*V poiskakh vechnogo norda*”.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Elagin, *Sovetskii ezoterizm*, 127.

¹⁹⁵ Aleksei Nilogov and Fedor Biriukov, “*Iurii Mamleev: ‘Ia i pisatel’, i filosof*”, *Zavtra* (26/4/2006) [<http://www.bigbook.ru/articles/detail.php?ID=1051>].

¹⁹⁶ Evgeniy Golovin, Artur Medvedev, and Maria Mamyko, “*Interv’iu Filosofskoi Gazete*” (2004) [<http://golovin.evrazia.org/?area=works&article=75>] / [<http://golovinfond.ru/content/intervyu-filosofskoy-gazete>].

¹⁹⁷ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, 236.

of the *Magicians*, claimed to present accounts of how National Socialism and the Nazi regime were inspired and even directly driven by esoteric and occult “fantasies” and “secret societies”, the end result frequently being the affirmation that “the history of the Third Reich cannot be understood out of this occult context.”¹⁹⁸ Although *Le Matin des magiciens* is sometimes referred to as the source of this genre¹⁹⁹, “Nazi occultism” in fact dates back to a considerably wider range of French and English publications in the 1930’s-’40’s.²⁰⁰ One of the most influential books in this genre was Hermann Rausschnig’s 1939 *Gespräche mit Hitler* (“*Conversations with Hitler*” or *Hitler Speaks*, originally published in English and French before German), which (in)famously claimed to be an account of Hitler’s occult and “mystical” activities (reportedly debunked as fraudulent in 1984²⁰¹), and was cited frequently and popularized by none other than *Le Matin des magiciens*.

“Nazi occultist” literature, like *Le Matin des magiciens*, intersected with esoteric and occult currents themselves. Interestingly enough, Guénon himself contributed to this train of thought in his vision of a conspiracy of “counter-initiatic” forces among which he accused Aleister Crowley of having staged his suicide in order to become a “secret advisor” to Hitler.²⁰² In addition, paradoxically, while many “Nazi-occultist reconstructions” were themselves concerned with warning the Western public against occult fantasies and their Nazi associations, the “Nazi occultist” genre not only inspired an esoteric current itself in the shape of “Esoteric Nazism”, but also contributed to interest in the 19th and 20th century *völkisch* occultist currents, such as the Ariosophy of Guido von List, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, and Rudolf von Sebottendorff, Karl Maria Wiligut, and the works of the Dutch-German scholar Herman Wirth.²⁰³ *The Morning of the Magicians* itself also let loose the myth of the “Luminous Lodge” or “Vril Society”, supposedly a secret society of masters of “vril”, or “the nerve center of our potential divinity”, hidden in the bosom of the Nazi project.²⁰⁴ Pauwels and Bergier also famously portrayed the founder of the German school of *Geopolitik*, Karl Haushofer, as a leading figure in the “Nazi occult” and Vril Society conspiracies.²⁰⁵ All of these authors will turn up in Alexander Dugin’s early works.

¹⁹⁸ Hakl, “Unknown Sources: National Socialism and the Occult”, 3.

¹⁹⁹ Pasi, *Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics*, 53.

²⁰⁰ See: Hakl, “Unknown Sources: National Socialism and the Occult.”

²⁰¹ Pasi, *Aleister Crowley and the Temptation of Politics*, 55.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 110.

²⁰³ See: Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*; *Ibidem*, *The Occult Roots*, 217-225.

²⁰⁴ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, 192. On “Vril”, see: Julian Strube, *Vril. Eine okkulte Urkraft in Theosophie und esoterischem Neonazismus* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2013).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 192, 254-255, 257-258, 260.

Thus, *The Morning of the Magicians* had a lasting impact on Golovin and the Yuzhinsky Circle in more ways than one. From its references, the circle discovered Traditionalism - Guénon and Evola became the favorites of the Yuzhinsky “magicians” - and from its “Nazi occultism”, Golovin derived his infamous “lifelong great sympathy for Nazi aesthetics.”²⁰⁶ Hence the impression of Golovin as “completely obsessed with the Third Reich, seeing in it a monstrous and mystical yin to humanity’s yang”²⁰⁷, and hence the later anecdotes of a portrait of Hitler, Sieg-Heiling, and the supposed founding of the internal “Black Order of the SS”, of which Golovin reportedly called himself the Führer, when the Yuzhinsky Circle moved, after Mamleev’s emigration, to Golovin’s own flat on Ushakova Street.²⁰⁸ While the Yuzhinsky Circle’s “Nazi aesthetics” might indeed, as former members have argued²⁰⁹, be contextualized within the rebellious atmosphere of Soviet sub-culture, or might be seen as merely aesthetic touches of Golovin’s “playful carnival esotericism” influenced by Mamleev and Fulcanelli²¹⁰, thus figuring far from actual profession of Nazism, these elements should also be seen in light of, and as one of the many inspirations derived from *The Morning of the Magicians*.

Further still, *The Morning of the Magicians* is also a candidate inspiration for the style, practices, and further attempts at deconstructing consciousness among the circle. One particularly relevant theme is that of language, from which Golovin’s role in the circle is inseparable. Pauwels and Bergier’s book treats language as one of the most contentious elements in the cosmic struggle of human consciousness. Language is called “a binary product, an organized conspiracy, and limitation” which restricts humans from being able to express what the “third eye” perceives.²¹¹ Secret societies themselves, in Pauwels and Bergier’s vision, are not necessarily “secret” *per se*, but are merely “inaccessible” because they have “a common language, not secret, but merely inaccessible to ordinary men at a given epoch in time.”²¹² For Mamleev and Golovin, who together knew as many as a dozen languages and were vested in the literary and poetic “transmutation” of language to explore alterations of consciousness, this treatment of language must have resonated deeply.

In fact, memorial accounts of Golovin recall him being habitually interested in language. Golovin’s daughter recalls him always stressing the need to learn foreign languages, which he “learned easily and absolutely independently”, and treating translation as

²⁰⁶ Nosachev, *Integralnyi traditsionalizm*, 212.

²⁰⁷ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 152.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁰⁹ See Igor Dudinsky’s account in Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 153, 157.

²¹⁰ Nosachev, “*Evgeniy Golovin a ‘russkii traditsionalizm’*”, 47-48.

²¹¹ Pauwels and Bergier, *The Morning of the Magicians*, 120.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 29.

the most inspiring and intensive of all activities.²¹³ Dugin recalls Golovin as “a master of translation” who “introduced new words into Russian” and “created a new language” in which he would speak to Yuzhinsky Circle attendants in his wine cellar.²¹⁴ In particular, Dugin stresses that Golovin’s “translations of poets, novelists, some alchemical and mystical texts...are unique in that they are often better than the originals”²¹⁵, and says that Golovin proposed the special term *parleur* and “professional reader” to describe his magical “art of translation” and “art of reading.”²¹⁶ In his memorial “theses on Golovin”, Dugin seems to reference particular ritual practices intended “to read texts as Golovin did (by stirring the patterns of text into a hermeneutical and Hermetic circle).”²¹⁷ This dimension of Golovin perhaps best symbolically encapsulates his immense significance to the Yuzhinsky Circle and Dugin: it was Golovin who first read, translated, and “*parleur-ed*” for the circle the ideas of Traditionalism, as well as the conspiratorial and ideological legacies of “Nazi occultist” narratives. Moreover, Golovin’s crucial impact can also be seen in that, of all the Yuzhinsky Circle initiates, it was Golovin whom Dugin admired the most, famously writing in the foreword to Golovin’s 2003 *Priblizhenie k Snezhnoi Koroleve*: “One can only love Evgeniy Vsevolodovich Golovin - madly, absolutely, and desperately. All other forms of evaluation and perception crumble to dust. If you do not know what love is, and are not ready to die for it, do not read this book.”²¹⁸

Be that as it may, it was actually not Golovin, but a young Russian-Azerbaijani who joined Golovin in 1967, Geydar Dzhemal, who would take Dugin as his disciple and initiate him into the circle in 1980. If Mamleev cultivated an experimental counter-cultural circle interested in synthesizing Western esotericism, “Eastern” metaphysics, and Russian identity, and if Golovin took the circle in a new direction by introducing the “revolt against the modern world” of Traditionalism and *Morning of the Magicians*, which he himself pursued into the realm of a metaphysics, alchemy, magic, and languages on the one hand, and an interest in “Nazi-occultist” aesthetics and sources on the other, then Dzhemal, as we will see, can be credited with expanding and developing the circle’s treatment of the radical

²¹³ Golovina, “*Moi otets Evgeniy Golovin*”, in Golovina, *Gde net paralellei i net poliusov. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina*, 19.

²¹⁴ Dugin, “*Evgeniy Golovin i sushchnost’ poezii: Avatary tantsuiushchey zvezdy*”, in *Ibid.*, 165. In 1995, Golovin edited and contributed to the two-volume almanach *Splendor Solis*, comprising various texts on philosophy, literature, and poetry, ranging from Martin Heidegger to Thomas Mann. Golovin later oversaw the *Garfang* book series, which published translations of Gustav Meyrink (1868-1932), Thomas Mann (1875-1955) H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), and the Traditionalist Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984). Besides these, however, interestingly enough, none of Golovin’s “master translations” of Yuzhinsky Circle esoteric works seem to have been published. Elsewhere, Dugin has mentioned that Golovin was revered as “spiritually advanced” because he had access to books that others did not or could not. See: Nosachev, “*Prolegomeny*”, 58, footnote 27.

²¹⁵ Dugin, “*Evgeniy Golovin i sushchnost’ poezii*”, *ibid.*

²¹⁶ Dugin, “*Evgeniy Golovin: Intelektual’naia topika (tezisy)*”, in *Ibid.*, 373.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 377.

²¹⁸ Dugin, “*Auf, o Seele! (esse o Evgenii Golovine)*”, in Golovin, *Priblizhenie k Snezhnoi Koroleve*, 14.

Traditionalist and völkisch occultist currents that will be originally reflected in Dugin's early thought.

Geydar Dzhemal and the Radical North

In 1966, Geydar Dzhahidovich Dzhemal, a Russian-Azerbaijani student or, as he called himself, a "Russian of Muslim origins" seeking "self-identification" in Islam, was expelled from Moscow State University's Institute of Eastern Languages for "manifesting bourgeois nationalism."²¹⁹ Thereafter, Dzhemal found work as a tutor of foreign languages and copy-editor at a medical publishing house, where he met the biologist and psychology editor Ilioi Moskvina. Moskvina, whose identity remains a mystery, reportedly "opened a new world for him", introducing Dzhemal to both the world of psychoanalysis and the Yuzhinsky Circle around 1967-1968.²²⁰ Through his publishing, linguistic, academic, and newfound Yuzhinsky Circle contacts, Dzhemal, like his grandfather, became an avid collector of books, particularly pertaining to Islam, German philosophy, and esotericism and occultism, which he translated and reproduced through *samizdat*.²²¹ The Russian author Vladimir Videman recalls Dzhemal's "shelves filled with reprinted copies of *samizdat*, including texts by Gurdjieff on the 'Fourth Theory', banned European works, and Qurans."²²² In fact, when in the late 1960's Golovin still possessed only two of Guénon's works, Dzhemal used contacts in Paris to have a nearly complete collection sent to Moscow, and in the 1980's Dzhemal was reportedly close to "some French diplomatic personnel who transported forbidden books through the diplomatic pouch."²²³ In the very least, Dzhemal was thus crucial in the role of defining trends in the Yuzhinsky Circle by virtue of his procurement of literature and wide range of contacts.

The main esoteric interests which Dzhemal developed also clearly fit the Yuzhinsky Circle. On the one hand, Dzhemal's commitment to an esoteric substantiation of Islam as his own spiritual path paralleled and in all likelihood was considerably inspired by his embrace of the works of Guénon, Schuon, and Burckhardt. According to Dzhemal, the first whole French book he ever read was Guénon's 1923 polemic against spiritualism and modern occultism, *L'erreur spirite*.²²⁴ As Dzhemal would later recount:

²¹⁹Aleksei Chelnokov, "Muezzin na Spasskoi bashne", *Izvestiia* (3/2/2010) [<https://old.flb.ru/infoprint/46933.html>]; Marina Lesko, "Geidar Dzhemal: Predvestnik Absoliuta", *Novyi Vgliad* (19/3/2009) [<http://www.newlookmedia.ru/?p=1174>]; See Dzhemal's interview on Vladimir Pozner's talk show: "Pozner Geidar Dzhemal 14 10 2013" (16/10/2013) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AkFqQNqfAE&t=819s>].

²²⁰Vladimir Vashchenko, "Vremia Geidara Dzhemalia proshlo", *Gazeta.ru* (5/12/2016) [<https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2016/12/05/10403705.shtml>].

²²¹Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 569.

²²²Ibid.

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Dzhemal, "Geidar Dzhemal o sebe, 'Iuzhinskom krushke' i Evgenii Golovine" (10/9/2013) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXxQx4K4a5U&t=405s>].

I went through a kind of fascination with the mystical, esoteric side of Islam. I naturally became interested and engaged in what is called *tasawwuf*, that is Sufism, especially in the Pamirs, where I spent a lot of time, had serious personal contacts with the Naqshbandiyya tariqah, and saw sheikhs and [Sufi] elders. I even maintained a personal relationship with some of them. Before I got into this milieu, I had been acquainted with what is in modern practice called Traditionalism - that is René Guénon and Schuon. I had been familiar with the French school of Traditionalism since sometime around 1969. Thanks to my contacts, especially the late Evgeniy Golovin, I had read virtually the whole corpus of Guénon's works in French by the time I met with real [Sufi] elders...²²⁵

Around 1979-1980 Dzhemal joined the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order and became actively involved in the underground Islamic Movement of Tajikistan, where he would take Golovin, Dugin, and other Yuzhinsky adepts to the Pamir mountains on meditative trips and to visit the graves of Sufi saints.²²⁶ Yet while later in life Dzhemal would ultimately reject Traditionalism and develop his own ideology termed "Islamic radicalism"²²⁷, in the context of the Yuzhinsky Circle Dzhemal was crucial as an aggregator and original theologian of the "Traditionalist metaphysics" which he would later critique.

That Dzhemal was heavily drawn to, initially identified with, and contributed to the proliferation of Traditionalism in the Yuzhinsky Circle is well known. The conceptualization of Traditionalism that Dzhemal forged in the Yuzhinsky Circle, which he would later reject as insufficiently "radical", was nonetheless of a particularly radical variety. Dzhemal's first work, *Orientatsiia. Sever* ("Orientation: North"), published via *samizdat* in 1979, is a collection of 1,800 condensed metaphysical theses that offers raw insight into the worldview Dzhemal had constructed out of the Yuzhinsky Circle at the time. According to one account, "Dzhemal believed...that he received this text [*Orientation: North*] as a Voice from nowhere and addressed to no one, as an Event beyond any references and contexts, as a Word in the Night."²²⁸

The fundamental point of departure of *Orientation: North* is that "the relationship of reality to the absolute is the universal problem of the spirit."²²⁹ If the spirit is the "active element" which is incommensurate with "global inertia", then, Dzhemal surmises, the very difference between the "non-spiritual" is a matter of degree and the "abyss" between the real "this" and the "Absolute Other" is "an abyss between inescapable slumber and complete

²²⁵ "Glava Islamskogo komiteta RF rasskazal, kak osoznanno prishel k islamu", *Life* (26/6/2015) [<https://life.ru/t/%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%83%D0%BA/831065>].

²²⁶ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 223.

²²⁷ See: Jafe Arnold, "From Traditionalism and Sufism to 'Islamic Radicalism': The Peculiar Case of Geydar Dzhemal (1947-2016); Marlene Laruelle, "Digital Geopolitics Encapsulated: Geidar Dzhemal between Islamism, Occult Fascism, and Eurasianism", in Suslov and Bassin, *Eurasia 2.0: Russian Geopolitics in the Age of New Media* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016): 81-98; Gulnaz Sibgatullina and Michael Kemper, "Between Salafism and Eurasianism: Geidar Dzhemal and the Global Islamic Revolution in Russia", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 28:2 (2017): 219-236.

²²⁸ Natalia Melent'eva, "*Orientatsiia. Sever: Rozhdenie Sub'ekta ili Volia k Fantasticheskomu Bytiiu*", *Geopolitica* (5/4/2019) [<https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/orientaciya-sever-rozhdenie-subekta-ili-volya-k-fantasticheskomu-bytiyu>].

²²⁹ Dzhemal, *Orientatsiia. Sever*, 5.

awakening.”²³⁰ The very “instinct” of spiritual birth, Dzhemal argues, is crystallized in myth, which is “profoundly inherent to the spirit of the subjective itself”, and the creation of an “inner myth” is “the only criterion of ability to awaken.”²³¹ Thus: “The mythical problem entails a categorical duty to realize metaphysical impossibility.”²³² In the end of the work, Dzhemal proposes the greatest “pole of the impossible”, the greatest revelation of “the pivot of subjective will towards itself”, and the greatest “appeal inwards towards the principle of the complete ‘I’” which transcends all metaphysical equations.²³³ This eternal, transcendental, dark, cold, and invisible pole independent of all other realities, to which one must surrender for the sake of metaphysical realization, is the “North.”²³⁴ Dzhemal ends his account with: “He who goes North does not fear the night. Because in the sky of the North there is no light.”²³⁵

This compressed, labyrinthine metaphysical manifesto of Dzhemal’s, void of any references, is in fact quite revealing. Many of the metaphysical terms and formulas discussed are derived from Guénon’s own 1932 metaphysical work: *Les États multiples de l’Être*. The presentation of the world of reality as “illusory”, beyond which the Absolute is accessible only to those who subject their inner elements to catharsis against the negatively structured cosmos, paired with metaphysical discussions of such concepts as Obscurantism, Illusion, Terror, Death, Miracle, and Evil, are themes clearly resembling the gnostic consciousness of Mamleev and Golovin’s Yuzhinsky Circle. Indeed, the two closing theses - “He who goes North does not fear the night. Because in the sky of the North there is no light” - are likely a re-phrasing of the widely-quoted maxim of Golovin: “He who goes against the day, should not fear the night.”²³⁶ Dzhemal later wrote about *Orientatsiia - Sever*:

The goal of *Orientation: North* twenty years ago was a very ironic correspondence with the Zen paradox of ‘I met Buddha, kill him!’”. This text ‘shoots’ humanism as the enemy of the spirit. The aim of *Orientation: North* was to lay the foundations for a new theology, a political theology of monotheism. *Orientation: North* is often taken to be a poem, thus misunderstanding its internal system. In fact, it is its own kind of reasoning on methodology.²³⁷

²³⁰ Dzhemal, *Orientatsiia. Sever*, 5, 7.

²³¹ Ibid., 41.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., 58-60.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., 60.

²³⁶ Dugin, “Auf, o Seele! (*esse o Evgenii Golovine*)”, in Golovina, *Gde net parallelei i net poliusov. Pamiati Evgeniia Golovina*, 108.

²³⁷ Dzhemal, “*Orientatsiia - Sever’ i ee Vremia.*” [<http://www.kontrudar.com/lekcii/orientaciya-sever-i-ee-vremya-absolyut-probuzhdennost-kosmos-razum-obskurantizm-illyuziya>].

Thus, while the metaphysical formulas laid out in *Orientation: North* might be cast as the germs of Dzhemal's later independent philosophical critique of Traditionalism, they also demonstrate Dzhemal's indebtedness to the Yuzhinsky Circle's sources, out of which Dzhemal later sought to craft a new "theology." The fact that Dzhemal's "methodology for a new theology" nonetheless operated with terms from Guénon also foreshadows the fact that nearly all of Dzhemal's later critiques of Traditionalism would still rely upon and evoke Traditionalist terms, concepts, and authors as his main reference points.²³⁸ Finally, it is worth pointing out that the very title of the work and its final, culminating thesis, North, is very likely a reference to a key discourse and trope shared by both Traditionalist and völkisch occultist sources.

In his many polemics with various occultists and in his explications of his "traditional" doctrines, Guénon consistently insisted the Primordial Tradition "to be Nordic, and even more exactly to be polar, since this is expressly affirmed in the *Veda* as well as in other sacred books."²³⁹ More specifically, Guénon preferred to name the Northern origin of Tradition after the Greek mythical land of Hyperborea, literally "the land beyond the Boreas [or North Winds]" in which he saw a correspondence with the "more correct" Vedic *Vārāhī*, literally "land of the wild boar."²⁴⁰ That Tradition was of Northern provenance was believed to correspond with the metaphysical principle of the Pole and the "spatial symbolism" of the beginning of the cosmic cycle.²⁴¹ At the same time, Guénon repeatedly insisted that Hyperborea and the "Hyperborean tradition" should not be conflated with Atlantis and the "Atlantean Tradition", as he considered the latter to be not only a secondary degradation of the original Hyperborean tradition, but also one potentially associated with nefarious, "counter-initiatic" doctrines.²⁴² While Guénon often developed this "Hyperborean origins theory" in polemical attempts at distinguishing his doctrines from a number of occultist currents, Guénon's fixation on Hyperborea was part of a long history of ancient wisdom narratives which, having their roots in antiquity, were unprecedentedly elaborately constructed around the arrangement of mythical continents and races in the 19th century occultist milieus out of which Guénon himself emerged.²⁴³

Julius Evola also followed Guénon in arguing for precedence for Hyperborea, and took his line a step further in specifically associating the North and Northern/Nordic Tradition with the "traditional civilizations of the Indo-European area", which occupied a

²³⁸ See: Arnold, "From Traditionalism and Sufism to 'Islamic Radicalism': The Peculiar Case of Geydar Dzhemal."

²³⁹ Guénon, *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, 16.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴² See: Arnold, "Thinking in Continents: Hyperborea and Atlantis in René Guénon's Conception of Tradition"; Godwin, *Atlantis*, 171.

²⁴³ See: Arnold, "Thinking in Continents: Hyperborea and Atlantis in René Guénon's Conception of Tradition"; Godwin, *Atlantis*, 157-162, 170-171; *Ibidem*, *Arktos*, 21-22.

central position in Evola's narratives on "spiritual racialism."²⁴⁴ Evola's main, supposedly "profane" source for this thesis, on whose works Guénon also critically commented for "confusing" Hyperborea and Atlantis, was Herman Wirth. Wirth's narrative of a primordial tradition whose migration and degeneration leads to the scattering of its kernels throughout the world's religions, languages, and cultures, correlates strongly with Guénon and Evola's discourses on the cyclical history of the Primordial and Perennial Tradition. Evola referenced and critically discussed Wirth's ideas in multiple works, and specifically mentioned Wirth as one of his key influences in his autobiography.²⁴⁵ In addition, Wirth, Guénon, and Evola were all inspired in their Hyperborean affirmations by the same source: Bal Gangadhar Tilak's immensely influential 1903 work, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas, Being Also a New Key to the Interpretation of Many Vedic Texts and Legends*, which argued that the primordial conditions and astronomical data described in Vedic and Avestan texts suggest a Northern, circumpolar habitat for the Aryans. Tilak's study represented a climax in the theory of the "Arctic origin of the Aryans" widespread throughout both 19th century occultisms and scholarship on the origins of the Indo-Europeans.²⁴⁶

The "Nordic-Hyperborean-Aryan" theme was thus a key trope for another esoteric spectrum, namely, the racial-mythological narratives of *völkisch* occultism à la Ariosophy and, later, the conspiracies of "Nazi occultism" following *Le Matin des magiciens*. The founding fathers of Ariosophy, Guido von List and Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, posited the *Urheimat* of the Aryans to be the vanished polar continent of *Arktogäa* ("Northern-Earth"), associated with the primordial Aryo-Germanic esoteric religio-linguistic system.²⁴⁷ Another significant *völkisch* occultist or "Ariosophist" who affirmed a Northern *Urheimat*, and whose Sufism would have highly interested Dzheimal, was Rudolf von Sebottendorff. Sebottendorff was the founder of the Thule Society, which was famously elevated as part of the "Nazi occult conspiracy" by *The Morning of the Magicians*, Thule being the distant northern city, ostensibly the capital of Hyperborea, described by the Ancient Greek explorer Pytheas, and a name which Guénon, Evola, and Wirth all employed.

The North Pole itself would become part of the legacy of *Le Matin des magiciens*' genre, and "Nazi occultism" proper, such as in the "Esoteric Hitlerism" of Miguel Serrano, who believed that Hitler himself had been not only initiated underground in one of the incarnations of Hyperborea and Ultima Thule at the Pole, but had also escaped the outcome of the Second World War there, where Hitler continues to wage a Gnostic, invisible battle

²⁴⁴ See: Julius Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 184-229; Ibidem, *The Bow and the Club*, 328-329; Ibidem, "The Arctic Myth", *The Myth of the Blood: The Genesis of Racialism*, 112-125. On Evola's "spiritual racialism", see: Furlong, *Social and Political Thought of Julius Evola*, 113-133; Hansen, "Julius Evola's Political Endeavours", 66-74.

²⁴⁵ Julius Evola, *The Path of Cinnabar: An Intellectual Biography of Julius Evola* (United Kingdom: Integral Tradition, 2009), 93, 96, 99. See: Arthur Branwen, *Ultima Thule: Julius Evola e Herman Wirth* (Parma: Edizioni all'insegna del Velto, 2007).

²⁴⁶ See: De Benoist, *The Indo-Europeans: In Search of the Homeland*, 124-128; Godwin, *Arktos*.

²⁴⁷ Godwin, *Atlantis*, 121-124 ; Ibidem, *Arktos*, 49; Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 55, 234, footnote 20; List, *The Religion of the Aryo-Germanic Folk: Esoteric and Exoteric*, 1-5.

against the Demiurge.²⁴⁸ In Serrano's works, the North, Hyperborea, and Thule were associated with initiatic knowledge and the Aryan Urheimat, representing "the Thulean mythology's successful migration to South America in the postwar period."²⁴⁹ Dzhemal not only knew *The Morning of the Magicians*, but he, Golovin, and Dugin would later reveal a familiarity with Serrano.²⁵⁰ Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, Dzhemal would later share that he discovered "Nazi mysticism"²⁵¹ through Armin Mohler's (1920-2003) famous 1972 *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932* (originally his doctoral dissertation), which features sections on List, Liebenfels, Sebottendorff, and Wirth.²⁵² Mohler himself had been a secretary to one of the leading figures of the German Conservative Revolution, Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), in whom Evola took considerable interest.²⁵³ Most curiously, Dzhemal attributes his early affinity for Traditionalism to his interest in "German philosophy."²⁵⁴ Both these Conservative Revolution authors and "fellow traveling" völkisch occultist sources and tropes, undoubtedly elevated by *Morning of the Magicians*, will emerge prominently in Dugin's early works. This legacy can also be seen even in Dzhemal's later works in which he would elaborate his "Islamic radicalism", envisioned as metaphysically in conflict with "pagan traditionalism."²⁵⁵ Dzhemal's first major open critique of Traditionalism and major step in the direction of his envisioning of an eschatological, cosmic mission for Muslims, a talk delivered in 1994, was characteristically titled "Aryan Islam."²⁵⁶

By the time of *Orientation: North's* publication, Dzhemal and Golovin had become the leaders of the Yuzhinsky Circle. Mamleev had emigrated to the United States in 1974, eventually gaining a position teaching Russian literature at Cornell University, only to leave for Paris in 1983, where he would acquire a similar position at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales. Mamleev's archives were apparently left in the care of the Yuzhinsky Circle and a contact at the Ministry of Information, from whom Dugin would later inherit them.²⁵⁷ In Paris, Mamleev mingled with various French literary, esoteric, and

²⁴⁸ On Serrano, see: Godwin, *Arktos*, 70-73; Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 173-192.

²⁴⁹ Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 173.

²⁵⁰ Dugin and Golovin, "V poiskakh vechnogo norda"; Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 572; "Geidar Dzhemal o sebe, 'Iuzhinskom kruzhke' i Evgenii Golovine."

²⁵¹ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 571.

²⁵² Armin Mohler, *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932: Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972/1989).

²⁵³ Camus, "Alain de Benoist and the New Right", 103-104; Hakl, "Julius Evola and Tradition", 89-90.

²⁵⁴ Geydar Dzhemal, "Geydar Dzhemal o sebe, 'Iuzhinskom kruzhke' i Evgenii Golovine" (10/9/2013) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXxQx4K4a5U&t=405s>].

²⁵⁵ Arnold, "From Traditionalism and Sufism to 'Islamic Radicalism': The Peculiar Case of Geydar Dzhemal", 7-10.

²⁵⁶ Dzhemal, "Ariiskii Islam", *Kontrudar* (3/1/1997) [<http://www.kontrudar.com/lekcii/ariyskiy-islam>].

²⁵⁷ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 161.

political milieus, developing contacts with intellectual networks which Dugin would engage in the 1990's, and procuring literature to smuggle back to the circle. Back in Moscow, Golovin and Dzhemal's Yuzhinsky Circle developed a number of ritual practices survived by various anecdotes and plunged into Traditionalist and völkisch occultist sources that would soon find a new candidate for ideologization. It is this "cocktail" of esoteric sources that was being engaged in the Yuzhinsky Circle, when one year following the first underground edition of *Orientation: North*, Dzhemal reportedly met the young Alexander Dugin at another Yuzhinsky Circle acquaintance, Sergey Zhigalkin's home. Dzhemal agreed to take him as an "apprentice" into the Yuzhinsky Circle, and, most tellingly, instructed Dugin to learn French and German.²⁵⁸

Enter Alexander Dugin

The son of a high-ranking Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) officer and a physician, Dugin was a student of the Moscow Aviation Institute at the time he was initiated into the Yuzhinsky Circle by Dzhemal. Little to no evidence is available as to Dugin's pre-Yuzhinsky ideological motivations, but all accounts offer the picture of a non-conformist youth with a particular disdain for Soviet life, whose earliest outlet of expression was his guitar. In the early 1980s', in line with the Yuzhinsky Circle's practice of adopting alter-egos and staging theatrical scenarios to attain "mad gnosis", Dugin developed an artistic alter-ego by the name of Hans Sievers, in which Dugin reportedly went into "ecstatic states" and under which Dugin has released a number of guitar-vocal albums. The very *nom de guerre* "Hans Sievers" is a clear indication of the relevance of German(ic) sources and inspirations in the circle at the time. The suggested connection with the 1933-1945 managing director of the Ahnenerbe and former associate of Herman Wirth's, Wolfram Sievers (1905-1948), while necessarily speculative, carries some weight in light of the Ahnenerbe and völkisch occultist sources present in the circle that would turn up in Dugin's several years later. Sievers' (Dugin's) first album's lyrics were supposedly inspired by one of Golovin's favorite French authors, Comte de Lautréamont (Isidore Lucien Ducasse).²⁵⁹ Dugin was temporarily arrested by the KGB in 1983 for one of his/Hans Sievers' "anti-Soviet" lyrics and interrogated over his possession of Mamleev's archives.²⁶⁰

Within a year of joining the circle, Dugin reportedly translated into Russian Julius Evola's 1933 *Heidnischer Imperialismus* ("Pagan Imperialism" or "Heathen Imperialism") followed by Evola's 1961 *Cavalcare la tigre* ("Ride the Tiger").²⁶¹ All of Dugin's accounts of his Yuzhinsky Circle days stress the centrality of his acquaintance with Guénon and Evola and his identification with Traditionalism. In particular, Dugin recalls:

²⁵⁸ Laruelle, "The Iuzhinskii Circle", 571.

²⁵⁹ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 158.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 159; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 222; Julius Evola, *Iazycheskii imperIALIZM* (translated by A. Dugin, Moscow: ArktoGeia, 1990) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/evola/evola1.htm>].

At that time [at the very beginning of the '80's] I was hanging out with a very small group of dissidents who shared some books by Julius Evola with me. These readings changed my life. I had never heard anyone describing the contradictions of the modern world like Evola, so I decided to learn foreign languages in order to be able to read more of his books. I ended up discovering and translating other, like-minded authors, such as René Guénon. Well, since those days I have thought of myself as a traditionalist.²⁶²

Elsewhere, Dugin stresses:

First of all in my early youth I was deeply inspired by Traditionalism of René Guénon and Julius Evola. That was my definitive choice of camp - on the side of sacred Tradition against the modern (and post-modern world). This choice and all consequences are still there in the present. I firmly stand for spiritual and religious values against actual decadent materialist and perverted culture. Traditionalism was and rests central as the philosophic focus of all my later developments.²⁶³

Finally, in another interview, Dugin recounts:

My ideological formation took place around 1979 into the '80's upon being acquainted with "Third Way" Traditionalists such as Dzhemal and Golovin. My moulding as an individual, as an intellectual, as a thinker, as a metaphysician, as a politician, and as an ideologist was none other than Traditionalist...The only thing that could fill the gigantic void inside of me was the complete rejection of everything modern in the ultra-revolutionary, Traditionalist, non-conformist intellectualism of Guénon and Evola...In 1981-'82 I was already a fully-formed philosopher with my own intellectual agenda, metaphysics, and ideology...I realized myself to be an insurrectionary of Tradition in the desert of modernity, a human of the metaphysical underground, preparing an apocalyptic revanche...I have never grown out of this.²⁶⁴

Beyond this glaring enthusiasm for the Traditionalism of Guénon and Evola, and besides the range of sources, aesthetics, and practices attributed to the Yuzhinsky Circle around the time Dugin joined, little else is known about the other esoteric sources which Dugin would have read in his formative years in the 1980's before his first publication in 1989. However, a collection of poems dating back to the early 1980's, published in 2011, might offer some clues. This compilation of poems, entitled *Barbelo-gnozis* ("Barbelo-Gnosis") is attributed to a certain "Alexander Sternberg," which the foreword immediately admits to be a pseudonym for "someone who had something to do with the great Russian poet Evgeniy Golovin and the greatest Russian writer, Yuri Mamleev...[and] had some kind of relationship with Alexander Dugin's 'Arktogeia' and 'New University.'"²⁶⁵ The foreword explicitly says that Sternberg is not Dugin, but someone else from the circle wishing to conceal their identity, to which scholars Laruelle and Nosachev have answered that "Sternberg" must be Golovin or,

²⁶² Steinmann, "The Illiberal Far-Right of Aleksandr Dugin. A conversation", *Reset Dialogues on Civilizations* (4/12/2018) [<https://www.resetdoc.org/story/illiberal-far-right-aleksandr-dugin-conversation/>].

²⁶³ "The Long Path: An Interview With Alexander Dugin", *Open Revolt* (17/5/2014) [<https://openrevolt.info/2014/05/17/alexander-dugin-interview/>].

²⁶⁴ "Pravye lyudi: novyye imena - Dugin Alexander Gel'evich (r. 1962)," *Pravaya.ru* (22/2/2006) [<http://www.pravaya.ru/ludi/451/6742>].

²⁶⁵ Sternberg, *Barbelo-gnozis* (Moscow: Gumanitarnyi izdatel'skii proekt 'Fravarti', 2011), 4-5.

nonetheless, Dugin himself.²⁶⁶ The timeline of the poems, dating from 1981 to 2002, as well as some of the correlation between chronology and content, would seem to suggest that the author might very well be Dugin, although this can only remain speculated. Regardless of authorship, the lines of *Barbelo-Gnosis* do offer a glimpse into what inspirations for poetry a Yuzhinsky Circle member would have had in the 1980's at the same time as Dugin.

“Sternberg” is very likely a reference to the “Bloody Mad Baron”, Roman von Ungern-Sternberg (1886-1921), a Baltic-German officer of the Russian Empire who attempted to establish a pan-Eurasian empire out of Mongolia during the Russian Civil War.²⁶⁷ Sternberg is widely reputed to have been a practicing occultist and fanatic of the wider regional trend of Shambhala eschatologisms and Judeo-Bolshevik-Freemasonic conspiracies.²⁶⁸ In the 1990's and early 2000's, Dugin would devote a number of publications to nearly hagiographical presentations of Ungern-Sternberg as an “esoteric Eurasianist”, “archetypal Kshatriya”, and “God of War.”²⁶⁹ In the Yuzhinsky Circle, Ungern-Sternberg was probably attractive as a “mad-gnostic” rebel, a “warrior-philosopher” *à la* Evola, a harbinger of the “mystical East”, and as a perfect character in the spirit of *The Morning of the Magicians*. The Baron might have been “discovered” in such an ideological light by means of an occultist whom the circle knew well - Roerich, who attempted a geopolitical stunt similar to Ungern-Sternberg's in Tibet on behalf of Soviet intelligence.²⁷⁰ In addition, both Guénon and Evola mentioned Ungern-Sternberg in journal reviews which Dugin knew, and, further, Dugin claims that Ungern-Sternberg believed he was realizing the Agarttha myth of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, a topic on which Guénon wrote extensively.²⁷¹

Be that as it may, the “new” Sternberg's poetry reveals other themes poeticized within the Yuzhinsky Circle. The first text, dated 1981, “Barbelo the Gnostic”, evokes the explicitly Gnostic Barbelo, Sophia, Hypatia, the Demiurge, as well as Poimandres, in conjunction with references to the Germanic Walpurgis Night festival.²⁷² A poem from 1985, “The Wife of Paracelsus”, is interspersed with French phraseologies, Hermetic and astrological references, as well as talk of “arctic dreams” and the Archean Aeon.²⁷³ Another stanza from 1985 speaks

²⁶⁶ Laruelle, “The Iuzhinskii Circle”, 572; Nosachev, “*Intengralnyi traditsionalizm*”, 210, footnote 28; Ibidem, “*K voprosu o russkom traditsionalizme*”, 181.

²⁶⁷ On Sternberg, see: Willard Sunderland, *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

²⁶⁸ See: Znamenski, *Red Shambhala: Magic, Prophecy and Geopolitics in the Heart of Asia*.

²⁶⁹ See, for instance: Dugin, “Baron Ungern: God of War”, *Eurasianist Internet Archive* (2019) [<https://eurasianist-archive.com/2019/03/09/baron-ungern-god-of-war/>].

²⁷⁰ Osterrieder, “From Synarchy to Shambhala: The Role of Political Occultism and Social Messianism in the Activities of Nicholas Roerich”; Znamenski, *Red Shambhala*.

²⁷¹ Dugin, “Baron Ungern: God of War”; Evola, “Baron von Ungern-Sternberg”; Guénon, *The Lord of the World*; Ibidem, *Theosophy: History of a Pseudo-Religion*, 310-312.

²⁷² Sternberg, *Barbelo-gnosis*, 7.

²⁷³ Ibid., 10.

of someone “trembling in the rays of the Salò Republic”, which is likely an allusion to Evola, who begrudgingly attempted to take advantage of the political vacuum of the Republic of Salò, or Italian Social Republic, established under German occupation in 1943.²⁷⁴ A later 1988 poem bears the title “*Die Atlantieker Marschieren Nach Osten*” and speaks of the “black-white-red flag” marching to the sacred East towards Narayana (Vishnu) with “memories of the flooded island”, which are clearly tropes derived from the “Nazi occultism” of *Morning of the Magicians*, Miguel Serrano, as well as the lost *Urheimat* espoused by the Ariosophists and Herman Wirth.²⁷⁵ These poems, and their explicit and veiled references, were written at the same time when, according to an explicit, public statement by Dzhemal, the young Dugin was his “disciple” and “pupil.”²⁷⁶ Thus, “Alexander Sternberg’s” poems offer a glimpse into the esoteric sources of the Yuzhinsky Circle into which Dugin was initiated in his youth in the 1980’s, on the basis of which he developed his “intellectual agenda, metaphysics, and ideology.”

The name and major sources which Dugin evidently chose to construct his early ideology found expression in Dugin’s first publication, the book *Puti Absoliuta* (“The Ways of the Absolute”), published via *samizdat* in 1989 - 10 years after Dzhemal’s *Orientation: North*, and in the very year that the socialist Eastern bloc began to collapse. This publication year itself might have been of symbolic significance to Dugin, clearly contextualizable in terms of the circle’s esoteric sources. Guénon’s *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, which the Yuzhinsky Circle read and which Dugin discusses in this first book, employs the formula $10=4+3+2+1$, the inverse of the Pythagorean Tetraktys, to express the duration of the cosmic cycle, the Hindu *Manvantara*, in which 10 is equivalent to, simultaneously, the totality, the end of the cycle and the restoration of the primordial and perennial origin, associated with the first Pole, the North, which Dzhemal, 10 years before the beginning of the collapse of the socialist bloc around them and 10 years before Dugin’s *Ways of the Absolute*, equated to the ultimate gnosis of absolute metaphysical realization. Indeed, Dugin cites these calculations in *Ways of the Absolute*.²⁷⁷ It might therefore be no coincidence that the preceding reconstructed and revealed esoteric sources of the Yuzhinsky Circle in which Dugin matured will now, in Dugin’s first work, be expressed with a strikingly apocalyptic, eschatological accent, will feature Guénon as the main source, and at the same time openly proclaim indebtedness to Mamleev, Golovin, and Dzhemal - the latter of whom, Dugin proclaims in the foreword, has been his “spiritual guide.”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Sternberg, *Barbelo-gnosis*, 13; Hansen, “Julius Evola’s Political Endeavors”, 49.

²⁷⁵ Sternberg, *Barbelo-gnosis*, 23.

²⁷⁶ Dzhemal said this in 2013 on one of Russia’s biggest talk shows, hosted by Vladimir Posner: “*Pozner Geidar Dzhemal 14 10 2013*” (14/10/2013) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AkFqQNqfAE&t=10s>].

²⁷⁷ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, (Moscow: 1989) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/putiabs/>], “Chapter IV: Principles and Orders of Symbolic Numbers”; Guénon, *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, 5-6.

²⁷⁸ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, “Foreword.”

The Ways of the Absolute

Dugin's first book, *The Ways of the Absolute* (1989), presents itself as simultaneously addressing two streams. The first is introduced as the "total Traditionalism", "integral Traditionalism", or "One Esoteric Tradition" of René Guénon, who, Dugin emphatically writes, "was and remains our spiritual guide and Teacher, a point which we believe it necessary to proclaim clearly and unambiguously, so that no one is left with any doubts as to our position." Guénon's Traditionalism, Dugin proposes, must be properly introduced into Russia to overcome the shortcomings of existing Orthodox theology and 19th century occultisms in explaining the "question of Eschatological Gnosis", the "metaphysical meaning of the End Times", the "shadow of the whole anti-metaphysical process seizing and conquering the planet." The occultisms which Dugin singles out as paling in comparison to "total Traditionalism", are precisely those known to the Yuzhinsky Circle: Dugin lists Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, Hermetism, Roerich, Theosophy, Steiner, Papus, and, in typical Traditionalist tongue, "all other neo-spiritualists." As follows, the second current and audience which Dugin addresses is the Yuzhinsky Circle itself. Dugin expresses "profound appreciation to Evgeniy Vsevolodovich Golovin - the man who, in the infernal decades of dying, senile, zomboid Brezhnevism, was the first in Russia to discover and raise as the banner of the esoteric underground the notion of the One Esoteric Tradition and the name of its unique 20th century messenger, René Guénon." Mamleev is also paid implicit tribute in the foreword, as Dugin writes: "This book is written for those exceptional and hardly evermore encountered people whose spiritual 'I' experiences endless and unbearable suffering in the world of the 'modern Hell.'"

However, it is Dzhemal who receives the greatest attribution after Guénon, as Dugin calls Dzhemal his "spiritual guide for a certain period" and a "great Islamic thinker" whose "esoteric transcendentalism has determined the particular structure of *Ways of the Absolute* and has shifted some of the most important doctrinal accents in its exposition of Metaphysics." Dugin presents *Ways of the Absolute* as postulating a new metaphysical topic, that of "eschatological gnosis" in an attempt at an "unprecedented announcement of Traditionalism" to Russians.²⁷⁹

The presentation of *Ways of the Absolute* reflects not only Dugin's first intellectual step beyond the Yuzhinsky Circle, with all the admitted and unconscious ideological indebtedness, but also Dugin's political activism and relationship with Dzhemal at the time. The year before, Dugin and Dzhemal were pressured out of the radical nationalist organization *Pamiat'* ("Memory"), which the two had sought to influence in a Traditionalist direction in an attempt at Evolian-style politics amidst the power vacuum of the destabilizing Soviet Union.²⁸⁰ The departure from *Pamiat'* largely marked the end of Dzhemal and Dugin's political cooperation, as Dzhemal subsequently turned to invest himself in exclusively

²⁷⁹ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, "Foreword."

²⁸⁰ On *Pamiat'*, see: Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 162-167; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 224.

Islamic political and intellectual movements, co-founding in 1990 the Islamic Renaissance Party and its journal, *Taukhid* (which Dzhemal called a “Russian journal of an Islamic perspective”) and becoming the head of the Islamic Committee of Russia by 1993.²⁸¹ Dugin’s *Ways of the Absolute* is therefore both a thread attaching Dugin to the esoteric sources of the Yuzhinsky Circle, especially Dzhemal, and Dugin’s first step towards philosophical differentiation paralleling their parting of ways.

Like Dzhemal’s *Orientation: North*, Dugin’s *The Ways of the Absolute* flows in the form of a series of logical presuppositions on the nature of metaphysical categories. Although not organized into theses, the book is structured strictly according to category, such as “Metaphysics, the Absolute, and Transcendence”, “The Plans of Metaphysics”, “The Categories of Possibility, Reality, and Necessity”, “The Principles and Orders of Symbolic Numbers”, “Subject and Object”, “Gnosis and Initiation”, “Symbolism in Tradition”, “The Symbolism of Genders”, “The Metaphysics of Castes”, etc. The bulk of the terms and concepts discussed under these headings can be identified as associated with the terminologies of Dzhemal and Guénon. Indeed, much of the book constitutes an original, critical summary of the latter’s 1925 *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, 1932 *The Multiple States of Being*, 1945 *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, and the posthumous compilation *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*. While Vedic terminology, taken from these works of Guénon and likely informed by Mamleev, makes up the greater part of Dugin’s exposition of his hierarchy of metaphysics, Dugin soon shifts the emphasis first towards gnostic formulas, and ultimately towards Orthodox Christianity which, according to Dugin, “being a strictly eschatological revelation, presents a true metaphysical picture of the end of being that totally raises the transcendently-oriented subject beyond cycles, time, and metaphysical presence itself, with an extreme harshness and rigidity.”²⁸² The latter advance represents the truly unique content of *Puti Absoliuta*, namely, the argument that the “synchronic” discourse or framework for metaphysical categories offered by Traditionalism is incomplete without the “second principle position”: the “teleological” and “eschatological” significance of the meaning of metaphysics itself. In the final chapter, Dugin reveals the main target:

If the first position [that of ‘synchronic’, ‘manifesting’ metaphysics] corresponds to the traditional response to the questions ‘What?’ and ‘How?’, then the second position should unambiguously answer the question of ‘For What?’ or ‘Why?’ This question is oriented not so much towards the affirmation of metaphysical givenness, as it is to its Cause and Meaning, i.e., directly to that of which the whole of Metaphysics is the secret testimony. This sphere of traditional knowledge has always been the most strictly closed, insofar as delving into it is fraught with terrifying, destructive consequences for those not thoroughly prepared for it.

This special, ultimate knowledge of the “End of Metaphysics” is termed by Dugin “eschatological gnosis”, most purely encapsulated in the “knowledge” of the Christian Last Judgement, and is summarized thusly:

²⁸¹ Arnold, “From Traditionalism and Sufism to Islamic Radicalism”, 6.

²⁸² Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, “Chapter XIII: Eschatological Gnosis.”

Eschatological gnosis, being completely universal, nevertheless has its most central points of application, and such a point is the End of the Kali-Yuga of the 7th Manvantara, i.e., the symbolic moment of the maximal distance of cosmic drift from the Pole, the Center. It is here, surrounded by the decomposing, chaotic, and demonized world, on the threshold of the internal-existential (*vnutribytiinoi*) Fog of the External, the immanent limit of Ontology, that the Great Mystery of the ‘Fulfillment of all Fulfillments’, the most important and most fundamental of all levels of Metaphysics, should transpire. Only it can answer the eschatological question of ‘Why?’ posed by the Great Sorrow of Pure Being. - 1989.²⁸³

Ways of the Absolute therefore takes the Guénonian conceptualization of the Kali-Yuga and the gnostic anti-worldliness of Dzhemal and the Yuzhinsky Circle, to a strict, rigorous conclusion:

This is the extreme of cyclical involution, in which are concentrated all the negative aspects of Manifestation. From this point of view, our epoch boasts a particular negative uniqueness - the most ‘infernal’ aspects of the subtle world temporally unfold in it, whose lower limit (like that of Being as a whole) is the Fog of the External, the final bottom of Ontology, pure *tamas* [Sanskrit for “darkness”]. After the end of our Manvantara will begin a new Golden Age and series of seven Manvantaras of return, but, for now, Tradition affirms, the current cosmos will continue its rapid involution in parallel to a humanity that has forgotten its ‘eternal’ source and Archetype.²⁸⁴

This eschatological, apocalyptic conclusion of the metaphysical formulas of *The Ways of the Absolute* constitutes one of the founding orientations which will be continued across, and profoundly underpin, Dugin’s early works. In Dugin’s analysis, it is precisely the recognition of the end of the present Manvantara, founded in a survey of Traditionalist metaphysics and accented with the Orthodox Christian notion of the End Times, that dictates the logic of any further theoretical development of Traditionalism in the (immanent) end of the Kali-Yuga. The establishment of this eschatological imperative will, in Dugin’s subsequent works, condition a distinct emphasis on the “cycles of civilization”, will accompany a profound interest in reconstructing the Golden Age that is to be restored, and will manifest itself in a logic according to which all “traditional data” are most impactfully defined by their position in the cosmic cycle leading to the immanent End. In the second chapter, we will see how this worldview translates into a particular narrative on the fate of Russian “sacred geography”, and in the third chapter, we will discover how this eschatological gnosis will figure at the heart of Dugin’s own choice of religious confession, anticipated in *Ways of the Absolute*’s emphasis on the “eschatological revelation” of Christianity.

Thus, on the one hand, *Puti Absoliuta*, written as a critical successor to Dzhemal’s *Orientation: North* and Guénon’s own metaphysical treatises, of which it claims to be a qualitatively advancing exponent, represents the first major culmination of the esoteric sources and ideas which Dugin critically developed from the Yuzhinsky Circle. On the other hand, *Ways of the Absolute*, in its attempt to expound a qualitatively new perspective, that of “eschatological gnosis”, represents a step in the direction of Dugin’s formulation of his own

²⁸³ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, “Chapter XIII: Eschatological Gnosis.”

²⁸⁴ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, “Chapter IX: Cosmic Cycles.”

early philosophy, albeit not immediately offering orientations as to who is to be its subject and mission beyond the mere recognition by Russian Traditionalists of the pinnacle of “eschatological gnosis” as the ultimate metaphysical realization. Having presented an explicitly Traditionalist-situated “metaphysical manifesto” after nearly a decade of development in the context of the esoteric Yuzhinsky Circle, Dugin has not yet developed, or revealed, his own proposal for the “ways of the Absolute.” A clue as to this next, pivotal turn in Dugin’s ideology and the esoteric sources on which such would be based, to which we shall now turn, is foreshadowed in a fleeting reference in the foreword to *Puti Absoliuta*: among the “other outstanding Traditionalists” said to have “significantly influenced the author [Dugin] in their highlighting of various aspects of the esoteric teachings referenced in *Ways of the Absolute*”, figures the Russianized surname *Virt*, i.e., Wirth.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Dugin, *Puti Absoliuta*, “Foreword”.

Chapter 2: Eurasian Ariosophy

Arktogeia and the Continent

In the year following Dugin's first work, *The Ways of the Absolute*, in 1990 Dugin founded the Historico-Religious Association "Arktogeia", which would serve as both the headquarters of the intellectual and political networks that he was establishing and as Dugin's own publishing house. Rather telling as to one of the Yuzhinsky Circle and Dugin's pools of esoteric inspirations by this time, "Arktogeia" is in fact a Russianization of *Arktogäa* which, as we have already seen, was the name given to the postulated Nordic Urheimat of the primordial wisdom tradition of the Aryans employed by the Austrian founding fathers of the völkisch occultist current of Ariosophy, Guido von List and Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. This was also a theme shared by the leading Traditionalist philosophers, Guénon and Evola, and the related völkisch scholar Herman Wirth. The "Manifesto of Arktogeia" characteristically introduces the name:

Arktogeia literally means "Northern Country." It is the mythical continent that once existed at the North Pole but which has long since disappeared from both physical reality and short-lived human memory. With it disappeared the spiritual axis of Being, the World Tree, which imparted traditions and religions with light-bringing, transformative meaning. Arktogeia is the missing center. It does not exist for modern humanity, therefore this humanity is doomed and will soon disappear...Arktogeia - the elite of the missing continent, the princes of the nonexistent country - moves in all directions.²⁸⁶

The later international, English-language version, "Arctogaia", presented itself thusly:

ARCTOGAIA is the association of intellectuals who study religious traditions, cultures and history of world nations. The association's activities are focused on the development of closer ties between each two world's religions and nations on the background of one, pre-historic, all-human, primordial tradition, which is subject to reconstruction. The special attention is paid to traditional being of peoples of the Eurasian continent. Eurasian traditional life style, culture, confessions are the major subjects of Arctogaia's researches as well as the influence the Eurasians had on the universal historical process. The members of the association also study the profound principles of social and political ideologies and movements.²⁸⁷

The Arktogeia manifesto lists 31 "formulas for opposing the modern world" as well as 47 "archetypal personalities which are central to our cause." Taken together, these "ideological lists", published as part of Dugin's first manifesto, are so explicitly telling as to the ideological climate and inspirations of the emerging Dugin and the Yuzhinsky Circle so as to merit reproduction in full:

²⁸⁶ "Manifest Arktogeei", *Arktogeia* (1991/1996) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/index1.htm>] [<http://arcto.ru/article/46>] [<http://my.arcto.ru/public/index1.htm>].

²⁸⁷ "Arctogaia Manifesto" (2001) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/eng/>].

Orthodoxy (revolutionary + esoteric-hesychastic)	René Guénon
Islam (Iranian, Shiite, revolutionary + Sufism)	Julius Evola
Traditionalism	Avvakum Petrov
Conservative Revolution	Karl Marx
National Bolshevism	Konstantin Leontiev
Third Way	George Sorel
Eurasianism (+Neo-Eurasianism)	Ernst Junger
Russia	Baron Ungern
Socialism	Martin Heidegger
Islamic socialism	Ernst Niekisch
Nationalism	Nikolai Ustrialov
Non-conformism	Arthur Moeller van den Bruck
Anarchism from the right (and from the left)	Karl Haushofer
Social Revolution	György Lukács
Extremism	Friedrich Nietzsche
Alternative Geopolitics	Jean Thiriart
Cultural radicalism	Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Hard-mysticism	Carl Schmitt
Subversive counter-culture	Georges Bataille
Hard-occultism	Herman Wirth
Continentalism (in geopolitics)	Jean Parvulesco
Apocalyptic terror	Carl Jung
Tantrism	Lev Gumilev
Dzogchen	Herbert Marcuse
Eschatologism	Guy Debord
New Right (“Nouvelle Droite” in the French-Italian sense, not the Anglo-Saxon “new right”)	Gottfried Benn
New Left	Nikolai Trubetzkoy
Anti-capitalism	Ramiro Ledesma Ramos
Revolutionary syndicalism	Boris Savinkov
Final Empire	Petr Savitsky
New Aeon	Nikolai Klyuev
Last Judgement	Lautréamont
and other synonyms (according to Armin Mohler)	Ayatollah Khomeini
	Jean-Paul Sartre
	Ali Shariati
	Henry Corbin
	Louis-Ferdinand Céline
	Mircea Eliade
	Ezra Pound
	Sri Ramana Maharshi
	Gilles Deleuze
	Arthur Rimbaud
	Mikhail Bakunin
	Georges Dumézil
	Alain de Benoist
	Che Guevara
	Johnny Rotten
	and others...

This extremely diverse, seemingly eclectic combination of references claimed by Dugin for his *Arktogeia Manifesto* can be contextualized within the legacy of the Yuzhinsky Circle, which we reconstructed in the previous chapter, and in part within Dugin’s own emerging ideological trajectory. All of these references acquire relevance in light of the Yuzhinsky Circle’s schizoid, bohemian, aggressively rebellious counter-cultural syncretism and propensity towards radicalism, as betray, perhaps somewhat parodically, the references to the

Sex Pistols frontman Johnny Rotten (1956-) and the Russian Socialist Revolutionary assassin Boris Savinkov (1879-1925). The Yuzhinsky Circle's Traditionalist favorites, Guénon and Evola, are present first and foremost on the list. Other French and German authors, such as those related to the Conservative Revolution, betray the legacies of Golovin and Dzhemal, who is also undoubtedly the source for the Islamic references. The apocalyptic, eschatological, and even "violent" and "revolutionary" references in the Arktoгеia Manifesto also reflect the gnostic tones of the circle which Dugin converted into his particular "eschatological gnosis" in *Puti Absoliuta*. It is also worth noting the absence of any other explicitly esoteric or occultist authors besides Guénon and Evola, a fact which was probably purposeful in light of *Puti Absoliuta*'s emphatic demand that Dugin be seen as a loyal Guénonian Traditionalist.

The Arktoгеia Manifesto also demonstrates Dugin's first articulation of a (geo-)political translation of his ideas. The "people of Arktoгеia", Dugin writes, stand for the "world of Tradition, the world of the Pole, the world of Being, the world of Arktoгaa" in a planetary "*Endkampf und Endsieg*" against the "Antichrist", identified as the "Liberal West" and "liberal-capitalist model" in general, and the "Atlanticist Evil Empire, the USA" in particular.²⁸⁸ Along with these affirmations, the Arktoгеia Manifesto stands out as a major development in Dugin's ideological trajectory for a number of reasons. On the one hand, the style of the manifesto itself, with its interweaving of cryptic and explicit narrative ultimately painting a cosmic duel, is unmistakably reminiscent of *Le Matin des magiciens*. The explicit claims to Tradition, the Pole, the North, and "Arktoгеia" itself are also lucid illustrations of Dugin's Yuzhinsky Circle esoteric heritage, particularly with regards to Traditionalism and völkisch occultism. On the other hand, numerous names on the manifesto's list are indicative of a new series of acquaintances and sources which Dugin was establishing simultaneously with the launch of his Arktoгеia center.

Thanks most likely to Mamleev and Dzhemal's intellectual contacts and to correspondences which Dugin himself sought out, starting in 1989 Dugin embarked on a series of European "tours", particularly to France, Belgium, Spain, and Italy, where he met a number of authors and activists who would play formative roles in Dugin's ideological and political trajectory. In France in 1990, Dugin met the founder of the Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (or GRECE, "Research and Study Group for European Civilization") and the leading philosopher of the European New Right, Alain de Benoist (1943-), who "recalls being struck by how remarkably well informed the Russian [Dugin] was about what was being published in the West [and] seemed to have read almost everything de Benoist had ever written."²⁸⁹ De Benoist, his works' references, and the New Right trend he headed are virtually inseparable from nearly half of the Arktoгеia list.²⁹⁰ Also in France, Dugin established contact with another GRECE member, the Belgian New Right

²⁸⁸ "*Manifest Arktoгеii*", *Arktoгеia* (1991/1996) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/index1.htm>] [<http://arcto.ru/article/46>] [<http://my.arcto.ru/public/index1.htm>].

²⁸⁹ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 175-176.

²⁹⁰ On De Benoist, see: Camus, "Alain de Benoist and the New Right".

author and activist Robert Steuckers (1958-), whose publication initiatives impactfully introduced Dugin to the theories of Geopolitics, and who was also a co-author with Dzhemal's major source for Conservative Revolution and völkisch occultist references, Armin Mohler.²⁹¹ Next to Steuckers, Dugin met another Belgian radical, the founder of the Jeune Europe movement, Jean-François Thiriart (1922-1992), famous for his proposal for a "Euro-Soviet Empire" and an aesthetically aggressive ideological syncretism emically christened "National Bolshevism" or "Pan-Europeanism."²⁹² Another French-language intellectual with whom Dugin entered into collaboration was the Romanian-born author and "conspirologist" with Traditionalist affinities, Jean Parvulesco (1929-2010), who wrote a series of "occult-conspirological" novels that strikingly resemble the style and content of *Le Matin des magiciens* and feature many of the genre's "Nazi occultist" conspiracies.²⁹³ Dugin's *Le Matin des magiciens*-derived "conspirological" and Guénon-driven Traditionalist interests, fresh out of the Yuzhinsky Circle, were not restricted to Parvulesco's literature, but branched out further: in Italy, Dugin established contact with a Traditionalist member of Thiriart's Jeune Europe and an associate of Parvulesco's, Claudio Mutti (1946-). As for Spain, Dugin came into contact with the Society of the Thule Group, which published and organized conferences on Ariosophy, Serrano and Savitri Devi.²⁹⁴

None of the texts which Dugin might have authored in this period of 1989-1990 seem to have been published in their original forms: one essay entitled "Julius Evola - Pagan Imperialist" is dated 1990, but would only be published later, in 1994, as part of Dugin's anthology *The Conservative Revolution* and as the afterword to a new Arktogeia edition of Dugin's translation of Evola's *Pagan Imperialism*.²⁹⁵ Another text, "The Conservative Revolution: The Third Way", says that it was written in 1990 as part of a seminar at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, but was ultimately rejected for publication, thereafter being published by Dugin later, in 1992 and 1994, when Dugin also presented a similar paper, "Evola, the Conservative Revolution, and Metaphysics" to the Julius Evola Foundation, which would be published in the European New Right journal

²⁹¹ Shekhovtsov, "Alexander Dugin and the West European New Right", 37.

²⁹² On Thiriart, see: Edouard Rix, "Jean Thiriart: The Machiavelli of United Europe," *North American New Right* 1 (2010): 412-423.

²⁹³ On Parvulesco, see: Philip Coppens, "Men of Mystery: Raymond Abellio and Jean Parvulesco - Their Vision of a New Europe", *New Dawn* 111 (November-December 2008) [<https://www.newdawnmagazine.com/articles/men-of-mystery-raymond-abellio-jean-parvulesco-their-vision-of-a-new-europe/>]; Godwin, *Arktos*, 73-76. See: Alexander Dugin, "The Star of the Invisible Empire: Jean Parvulesco", *Eurasianist Internet Archive* (2019) [<https://eurasianist-archive.com/2019/05/06/the-star-of-the-invisible-empire-jean-parvulesco/>].

²⁹⁴ Shekhovtsov, "Alexander Dugin and the West European New Right", 40-43.

²⁹⁵ Dugin, "*Julius Evola, iazycheskii imperialist*", *Konservativnaia Revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 1994). [<http://arcto.ru/article/22>].

Nouvelles de Synergies européennes.²⁹⁶ Be that as it may, at first glance, the esoteric connections with regards to Dugin's inspirations and sources in this emergent period are clearly present: all of these authors, milieus, and currents were in one way or another related in the history of ideas to the Traditionalist, Conservative Revolutionist, völkisch occultist, "Nazi occultist", conspiratorial, and other themes and legacies of the Yuzhinsky Circle. Just which of these sources Dugin had internalized to the point of commitment in his next published ideological pronouncement was revealed in Dugin's second book, released by Arktogeia in 1991: *Misterii Evrazii* ("Mysteries of Eurasia").

Mysteries of Eurasia

Already in the foreword to *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Dugin leaves no doubt as to the work's specific esoteric inspirations, sources, allegiances, and audience. Dugin states: "This work is based entirely on the Tradition in the sphere of which the highest authority is René Guénon", whose *The Crisis of the Modern World* and *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* are explicitly cited in the opening sentences. The specific Traditional(ist) aim of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Dugin writes, "is to study the sacred geography of precisely this continent and especially its central part, which long ago became the country of the Russians." This sacred geography, attributed to Guénon, is defined as: "a part of Tradition associated with the qualitative structure of space and the symbolism of parts of the world, continents, landscapes, etc. Tradition affirms that the place in which this or that people lives, in addition to a physical dimension, also has a metaphysical dimension corresponding to some spiritual archetypes beyond the material."²⁹⁷

By engaging in this "sacred geographical" study of Russian lands, Dugin aims to illustrate two main theses. The first concerns the relevance of Russia within Tradition itself, which Dugin prefaces: "Russia is located at the center of the Eurasian continent, and this central position, from a sacred point of view, is neither arbitrary nor accidental."²⁹⁸ The second major motivation of *Mysteries of Eurasia* concerns the relevance of Guénon's Traditionalism and its applicability to the Russian context: "For Russia and Russians, following Guénon means appealing to Russian Orthodoxy and the sacred Russian tradition whose traces are preserved in icons, hagiographies, chronicles, temples, our legends, myths, fairy tales, proverbs, the mysterious Russian language, our ancient literature, our national soul, and our great and glorious history."²⁹⁹ This dual engagement of Tradition and the "sacred identity" of Russia and the Russian people sets the defining, underlying approach of

²⁹⁶ Dugin, "Konservativnaiia Revoliutsiia - Tretii Put'", *Elementy* 1 (1992), *Konservativnaiia Revoliutsiia* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 1994). [<http://arcto.ru/article/21>]; Alexandre Douguine, "Evola, Revolution conservatrice et Metaphysique (Intervention d'Alexandre Douguine au colloque de la Fondation Evola)," *Nouvelles de Synergies européennes*. 6 (1994).

²⁹⁷ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 1991), "Foreword", [<http://arctogaia.com/public/mistevr/mistevr0.htm>].

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

Mysteries of Eurasia and reflects the work's two main esoteric sources, namely, Traditionalist and völkisch occultist discourses and works.

While the foreword proclaims “sacred geography” as a Traditionalist inquiry to be the unifying theme of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, the book itself is divided into two parts, “The Mysteries of Continents” and “Russian Sacrality: Doctrines and Symbols”, each of which contains a series of semi-continuous thematic chapters. Very similar to the style of *Le Matin des magiciens*, in *Mysteries of Eurasia* Dugin alternates between distanced analysis and passionate imperatives, constantly switches between passive and active voices, and purports to be drawing upon both “ancient esoteric knowledge” and modern trends in science, scholarship, and geopolitics to illuminate the contours and significance of the cosmic situation. Like *Morning of the Magicians*, *Mysteries of Eurasia* simply defies brief summation of its wide range of claims, references, and theses established in labyrinthine pattern across its pages. The most adequate approach to deciphering the significance of *Mysteries of Eurasia* in Dugin's intellectual development would therefore be to examine just which sources, cited and un-cited, Dugin draws upon in his “sacred geographical” discourse. This “sacred geography” of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, as we saw in the foreword and will see in an analysis of several key chapters below, is primarily rooted in Traditionalist works and discourses, is heavily weighted in the works of Herman Wirth, and strongly resembles the ideas of völkisch occultism. Multiple concepts, “methodologies”, terms, and discourses are critically derived from these currents and synthesized by Dugin in a narrative that is, on the one hand, principally Traditionalist-inspired and explained in terms of Traditionalist notions, yet, on the other hand, is clearly inclined towards the making of an “esoteric subject” out of the Russian *Volk* and reconstructing the “Russian tradition,” an endeavor characteristic of the völkisch occultist currents with which Dugin must have been familiar.

The particular place of Russian “sacred geography” and the “Russian tradition” within Tradition as a whole, and the sources upon which Dugin relies to illustrate such, are revealed already in the first chapter, “Continent Russia.” This first chapter of *Mysteries of Eurasia* aims to define the “secret enigma of Russian patriotism”, i.e., to understand why “Russia has never recognized itself to be something purely ethnic” and why, by contrast, “she [Russia] is a reality of a higher level, a reality of the geosacred Tradition in which different peoples had their proper place.”³⁰⁰ The notion that “Russian patriotism...in no way can be reduced to the banal nationalism of a particular ethnic group” is explained with the “revelation” that Russia is not merely a country, but a Continent, one whose “psychology” and “archetype” of “Inner Russia” is: “in its deepest dimension identified with ‘Paradise’, with the territories of the Golden Age, and moreover, with the symbolism of Hyperborea, Varahi, and the Vanir-Ivan tillers.”³⁰¹ Thus, the first “mystery of Eurasia” is that “Continent Russia” corresponds to the Pole, the North, and Hyperborea. Russia and the Russian people therefore occupy a central position in the cosmic cycle, and the memory of the “Hyperborean heritage” of Russia is presented as scattered across Indo-European languages and myths, among which Dugin

³⁰⁰ Aleksandr Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, in *Absoliutnaia Rodina* (Moscow: Arktogetia, 1999), 579.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 588.

analyzes Greek, Norse, Zoroastrian, and Hindu myths. By occupying the Russian sacred-geographical space, Dugin unveils, the Russian people is therefore “theophorically soaked in” and entrusted with the Hyperborean legacy of these lands in the cosmic cycle of Tradition. Most dramatically, Dugin writes:

“Russian patriotism” is imbued with a cosmic fate and is not only a fact of history. He who lives and learns Russia lives and learns the secret bequeathed to distant generations of ancestors who fought under the banner of Alexander the Great, galloped across the steppes among Tatar cavalry, worshipped the Son of God in Byzantium, lit the sacred fires on the altars of Ahura-Mazda, listened to the teachings of the druids under the oaks of Europe, beheld in spiritual ecstasy the eternal dance of Shiva-Nataraja, built the ziggurats of Assyria, destroyed Carthage, and sailed the seas in boats with the curved neck of the Hyperborean Swan at the nose, always remembering the Heart of the World, the “golden heart of Russia” (Nikolai Gumilev) and ‘Mystical Russia.’³⁰²

Initiation into this “mystery of Eurasia” is, in the conclusion to the first chapter, also attributed the eschatological significance of *The Ways of the Absolute* that is to be developed throughout the book:

We are approaching an important spiritual milestone. Global forces are stretched to the limit, and in many ways the fate of our country today determines the fate of the planet. Therefore, it is important to break through to the depths of the sacrality of Russia and its prehistoric roots in order to understand its strange and sorrowful path, and to muster strength for the revival of the Holy Country and the rebirth of Continent Russia together with its secret, permafrost-covered center.³⁰³

Dugin’s arrival at these conclusions is based on lines of argumentation and conceptualization which can be seen as inspired by primarily Traditionalist and völkisch occultist sources. The astrological and numerological calculations employed to identify Russia as the Pole at the “center of the Eurasian circle of evolution” are from Gaston Georgel’s 1937 *Les Rythmes dans l’Histoire*, a work to which Guénon paid two critical, although largely encouraging reviews which led to an exchange of correspondences with Georgel.³⁰⁴ The numerous references to aspects of Tradition and much of the mythological data which Dugin employs are at times paraphrases of passages from Julius Evola’s 1934 *Revolt Against the Modern World*, although such is not cited in the first chapter. Mircea Eliade’s discourse on the relationship between nature and culture from *L’épreuve de labyrinthe* and Jean Chevalier (1906-1993) and Alain Gheerbrant’s (1920-2013) 1969 *Dictionary of Symbols*’ entry on the subconscious symbolism of “continents” are cited as testimonies for the fact that Continents can have a “sacred psychology” and that there exist such phenomena as “national, racial, or continental memory”, which Dugin relates, à la Guénon and Evola, to cycles and aspects of the “archetypal unity of traditions.”³⁰⁵ As a testimony to the legacy of the interests of the

³⁰² Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 589.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 589-590.

³⁰⁴ Gaston Georgel, *Les Rythmes dans l’Histoire* (Milano: Arche, 1981); Joscelyn Godwin, “When Does the Kali Yuga End?”, *New Dawn* 138 (May-June, 2013); Guénon, *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, 10-12.

³⁰⁵ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 588.

Yuzhinsky Circle, Dugin even applies Carl Jung's term "collective unconscious" to such "continental memory."

However, just as telling as to the esoteric sources of Dugin's discourse on Russia-Hyperborea are the sources which are not yet admitted in the footnotes in the first chapter. In Dugin's conceptualization presented here, the identity of the Russian space within Tradition can be discerned on the basis of "linguistic archetypes...toponyms, myths, legends, and even in the ordinary correspondences between symbols and words."³⁰⁶ One such case, by which Dugin argues that the "Russian tradition" was "not abolished but transformed by Christianity into a new synthetic unity", is rather telling.³⁰⁷ Dugin writes: "One canonical example of this is the summer festival of the Prophet Elijah, who became the Orthodox expression of the old Aryan 'god' of thunder, sky, and light, *Il* (from the same root of the ancient Russian word for 'sun', *solntse*, which in old Aryan means 'good light')." The latter statement is highly disputable from a linguistic standpoint, since *Il-* is the Semitic-Akkadian root for "god" while in Indo-European languages the root *il-* or *ilu-* in fact has a semantic range of "dirty", "black", or even "impure."³⁰⁸ The association which Dugin draws here does, however, have precedence in none other than völkisch occultist sources and Wirth's works. In general, the "revelation" of scattered references to the Aryan *Wihinei* through the deconstruction of loose phonetic correspondences was a precedent extensively established by List in his "folk etymology", who translated *lio-* and *sal-* as "light" and "holiness", and related to salvation.³⁰⁹ Liebenfels, who was educated in Ancient Near Eastern languages during his monastic service, saw the most explicit references to the miscegenetic Fall in Assyrian and Babylonian myths and inscriptions.³¹⁰ List, Liebenfels, and Wirth's expressions on this historical region were part of a wider völkisch discourse which "regarded Babylonian culture as a heritage of the Sumerians, whom they identified as early Aryan colonizers of Mesopotamia."³¹¹ These precedents in the very völkisch occultist sources after which Dugin named his Arktogeia Center strongly resonate with Dugin's discourse in *Mysteries of Eurasia*. Most specifically, however, the notion that *il-* is an "Aryan root" pertaining to both a season and a divinity is a direct borrowing from Herman Wirth's *Die Heilige Urschrift der Menschheit*.³¹²

In *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Dugin references Wirth 70 times - more than any other author. In so doing, Dugin treats Wirth as an authoritative source for substantiating his Traditionalist and völkisch occultist discourse. In a later addition to *Mysteries of Eurasia*,

³⁰⁶ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 577.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ *Proto-Indo-European Etymological Dictionary: A Revised Edition of Julius Pokorny's Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (2007), 1405.

³⁰⁹ List, *The Religion of the Aryo-Germanic Folk*, 37.

³¹⁰ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 93, 99; See: Liebenfels, *Theozoology, or the Science of the Sodomite Apelings and the Divine Electron - An Introduction to the Most Ancient and Most Modern Philosophy and a Justification of the Monarchy and the Nobility* (Europa-House: 2004).

³¹¹ Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 147.

³¹² Wirth, *Die Heilige Urschrift der Menschheit*, 767-778. See: Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 147.

Dugin explains: “Wirth’s discoveries are incomparably more important to our understanding of the origins of the human spirit than the works of many other authors.”³¹³ Dugin claims to have discovered the extremely rare works of Wirth’s un-perused in the private library of Alain de Benoist, which therefore means between 1989 and 1991, as well as in a Soviet storage room (the location of which is undisclosed) where they were supposedly left in poor shape since the Red Army confiscated them from Berlin in 1945.³¹⁴ Tellingly enough as to Dugin’s evidently intimate familiarity with Wirth’s corpus, the whole eighth chapter of *Mysteries of Eurasia* is devoted to critically discussing Wirth’s analysis of the Oera Linda Chronicle, which Dugin suggests evidences the “potency” of the “sacral-racial myth” of the “archetypes of Eurasia.”³¹⁵

In the second chapter, “The Unconscious of Eurasia”, Dugin introduces, for the first time, his appreciation for the Eurasianist school, calling them “the most profound Russian thinkers of the 20th century” responsible for revealing the Turanian dimension of Russia: “In their conceptions...the Russian ethnos (in the supranational sense of the word) is considered to be the modern carrier of Turanism, a special imperial psycho-ideology accordingly passed down to the people of Rus by the Turkic-Mongolian tribes of the Horde...For many Eurasianists, Russia-Turan was a supra-political concept whose value was defined by its geopolitical mission.” However, Dugin promptly qualifies: “The intuition of the Eurasianists proved to be quite true, but the origins of this concept stretch back to pre-history, to the epochs prior not only to the conquests of Genghis Khan and his successors, but also prior to even the appearance of Slavs on Russian lands. Where did Russia-Turan come from?”³¹⁶ If in the first chapter Dugin sought to argue that Russia occupied a sacred role by virtue of its correspondence to the Pole and Hyperborea of the Indo-European or Aryan tradition, then “The Unconscious of Eurasia” is dedicated to arguing that Russia-Eurasia is also the corresponding heir of the Eastern, Turanian tradition, a thesis which is presented as a crucial “correction” of Wirth and Evola’s models of the “cultural morphology of the Primordial Tradition.”

While in line with Guénon and Evola’s shared thesis that the present cosmic cycle has seen a shift from a North-South polarity towards a West-East polarity, Dugin argues that the Eastern pole, represented in the current arrangement of sacred-geographical space by Siberia, i.e., Russia, is the bearer of a second link to the “pre-” or “proto-Aryan” Tradition: the Turanian tradition. Dugin accepts Wirth and Evola’s model’s postulation of a Nordic civilization which diffused from the North-West to the South-East as one “Atlantic dominant of ancient cultural migrations.” However, Dugin criticizes the “Atlantic Western-centrism” of such, which he ties to “Atlanticism”, or a sacred-geographically inspired “ideological preconception which saturates Western culture”, one that “was revived by Alexander the Great, Rome, the German emperors, Napoleon, the British Empire, Adolf Hitler, and the

³¹³ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, in *Absolutnaia Rodina* (1999), 691.

³¹⁴ Dugin, *Filosofia traditsionalizma*, (Moscow: Arktogeia, 2002), 139-140.

³¹⁵ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 673-686.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 591-592.

contemporary ideologists of NATO...and its undisputed political leader today...the United States, the ‘New Atlantis.’” This Atlantic pole of Eurasia, Dugin argues, has intersected, historically come into conflict with, and “arrogantly” belittled a Turanian tradition which diffused from the North-East, from Siberia and Mongolia, to the South-West, which Dugin suggests solves the question of the “so-called secret origin of the Sumerians.” Dugin thus postulates the existence of a Great Tradition of Turan, to which Russia is heir as the bearer of Siberia and the “Turanism” of the Eurasianists: “It is in Turanism that the Eastern component of Russian geopolitical specificity has been discovered and it is through Turanism, the East, and Siberia that Russians themselves can and should find the path to their own national ‘I.’”³¹⁷ Thus, Dugin surmises, it is up to the Turanian East, Russia, to initiate “a new holy alliance of the Eurasian North and the Eurasian South”, based on a “sacred alliance with those countries and nations of the East which are fighting for geopolitical autarchy and the restoration of traditional values against the modern world and Atlanticist, American aggression.” Again with eschatological anticipations, Dugin concludes: “He who knows the depths of Eurasia’s unconscious, the stability of its imperial archetypes, the strength of the pole, and its reflection in the traditions of nations and races cannot give up hope and faith in the great awakening.”³¹⁸ Even more dramatically, Dugin implies that the “identification of Hyperborea as Atlantis and the North as the West in the writings of Wirth ultimately led the imperial military will of Germany in a certain direction, making the Anglo-Saxons (Atlanticists) potential allies and the Turanists enemies.” Reminiscent of *Le Matin des magiciens*, Dugin assesses the Second World War thusly: “Therefore, the issue of identifying the North and Hyperborea (which was an absolute value to the Nazis’ mythologized worldview) as the West and Atlantis was of key significance and might have ultimately tipped the scales in favor of certain geopolitical decisions on this or that matter.”³¹⁹ On the same note, perhaps also inspired by *Le Matin des magiciens*, Karl Haushofer is portrayed as in tune to the “perspective of traditional sacred geography” and the “collective unconscious.”

With regards to the sacred geography of “European Russia”, in the fourth chapter Dugin references the “Hyperborean Dacia” of the Romanian correspondent of Guénon, Vasile Lovinescu (“Geticus”, 1905-1984), as proof of Rus’ Hyperborean identity.³²⁰ In the same chapter, Dugin meticulously applies Wirth’s symbolological theories to Russian folk art and folk tales, ultimately suggesting that European Russian’s regional sacred geography corresponds to the “Northern”, “Salvational” pole of Wirth’s sacred yearly cycle and sacred proto-script. In the examination of various Russian toponyms and folk elements, Dugin invokes “sacred linguistics” and “folk etymology” as an approach capable of revealing the Hyperborean elements embedded in Russian culture. In particular, Dugin summons “Slavic

³¹⁷ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 592-594, 596-597.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 600-601.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 598.

³²⁰ Geticus, *La Dacia Iperborea* (Parma, 1984); On Guénon and Lovinescu, see: Jean-Pierre Laurant, “Pour une typologie thématique de la correspondance de René Guénon: l’exemple de l’échange avec Vasile Lovinescu”, in Hans Thomas Hakl, *Octagon: La recherche de perfection* (Scientia Nova, 2018): 129-135.

Nirukta”, i.e., Vedic etymological hermeneutics, which was treated by Guénon as a “traditional science.”³²¹ At the same time, Dugin’s invocation of “folk etymology” is reminiscent of the idea of the same name employed by Guido von List, whose “mystical-syllabic” etymological operations and distinct brand of runological hermeneutics, termed *kala*, were compared to “the methods laid down by Indian mystics who analyze Sanskrit words in a similar metalinguistic manner.”³²²

In these narratives of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Russia is allotted the cosmic mission of both the Hyperborean, Aryan North, and the Turanian, “metaphysical” East. This mission is not only that of the Golden Age of the Primordial Tradition, but as such is also distinctly eschatological. The synthesis of these theses in *Mysteries of Eurasia* finds particularly explicit expression in the following formulation:

In accordance with the shifting trajectory of the supreme center of Tradition, it can be said that it is precisely along this line, which connects Eastern, subterranean Agarththa with the North Pole, that the decisive events of the end of the Kali-Yuga, our iron age, should logically unfold. It is difficult to understand the transformations ongoing in the geopolitical space of Russia otherwise than as signs of the times heralding the proximity of this threshold. As always in epochs of global turmoil, the sacred memory of the continent is coming alive in Russia in the peoples of these regions today...In this situation, it is necessary to offer clear account of the sacred significance of the “white pledge” and all the peoples of Eurasia who, by virtue of their Hyperborean heritage, are the descendants of the great builders of the Eurasian Empire.³²³

Additional insight into Dugin’s worldview and sources in *Mysteries of Eurasia* is to be found in the eighth chapter, “Russian Orthodoxy and Initiation”, in which Dugin expands on his introductory remark that “for Russia and Russians, following Guénon means appealing to Russian Orthodoxy and the sacred Russian tradition.” In this crucial chapter, whose culmination in another of Dugin’s early works will be further contextualized and analyzed in chapter three, Dugin advances two highly ambitious theses: (1) Russian Orthodox Christianity is an authentically initiatic tradition from a Traditionalist standpoint, and (2) the Russian people’s “conscience” and “soul” itself bears a certain initiatic propensity. As follows, Dugin declares that it is up to a Russian “spiritual elite” to confront the Antichrist, and ties this mission to Russia itself: “If the possibility of salvation still exists for our ‘counter-initiatic’ civilization, then does ‘initiatic’ Orthodox Russia not remain the best place for ascension?”³²⁴ In the course of his critical application of Guénon’s concepts of “esoterism”, “initiation”, and “counter-initiation” to Orthodox theology and Church history, Dugin displays intimate familiarity with Guénon’s life, works, and clearly identifies with his philosophy in critically (positively) employing it. Rather tellingly, Dugin follows Guénon in assigning the label of “counter-initiatic” to all “the pseudo-initiatic occult and theosophist societies in the 19th century which later formed the basis of what has come to be called ‘neo-

³²¹ Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, 193-194.

³²² List, *The Religion of the Aryo-Germanic Folk*, vi; Flowers, List, *The Secret of the Runes*, 23, 29, 77-78, 116 f. 35.

³²³ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 643-644.

³²⁴ Dugin, “Russian Orthodoxy and Initiation.”

spiritualism' (Guénon ranked among such 'neo-spiritualisms': magnetism, spiritism, the Theosophism of Madame Blavatsky and Besant, the occultism of Papus, the Anthroposophy of Steiner, and all other extensions and variations of such neo-mysticist and pseudo-esoteric trends).³²⁵ Dugin's affirmation of Guénon's notions of initiation and counter-initiation is subsequently translated into a particularly transparent appraisal of the Russian people as the bearers of, in the very least, "virtual initiation" which, by virtue of the roots of the "Russian phenomenon" itself, is endowed with the mission of "casting the 'Nation of the Red Beast' into the Spiritual Heavens of the Holy Trinity much like Christ himself, freeing Old Adam from the snares of hell."³²⁶ This thesis, while indeed prefaced and formulated in Traditionalist terms, is clearly resonant with the discourses of völkisch occultism.

Secrets of the Century

Any doubt as to Dugin's knowledge of völkisch occultist sources would be dispelled by the appearance of a samizdat journal entitled *Hyperborea: The Intellectual Organ of the New Forces of the North*, published out of Vilnius in 1991. The journal, supposedly the Russian edition of the Spanish Thule Group's publication of the same name, is adorned with the slogan "AREHISOSUR", which was Guido von List's formula for the "lost master-word," "the unutterable name of God" and the "philosopher's stone" sought after by the Armanenschaft.³²⁷ The front flap also features a Russian translation of the "Armanentreue ritual chant" of the Guido von List Society. That Dugin was behind *Hyperborea* is suggested by the fact that most of the articles and translations are attributed to Hans Sievers, Dugin himself, "Alexander Sternberg", and "L. Okhotin," a pseudonym under which Dugin subsequently wrote for the newspaper *Den'*.³²⁸ Although a second issue of *Hyperborea* was announced, it seems to never have been published.

In his editorial in *Hyperborea*, "The Occult War of the Seniors", Dugin elaborates the contours of a global metaphysical conspiracy in which "history is not a blindly determined process and is not a game of chance, but is a great spiritual war between two principal positions, an arena of battle between angels and demons, and the subjects of this history are not people, but supra-human and sub-human forces acting through people."³²⁹ This planetary conspiracy, explained in terms from Guénon and Evola and articulated in the spirit of *Morning of the Magicians*, is presented as Tradition vs. Global Subversion, Initiation vs. Counter-Initiation, and the Conservative Counter Revolution vs. "Counter-Initiatic Centers" and "Ideologies of the Modern World", dualisms which are reflected in a fundamentally negative trajectory of the cosmos and on the levels of different political ideologies and conspiratorial blocs. Dugin takes Guénon and Evola's notions of Counter-Initiation as the

³²⁵ Dugin, "Russian Orthodoxy and Initiation."

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 57.

³²⁸ Dugin, "Ugroza Mondializma - 2 (8 let spustia)" (1999) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/vtor22.htm>].

³²⁹ Dugin, "Okkul'tnaia voina sen'orov" in *Giperboreia* (Vilnius: Fravarti, 1991), 71.

central term encompassing the “global subversion of the world of Tradition” and the deep force lurking behind the “ideologies of the modern world.”³³⁰ Overall, the text reads heavily like Evola’s 1953 *Men Among the Ruins*’ discussion of conspiracies and the “occult war”, and indeed the only sources Dugin cites are Evola’s latter work, his 1934 *Revolt Against the Modern World*, his 1961 *Ride the Tiger*, and Guénon’s 1927 *Crisis of the Modern World*.

The noteworthiness of this early text of Dugin’s lies in its foreshadowing of one of the major themes that would characterize a series of Dugin’s works into the late 1990’s, namely: an interest in constructing and deconstructing “conspirology” from a Traditionalist perspective. On the one hand, this drift towards a conspiratorial narrative of history in terms of opposing “orders”, “blocs”, and “occult war” is especially relevantly contextualizable in light of Dugin’s established exchange with Jean Parvulesco, who also supposedly gave Dugin the manuscript of his “conspirological report” in 1991.³³¹ In addition, at this time Dugin had established contact with the French scholarly association for the study of esotericism, *Politica Hermetica*, which organized a colloquium on conspiracy theories and esotericism, “Le Complot”, at which Dugin presented a paper on Russian Cosmism.³³² On the other hand, the origins of this narrative in Dugin’s arsenal by all means date back to the Yuzhinsky Circle’s reading of *Le Matin des magiciens*, and are formulated in the discourse of one of his key esoteric sources: Dugin explicitly colors this conspiracy as of Traditionalist extraction, formulated in terms from Guénon and Evola, as of Tradition against Counter-Initiation. That this text figures between evocations of the North and references to Guido von List demonstrates the particular sources which we have traced in Dugin’s esoteric grammarology up to this point.

The discontinued publication of *Hyperborea* was followed by the launch of Dugin’s own journal, *Mily Angel: ezotericheskoe reviu* (“Sweet Angel” or “Enchanted Angel”: Esoteric Review) in November 1991. The journal presents itself as “the first and so far the only journal standing on radical Traditionalist positions” and declares its main goal to be the “Restoration of the Integral Tradition.”³³³ The sub-title of the journal is: “Metaphysics, Tradition, Esotericism, Angelology, Initiation, Symbology, Eschatology, Sacred Geography, Traditional Sciences”, and an editorial statement stresses that *Mily Angel* is “oriented exclusively towards the intellectual and spiritual elite.” The first issue is populated with articles on and translations of Guénon and Evola, texts arguing in favor of the traditional, initiatic quality of Russian Orthodox iconography, sections on Sufism and alchemy, and an

³³⁰ On Guénon and “counter-initiation”, see: Jean-Pierre Laurant, “Contre-Initiation, Complot et Histoire chez René Guénon”, *Politica Hermetica* 6 (1992): 93-101.

³³¹ According to Dugin, in 1991, Parvulesco gave him a manuscript entitled “The GRU Galaxy: The Secret Mission of Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR, and the Future of the Great Eurasian Continent”, supposedly submitted by Parvulesco to his own “think-tank”, the Atlantis Institute of Special Metastrategic Studies. This text is advertised as the main source of Dugin’s 1991-1992 “The Great War of Continents”, discussed below.

³³² Alexandre Douguine, “Le complot idéologique du cosmisme russe”, *Politica Hermetica* 6 (1992): 80-93. See: George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and his Followers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³³³ *Mily Angel* 1 (1991).

entry “About our authorities”, which spells out a Traditionalist canon: Evola, Guénon, Michel Valsan, Schuon, Burckhardt, Jean-Henri Probst-Biraben, Guido de Giorgio, Marco Pallis, Gaston Georgel, and “many others.”³³⁴ Most notably, a section entitled “Conspirology” comprises two texts promoting *Politica Hermetica*, but in a series of emphatic editorial inserts, Dugin stresses that while *Mily Angel* is also interested in investigating “links between occult currents and groups and political phenomena” with “impartiality and purely scientific rigor”, the journal’s “strictly Traditionalist position” differs from the “categorical academicism of *Politica Hermetica*.”

This Traditionalist journal was followed in 1992 by Dugin’s launch of the magazine *Elementy*, named after the major French New Right (GRECE) publication launched in 1973, *Éléments*. This journal is best known as the site of Dugin’s first texts and translations related to Eurasianism, the Conservative Revolution, National Bolshevism, the European New Right, and Geopolitics. Indeed, the first edition lists, among others, de Benoist, Steuckers, Mutti, and the major Russian author and political figure Alexander Prokhanov as members of the editorial board, and also announces the founding of the Center for Special Metastrategic Studies as a “working group” of Arktogeia. However, though the first issue of *Elementy* does seem to present itself as devoted mainly to translating Conservative Revolution and European New Right ideas for Russian audiences, it simultaneously advertises Arktogeia editions of Dzhemal’s *Orientation: North*, translations of Guénon’s *Crisis of the Modern World* and Evola’s *Pagan Imperialism*, as well as two new books by Dugin, dated 1992-3: *Conspirology* and *The Hyperborean Theory*.

The first 1992-3 edition of what would later become the 600 page “textbook” volume *Conspirology*, might best be described as Dugin’s own *Morning of the Magicians*. Just as *Le Matin des magiciens* introduced its winding “account of conspiracy” with the disclaimers and “approach” of “fantastic realism”, Dugin introduces the term “historical madness” as the “methodology” to present “conspirological views of history” and to examine “secret societies”, “occult forces”, and “metaphysical centers outside of the sphere of attention of humans, who are guided by mere ‘historical intuition’, and not direct and full initiation and spiritual realization.”³³⁵ By deconstructing and reconstructing the conspiratorial paradigms of certain “historical madmen,” Dugin contends, one can discover how they “intuit the secret logic of cyclical development and recognize the metaphysics of history mirrored in semi-secret organizations and the ideologies inherent to them.” The thesis advanced here is highly ambiguous: on the one hand, conspiracies are to be treated to a certain extent as “superior in truth and methodological value” to the “factological and meaningless Sisyphean labor” of “profane historians” and “positivists”, insofar as “conspiracy theories” reflect, to varying extents of inversion, “sacred metaphysical principles behind history.”³³⁶ On the other hand,

³³⁴ *Mily Angel* 1 (1991), 5.

³³⁵ Aleksandr Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Metod ‘istoricheskogo bezumiia”’, (Moscow: Arktogeia, 1992/3) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/consp2.htm#1>]; Ibidem, *Konspirologiia. Teoriia zagovora, sekretnye obshchestva, velikaia voina kontinentov* (Moscow: 2005), 53-55.

³³⁶ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Metod ‘istoricheskogo bezumiia”’.

Dugin insists on a certain distance from “such a delicate problem as ‘conspiracy theory’” which “only exists insofar as there exists a whole historical and sociologically fixed faith in such.”³³⁷ In all of these qualifications, Dugin operates, similar to *Le Matin des magiciens*, between active and passive, ecstatically enthusiastic and cold analytical voices. Dugin acts simultaneously as an “aggregator”, “translator”, “presenter”, “commentator” and selective, emic theoretician of “the metaphysics behind conpirology.” What is not ambiguous, however, is Dugin’s concluding affirmation that the study of “madmen from history” and “conpirology” is possible “only upon acquaintance with Traditionalism and the works of René Guénon.”³³⁸ Dugin qualifies that this relevance of “conpirology” is already being “illuminated in modern studies in the field of the History of Religions, ‘depth psychology’, and mythology...revealing the fundamental archetypes of the human being, the foundations of his unconscious and to a certain extent supra-conscious levels.”³³⁹ This constantly meandering between an emic discourse claiming a recourse to higher metaphysical knowledge paired with an alternating “injecting of analytical distance”³⁴⁰, and overall the voice, style, and structure of the first edition all resoundingly evoke *Morning of the Magicians*. Already familiar authors and themes such as Saint-Yves d’Alveydre’s *La Synarchie*, Guénon’s doctrine of counter-initiation, and Jean Parvulesco’s “occult conspiracy” make up the bulk of the central study of the section “Secret Societies and Occult Forces in History.” However, also under this chapter, Dugin commits to his first explicit analytical engagement with völkisch occultism, Ariosophy, and *Le Matin des magiciens*. In a section dedicated to summarizing the biography and “Hitlerian conpirology” of Serrano, Dugin intervenes:

Here it should be noted that completely independently of Serrano’s cosmogonic and anthropological scheme and outside of the context of his conpirological view of history, his whole description of the actual side of affairs in the SS and the Ariosophical organizations related to it, despite all the unlikelihood, is completely true. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to attentively study the works of the Ariosophists of the 20th century, such as Guido von List, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Karl Maria Wiligut, and their followers...Let us preliminarily remark that the combination of these themes with Nazism became commonplace after the appearance of the book *The Morning of the Magicians* by Louis Pauwels and Paul [sic] Bergier in the 1960’s.³⁴¹

Dugin also makes a point to emphasize that Serrano met Professor Herman Wirth.³⁴² This passage not only represents Dugin’s first admission of his knowledge of *The Morning of the*

³³⁷ Aleksandr Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Paradigma zagovora” [<http://arctogaia.com/public/consp3.htm>]; Dugin, *Konrpiologiiia* (2005), 19.

³³⁸ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Zakliuchenie” [<http://arctogaia.com/public/consp2.htm#1>].

³³⁹ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Metod ‘istoricheskogo bezumiia.’”

³⁴⁰ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 189.

³⁴¹ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Trevozhnaia Vselennaia Migelia Serrano” [<http://arctogaia.com/public/consp2.htm#4>]; Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, 86, 80-92.

³⁴² Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun*, 190.

Magicians, but is also followed by a further discussion of the work, in which he credits “Bergier and Pauwels’ sensational book” with having “compelled numerous scholars to busy themselves with the search for the occult roots of Nazi ideology.”³⁴³

While *Conspirology* treats Ariosophy and “Nazi occultism” as a subject of “conspirological history”, and is not employed or praised as Dugin’s own method or source, the völkisch occultist allusions of *Mysteries of Eurasia* seem to be gradually surfacing. Most tellingly, in the conclusion dedicated to the “possibility, desirability, and necessity” of developing none other than a uniquely Russian school of “conspirological consciousness”, Dugin specifically claims that Soviet Marshal Tukhachevsky (1893-1937) had been acquainted with the “Austrian Ariosophists.”³⁴⁴ This connection is particularly noteworthy, given what Dugin capitulates in the “epilogue” to *Conspirology*, “The Great War of Continents.” In this famous text, Dugin constructs his own conspirological model which, citing Jean Parvulesco, “reveals” that Marshal Tukhachevsky was an initiate of the “Polar Order”, part of the secret Order of Eurasia within the Soviet establishment, locked in combat with the cosmic enemy, the Order of Atlantis.³⁴⁵ This conspirological rephrasing of the narrative of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, with its explicitly linked references to Traditionalist and Ariosophical currents, can be seen as one of the most suggestive demonstrations of Dugin’s established engagement of these esoteric sources.

That Dugin was intimately familiar with völkisch occultist and Ariosophical sources, and that he drew some kind of ideational connection between them and Wirth, can be seen as confirmed in a documentary series which aired on Russia’s Channels One and Four in 1992-1993, “Secrets of the Century.”³⁴⁶ In two episodes dedicated to “mysticism in the Third Reich”, Dugin, presented as “member of the international association Politica Hermetica”, was interviewed as an historian of Ariosophy, Herman Wirth, and the Ahnenerbe. In the first episode, “The Ahnenerbe”, Dugin presents on Liebenfels, the Ordo Novi Templi, speaks of the “occult current of Wihinei” professed by the Guido von List Society and “other secret centers”, such as the Germanenorder, and he mentions Rudolf von Sebottendorff and the Thule Society as “another line of the development of Ariosophical cults.” Dugin’s reference to Wihinei as an “occult current” of “closed, secret orders of a pan-Germanic character related to the Guido von List Society and the closely related Ordo Novi Templi” is a rather broad-brush description, insofar as Wihinei was more specifically List’s vision. This demonstrates that Dugin conceives the whole lot of völkisch occultists, synonymously interchanged with the doctrines of Ariosophy and Wihinei, as a more or less unified current of study.

³⁴³ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Jean Robin, borets protiv Zelenogo Tsveta” [<http://arctogaia.com/public/consp2.htm#5>]; Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, 93.

³⁴⁴ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, “Zakliuchenie.”

³⁴⁵ Dugin, “The Great War of Continents”, *Eurasianist Internet Archive* (12/10/ 2016) [<https://eurasianist-archive.com/2016/10/12/the-great-war-of-continents/>].

³⁴⁶ “*Tayny veka 1992. Mistika Reikha. 1. Ahnenerbe. 2. Magiia Gitlera*”, YouTube (2013) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFHKwKNmYoY>] [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7Xfpq55vmg&t=1491s>].

Further suggestive of this is Dugin's presentation of the Ahnenerbe. Filmed leafing through a copy of Wirth's *Der Aufgang der Menschheit* bookmarked with various runes, Dugin contrasts Wirth as the "scholar" of the Ahnenerbe distinct from, yet working alongside "so-called Ariosophical divisions in the Ahnenerbe" who, in Dugin's words, "attempted to reconstruct the tradition of the North, the proto-tradition, the proto-religion of the Aryan, Nordic race, to revive its rituals and reconstruct the most ancient form of this cult." Dugin emphasizes that "Wirth's ideas were by no means guilty" for the racism of the later Ahnenerbe, which, Dugin stresses, was originally under Wirth "an official institution for the study of ancient archaeology and the heritage of the ancestors in the broadest sense of the word." The sources of Dugin's public debut as an expert on Ariosophy and the Ahnenerbe are shown in the second installment of "Secrets of the Century, in which Dugin presents a collection of "lost" archival documents from the Germanenorder and the Thule Society, supposedly discovered un-filed for the first time by "us" in Russian archives. This and *Conspirology's* explicit announcement of Ariosophy and Wirth to Russian audiences coincide with Dugin's publication of another new work, *The Hyperborean Theory*, which in many respects represents the most explicit expression of these sources in Dugin's early ideological development.

The Hyperborean Theory

In 2007-2008, the major Russian publishing house Veche published a book series entitled *Ariana Mystica*, which included a Russian translation of Herman Wirth's *Die Ura-Linda Chronik* with an extensive introduction to Wirth's biography and works, and a newly edited and expanded edition of Dugin's *Hyperborean Theory* under the title *Signs of the Great Nord*.³⁴⁷ The promotional synopsis hails *The Hyperborean Theory* to have been the "de facto beginning of the study of Nordic esotericism in Russia" and acclaims: "Under the influence of this work of Alexander Dugin, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences and the greatest contemporary Russian specialist on the sacred, numerous expeditions have been organized to the North in search of the remnants of the ancient civilization of Hyperborea."³⁴⁸

The original 1992-1993 edition of Dugin's *The Hyperborean Theory* bears the subtitle *Opyt ariosofskogo issledovaniia* - literally "The Experience of Ariosophical Research", although the word *opyt* can also be translated as an archaic Russian term for an "essay in" or "exposition of", perhaps yielding "An Exposition of Ariosophical Studies." Nominally, both the 1992 and 2008 books are dedicated to summarizing and "metaphysically expanding upon" the ideas of Wirth. However, while *The Hyperborean Theory* in both versions offers what remains one of the most extensive summaries and treatments of Wirth in any language, in the foreword to the first edition Dugin introduces this content from a rather telling perspective, admitting that he has taken the liberty in selectively integrating "our own

³⁴⁷Aleksandr Dugin, *Giperboreiskaiia Teoriia (opyt ariosofskogo issledovaniia)* (Tsentr EON, 1992; Moscow: Arktogeia, 1993); Ibidem, *Znaki Velikogo Norda. Giperboreiskaiia Teoriia* (Moscow: Veche, 2008); German Feliks Virt [Herman Felix Wirth], *Khronika Ura Linda. Drevneishaiia istoriia Evropy* (Moscow: Veche, 2007). See: Andrei Kondrat'ev, "German Feliks Virt i 'Khronika Ura Linda'", on pp. 3-96.

³⁴⁸Dugin, *Znaki Velikogo Norda*, 3.

discoveries and conclusions” and employing terminologies which do not strictly accord with Wirth’s own.³⁴⁹ Throughout, Dugin prefers to employ the Ariosophical and Traditionalist “Northern terms”, Arktogaa and Hyperborea, and the concept of “initiation” is taken as the essential touchstone for all “Hyperborean theories.” Indeed, Dugin makes it clear that *The Hyperborean Theory* is interested in Wirth not for his “purely scientific discoveries”, but as a “knight of Hyperborea...whose fundamental works contain an enormous lot of materials concerning the Hyperborean Tradition in its echoes, traces, paths, and mysterious splashes.”³⁵⁰ Most explicitly, Dugin reveals his thesis in the opening lines: “The notion of the ‘Hyperborean Theory’ means the hidden esoteric truth that has inspired all the historical traditions of the peoples of the Earth, the source of earthly sacrality, the compressed and common expression of that which is the Primordial Tradition. Thus, the Hyperborean Theory is the foundation and treasure of the religions of the world, a most ancient and supra-temporal, initiatic doctrine.”³⁵¹ That Wirth’s theories are to be summated and examined from such an “initiatic”, “Traditionalist-Hyperborean” standpoint, by all means full of implications in light of the Hyperborean imperatives of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, is not the only connection drawn in the first edition of *The Hyperborean Theory*.

Also in the foreword, Dugin associates Wirth with the “Hyperborean contributions” of other “esoteric authorities, such as René Guénon, Guido von List, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Julius Evola, Otto Rahn, Rudolf von Sebottendorff, Miguel Serrano, Saint-Yves d’Alveydre, Fabre d’Olivet, and other traditionalists who have not only brought to this sphere valuable details (like a number of other researchers), but who have also unveiled whole global layers of Hyperborean Sacrality.”³⁵² While warning against “attributing to Wirth views which he never set forth”, Dugin nonetheless proceeds from this “Traditionalist framing” to name the initiatic science of the “Hyperborean theory” - to expound which Wirth is being summoned - none other than “the science that Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels called ‘Ariosophy.’” Dugin climactically states: “With this book we hereby initiate Ariosophy in the Russian-language context.”³⁵³ That Ariosophy is explicitly evoked, that Wirth is treated from such an “Ariosophical” and Traditionalist perspective, and that Dugin associates the Hyperborean/Arktogaan North with an initiatic doctrine itself - all of these themes shed light on the culmination of what we have discerned to be the primary esoteric apperceptions of *Mysteries of Eurasia* and indeed key sources of Dugin’s Yuzhinsky Circle-inspired trajectory.

³⁴⁹ Dugin, *Giperboreiskaiia Teoriia*, 4.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3, 4.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5.

The Nuances of ‘Eurasian Ariosophy’

While recognizing its logical coherence within Dugin’s early esoteric grammatology, *The Hyperborean Theory* also harbors and reflects a number of paradoxes and nuances which are indispensable to contextualizing the course of Dugin’s early corpus. On the one hand, this work advances Dugin’s engagement with the Northern/Nordic theme of Traditionalist and *völkisch* sources to the climax of the formulation of an “Hyperborean”, “Nordic esotericism” itself, symbolically aligned towards the same direction as Dzhemal’s metaphysical theses and the “Paladin of the Great North” (Golovin). On the other hand, Dugin’s own presentation of the “metaphysics of the North”, while introduced in Traditionalist terms as related to the Primordial Tradition and Hyperborea, is also explicitly styled as “Ariosophy”, is corresponded with Arktogaa, and indeed evokes List, Liebenfels, and Sebottendorff explicitly for the first time as precedents. This shift from the pamphlet *Hyperborea*’s quotations of List to *Mysteries of Eurasia*’s absence of Ariosophical citations, to “Secret of the Century’s” and *Conspirology*’s analytical distance towards the Ariosophists as “conspirological subjects” to *The Hyperborean Theory*’s enthusiastic “Ariosophical exposition” highlights one of the major points of ambiguity in the development of Dugin’s early thought.

Although Ariosophy, List, and Liebenfels are announced in the introduction, their doctrines do not find reproduction or even mention in *The Hyperborean Theory*’s summary and metaphysical extrapolation on Wirth’s theories of the primordial Nordic-Atlantic worldview, the hermeneutics of its calendro-hieroglyphic-symbological language, the metaphysics of the Year, etc. Under the chapter “Race”, where one might expect to find a presentation of relevant Ariosophical tropes, we find Dugin only summarizing Wirth’s systematization of pre-historic blood groups and migration theories, concluding with a remark seemingly intended to deny the relevance of biological race: “Modern ‘white’ ethnoi can be infinitely far from the white Nordic race, and some “blacks”, like the Maori, “yellow” Samurais, or “red” Indians can be much “whiter” and “more northern” than Northern Europeans. Indeed, Eurasia itself is a continent altogether foreign to the ‘white race’, to which it was compelled to migrate due to the death of its Arctic and later Atlantic Primordial Homeland.”³⁵⁴ Similarly ambiguously, Dugin later inserts that “the Apollonian cult is the genetic content of the Aryan race” only to immediately qualify: “The Aryan in essence is defined not so much by biology as by metaphysical mission.”³⁵⁵ If it is presumed that, in the latter instance, Dugin is presenting his own conceptualization of race, not Wirth’s, then this perspective seems to sit uneasily with “The Great War of Continent’s” construction of an irreconcilable dualism between “blood” and “soil.” In the latter, Dugin affirms that the correct formula of the “Polar Order of Eurasia” is none other than “soil over blood”, or “statehood and culture” over “race.”³⁵⁶ Further in *The Hyperborean Theory*, under the chapters “Gender”, “Beast-People and God-People”, and “The Meaning of Aryan Dualism”, there is no trace of Liebenfels’ sexo-racial scheme, but rather a metaphysical extrapolation on

³⁵⁴ Dugin, *Giperboreiskaiia Teoriia*, 18.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

³⁵⁶ Dugin, “Great War of Continents.”

Wirth's primordial matriarchal priestesshood, the deconstruction of "racial dualism" as a reflection of the "ontological", "gnoseological", and "metaphysical" dilemmas of Thought which lead "to the 'I'", and a discussion of the dualism between the "transcendence of God" and the "immanence of the world" in light of Wirth's theological model of the primordial "Aryan" cult and language.³⁵⁷ For an "exposition of Ariosophy" which initially purports to "emically" advertise List, Liebenfels, and Sebottendorff for the first time, the Ariosophists and their ideas with which Dugin has demonstrated to be familiar are decidedly absent from *The Hyperborean Theory*. This paradoxical situation might shed light on the ambiguous yet sensible difference between the extent to which Dugin merely emulates or imitates völkisch occultist templates in his construction of an "Eurasian 'Ariosophy'" and the extent to which Dugin actually adopts and extends Ariosophical narratives and doctrines proper.

While it has been established that *Mysteries of Eurasia's* narrative on the "sacred geography" of Russia-Eurasia strongly resonates with the discourses of völkisch occultism, the absence of direct references, expressions of indebtedness to or appreciation for the Ariosophists is an equally important index. This might be explained in part by the recognition that Dugin's Russian-Eurasian, "Turanian" Tradition and civilization is irreconcilable with the anti-Slavic racial doctrines of the Ariosophists. In addition, Dugin explicitly identifies a certain dimension of Russia's "sacred geography" and "racial myth" with that of the "Fins", or the "yellow race" of the *Oera Linda Chronicle*, where they are presented as the "inferior" indigenous inhabitants of Eurasia colonized, enslaved, and to a certain extent opposed to the "Frisians", i.e., the Aryans. Dugin lays the blame for the "monstrous catastrophe" of the Second World War on "Nazi Atlantic(ist) racism" and symbolically blames the "uncritical national-racial interpretation" of the "racial myth of the *Oera Linda Chronicle*," remarking: "the scenes of the last war are still fresh memories, especially since the European 'Frisians' were determined to put the Eurasian 'Fins' in their place."³⁵⁸ Although Wirth himself is criticized for having "[mis]led the imperial military will of Germany in a certain direction" and the Ahnenerbe is accused of using a "fleeting", "purely racial, 'seriological' approach", Dugin nevertheless defends Wirth as "entirely free of 'Pan-Germanist' chauvinistic prejudices", a disclaimer which Dugin also issued in "Secrets of the Century."³⁵⁹ In *Conspirology*, Dugin explicitly accuses List and Liebenfels of "Slavophobia" and attributes their "Aryan racist" views to the "particularities of the inter-nation relations of the disintegrating Austro-Hungarian Empire."³⁶⁰ Neither *Mysteries of Eurasia*, *Conspirology*, nor *The Hyperborean Theory* seem to offer any definitive formulation of Dugin's own particular understanding of "race", "racialism", and "racism" - instead, the former is most frequently referred to as a matter of "the power of myth", "archetype", "spirit", and "soil." In this sense, the early Dugin's "esoteric" conceptualization of race and "Aryan" discourse seem to be closest of all to Evola's and, along this same line, highly sympathetic towards, although not

³⁵⁷ Dugin, *Giperboreiskaiia Teoriia*, 68-72, 73-78, 97-100

³⁵⁸ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 597-599, 673-686.

³⁵⁹ Dugin, *Misterii Evrazii*, 598; "Tayny veka."

³⁶⁰ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*,

critical of, Wirth's constructions.³⁶¹ The contradiction of this otherwise critical attitude towards the Ariosophists' racial discourses by *The Hyperborean Theory's* proclaimed "Ariosophy" curiously foreshadows the fact that the references to "Ariosophy" and the Ariosophists were removed from the second edition of *The Hyperborean Theory*, leaving only Wirth.

Dugin's reception of Ariosophical doctrines thus varies between critical and ambiguous statements directed against the latter, an imitation of a "Russian-Eurasian völkisch occultism" anchored to a greater extent in Traditionalist and Wirthian narratives, and an attempt to overcome the legacies of all these currents through an original cosmic meta-narrative which argues for a correlation between Russia and the Primordial North and the significance of such to eschatology. A similarly ambiguous divergence arises in what previous scholarship has variously deemed a "veiled anti-Semitism", "paradoxical combination of philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic arguments", "a more sophisticated and euphemized version of anti-Semitism centered on more subtle religious and philosophical arguments", and a "complex philo-Zionism combined with anti-Semitic statements" in Dugin's corpus.³⁶² In "The Occult War of the Seniors", Dugin critically engages the notion that "political Jewry" has become an "instrument of world subversion" and "counter-initiatic forces", which he deconstructs as referring to "reactionary processes" within "Judaism as an authentic tradition", remarking: "Jews have become a convenient target and easy prey for counter-initiation, the agents and influences of which have striven to make a confrontation between Jews and other peoples into a synonym for opposition to the subversion of the world Tradition. Naturally, this has nothing to do with the maxims of marketable Judeophobia, which true counter-revolutionaries have always opposed." The "true counter-revolutionaries" cited in this passage are Guénon and Evola. Following the latter Dugin asserts that the "Judeo-Masonic bloc is but a mask hiding counter-initiatic centers."³⁶³ While in stark contrast to the positions of the Ariosophists, this expression of Dugin's heavily paraphrases the "Occult War" section of Evola's *Men Among the Ruins*, in which Evola similarly qualified his discussion with a denunciation of "fanatical anti-Semitism, which always sees the Jew as a *deus ex machina*", and the insistence that the "occult war" is "hardly reducible to the simplistic formula of a Judeo-Masonic plot."³⁶⁴ As in the case with race, these corresponding statements suggest a greater indebtedness of Dugin to Evola than to the Ariosophists. This ambiguous contrast is also reflected in a subsequent article published in the newspaper *Den* in 1992: "To Understand is to Defeat." In the latter, Dugin suggests that "an objective and unbiased study of the religious, cultural and historical destiny of the Jewish people can lead to the major conclusion" that there is a "fundamental distinction" between the Indo-European/"Aryan" and Judaic "religious worldviews." On the relationship between them, Dugin writes:

Our worldviews are different, they are even somewhat opposite. Moreover, sometimes they mutually exclude each other. But the very recognition of this opposition uplifts our spirit to the heights of a

³⁶¹ On Evola's "spiritual racialism", see: Furlong, *Social and Political Thought of Julius Evola*, 113-133; Hansen, "Julius Evola's Political Endeavours", 66-74.

³⁶² Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?", 17-19.

³⁶³ Dugin, "*Okkul'tnaia voina*", 75, 77.

³⁶⁴ Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 211, 212.

purely metaphysical problem...A metaphysical dialogue with Jewish metaphysics, Jewish tradition and the Jewish spirit should of necessity begin on the highest level... To prevent these energies going along the terrible trajectory of blind hatred and gloomy violence, we must raise the metaphysical banners of the inevitable fight of the future beforehand, we must establish knightly rules and not allow for the transformation of this great and deep metaphysical dispute into the "total war" about whose dangers the ingenious German jurist Carl Schmitt warned.

In the conclusion, Dugin therefore urges "Conservative Revolutionaries, radical intellectuals, Traditionalists, religious elites, and the Indo-European elite" to "stand today before a mighty task - to understand those who are not only culturally, nationally and politically, but also metaphysically different. And in this case, 'to understand' means not 'to forgive', but 'to defeat' - 'To defeat with the Light of Truth.'"³⁶⁵ In the subsequent analytical deconstructions of *Conspirology*, Dugin deems "Judeophobia" a "variant of Aryan racism inherent in National Socialist conceptions", but considers the "paradigm of the 'Jewish conspiracy theory'" to be a "deep, unconscious conspirological archetype", only to introduce further distinctions between "ethnic Judeophobia", "conspiracy theories of any national minorities" and "the racist gnosis of Guido von List and his Ariosophist followers."³⁶⁶ In a later text, Dugin would extend this rhetoric to call Liebenfels a "freak obsessed with the racial magic of bestiality."³⁶⁷ Even more directly, in 1995, in a FAQ response letter to Arktogeia readers titled "The Enchanted Disenchantment of a National Intellectual", Dugin addressed a "nationalist critic": "The myth of the 'solidarity of the white race' is a pure utopia which, by the way, led to the genocide of not only Jews, but also Slavs. The fall of the Third Reich was the cost of this delirious, contradictory concept that is false at its core...I absolutely exclude any racist approach towards Jews."³⁶⁸ In place of the latter sentence, the English version of Dugin's response read: "I am completely against the Antisemite racist ideals." In the same letter, Dugin admits that he has had an "attraction" to "Ariosophical 'völkisch' mysticism."³⁶⁹

These repeated, concerted, yet frequently ambiguous attempts on Dugin's part to establish a certain critical distance and nuance with regards to the völkisch and Ariosophical sources known to him, particularly their racial and anti-Semitic doctrines, combined with the fact of their absence altogether in *The Hyperborean Theory*, the removal of Ariosophical references from the latter, and Dugin's repeated defenses of Wirth and Evola from "racism", pose for consideration the larger question of the extent to which Dugin adopts völkisch occultist themes over the course of his early works. Perhaps most symbolic of this relationship with the Ariosophists is the fact that Dugin's Arktogeia, while bearing the very name of List and Liebenfels' Northern spiritual homeland, does not name them among its

³⁶⁵ Alexander Dugin, "To Understand is to Defeat", *Den' 18 / Arctogaia* (1992) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/eng/defeat.html>].

³⁶⁶ Dugin, *Konspirologiia*, 34-40.

³⁶⁷ Aleksandr Dugin, "Nepriyemlye kholizm Tani Bulanovoi", *Russkii zhurnal* (20/9/2002) [http://old.russ.ru/culture/20020920_dug.html].

³⁶⁸ Aleksandr Dugin, "Ocharovannoe razocharovanie natsional-intelektuala", *Arktogeia* (1995) [<http://arcto.ru/article/997>].

³⁶⁹ Alexander Dugin, "The Magic Disillusion of a Nationalist Intellectual", *Arctogaia* (1995) [<http://arctogaia.com/public/eng-inter1.htm>].

“formulas for opposing the modern world” or “archetypal personalities which are central to our cause.”³⁷⁰

By 1993, with the publication of *The Hyperborean Theory*, Dugin had established himself as an author dealing with two main esoteric currents, namely, Traditionalism and völkisch-occultism. The origins, evolution, and synthesis of these esoteric sources with other themes, such as “conspiological”, “Nazi occultist”, and eschatological tropes, can be more or less coherently traced over the course of Dugin’s early corpus and intellectual biography from the historical-ideational legacy of the Yuzhinsky Circle. At the same time, however, Dugin’s early works increasingly demonstrate a nuanced relationship to the historical and ideological context and content of Ariosophical doctrines, and emphasize a clear preference for Traditionalist and Wirthian concepts. Dugin’s early “Eurasian Ariosophy” clearly draws inspiration from the “templates” of völkisch occultism in its fixation on the “cosmic-spiritual” and “mythical-racial” identity of Russia and its “folk etymological” and in some of its runic extrapolations, but also demonstrates an evolving, explicit, and conscious critique and distance from the sources of these initial inspirations. Dugin’s “Ariosophy” is preoccupied rather with the metaphysics of Wirth’s primordial Nordic theology, with the “esotericism” of the “archetype” of the North within the Primordial Tradition, and with the “sacred geographical” role of the civilization which, Dugin recognizes, is denied any positive role in the racial schemes of the Austrian and German Ariosophists. These distinctions foreshadow the fact that, following *The Hyperborean Theory*, Dugin will no longer pay any mentions to the Ariosophists, and Dugin’s next, pivotal work will occupy itself with a quite different line of ideological development. In his 1996 *The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism*, Dugin will meticulously articulate a unique “Russian Orthodox esotericism” in a work which very much situates itself as an answer to two other major questions posed among the Traditionalist and völkisch occultist currents. In the case of the former, Dugin will offer his answer to one of the most belabored questions in Traditionalist literature, namely, the “choice of tradition”; as suspectedly follows, in the case of the latter, Dugin will definitively address the relationship between Christianity and the Russian *Volk*.

³⁷⁰ See p. 56-57 above.

Chapter 3: Hyperborean Orthodoxy

The Choice of Tradition

In Dugin's early intellectual biography, the period following *The Hyperborean Theory* is most visibly associated with Dugin's heightening, diverse political activities. In 1992-1993, Dugin was a columnist for the major newspaper of the "Patriotic Opposition", *Den'*, renamed *Zavtra* after being banned following the 1993 constitutional crisis of "Black October." Moving around the networks surrounding *Den'/Zavtra*, Dugin collaborated with the newly-established Communist Party of the Russian Federation of Genadii Ziuganov, while also lecturing on geopolitics at the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation where, by 1993, Dugin's texts on geopolitics, Eurasianism, and the European New Right were being circulated as course materials.³⁷¹ Perhaps most iconic of this period is Dugin's co-founding of the National Bolshevik Party with the Russian author Eduard Limonov (1943-) in May 1993.³⁷² The "Declaration of the Creation of the National Bolshevik Party" proclaimed the party's mission to be the "merger" of "national tradition" and "social justice and equality", the "removal of the anti-national junta and regime of the social dictatorship of the overwhelming minority from power", and the "establishment of a new order based on the national and social traditions of the Russian people."³⁷³ A significant portion of Dugin's texts from the mid-1990's are accordingly dedicated to expounding his particular ideological vision for the National Bolshevik Party. In this context, "Dugin's *Arctogaia* then served as a think tank for the political activities of the NBP's leader, Eduard Limonov."³⁷⁴ These works, which can be called Dugin's earliest major attempts to formulate a radical political philosophy, center around two collections of essays published as *The Conservative Revolution* in 1994 and *The Knights Templar of the Proletariat* in 1997.

In one particularly insightful essay, "The Metaphysics of National-Bolshevism", Dugin advances that National Bolshevism must be taken beyond its historical Conservative Revolution incarnation and developed into a metaphysics uniting all political tendencies that

³⁷¹ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 204, 233-235. These texts would culminate in Dugin's 1997 *Osnovy geopolitiki* ("The Foundations of Geopolitics"), advertised as the "first Russian textbook on geopolitics" and the "first formulation of a geopolitical doctrine for Russia" published under the auspices of the Military Academy. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii. Myslit' Prostranstvom* (Moscow: Arktogeia, 2000).

³⁷² On the National Bolshevik Party, see: Fabrizio Fenghi, "Making post-Soviet counterpublics: the aesthetics of *Limonka* and the National-Bolshevik Party", *Nationalities Papers* 45:2 (2017): 182-205; Markus Mathyl, "The National-Bolshevik Party and *Arctogaia*: two neo-fascist groupuscules in the post-Soviet political space", *Patterns of Prejudice* 36:3 (2002): 62-76; Andrei Rogatchevski, "The National Bolshevik Party (1993-2001): A Brief Timeline", *New Zealand Slavonic Journal* 41 (2007): 90-112; Przemysław Sierdzan, *Aksamitni terroryści. Narodowy bolszewizm w Federacji Rosyjskiej* (Warsaw: ELIPSA, 2008); Ibidem., *Czerwonobrunatni. Sojusz radykalizmu lewicy i prawicy w Rosji współczesnej* (Warsaw: ASPRA, 2010).

³⁷³ E. Limonov and A. Dugin, "Deklaratsiia o sozdanii NBP" (1/5/1993) [<https://web.archive.org/web/20080921193029/http://www.nazbol.ru:80/rubr28/index0/249.html>].

³⁷⁴ Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right," 2.

fall under Karl Popper’s “enemies of the Open Society.”³⁷⁵ In arguing for his own “metaphysics of National Bolshevism”, Dugin proposes to explore two spheres in particular for inspiration: the “metaphysics of the nation” and Traditionalism.³⁷⁶ These specific references are endemic of the fact that the emphatic visibility of Dugin’s National Bolshevik philosophizing should not divert attention from, or be mistaken to be disconnected from, Dugin’s persistent esoteric commitments. Dugin’s firmly established commitment to a Traditionalist and “Ariosophical” apperception, discourse, and agenda not only did not disappear during the NBP period, but most impactfully culminated in Dugin’s religious manifesto of 1996: *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti: Pravoslavny Ezoterizm* (“The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism/Esoterism”).

The context and significance of *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* to Dugin’s early thought is inseparable from the ideological and discursive legacy of Traditionalism. As prefaced earlier, one of the defining cornerstones of Guénon’s concept of Tradition - and one upon which Dugin has heavily drawn - is the emphasis on the notion of initiation. In his definitive 1946 work on the topic, *Aperçus sur l’initiation*, Guénon insisted: “initiation is essentially the transmission of a spiritual influence, a transmission that can only take place through a regular, traditional organization, so that one cannot speak of initiation outside of an affiliation with an organization of this kind.”³⁷⁷ When Guénon’s intellectual Traditionalism was confronted with the practical question of identifying really existing “initiatic organizations” for the envisioned Traditionalist elite, Guénon left his followers with rather ambiguous “perspectives.”³⁷⁸ On the one hand, Guénon maintained that immersion into “Oriental metaphysics”, particularly Hinduism, promised unparalleled knowledge of traditional doctrines that had been lost in the West. At the same time, however, Guénon was weary of the “assimilation of the West by the East” and was doubtful of the possibility that Westerners could conform to Hinduism.³⁷⁹ In his first book, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, Guénon initially deemed Islam “sociologically” inaccessible to Westerners.³⁸⁰ Yet this disclaimer came 11 years after Guénon himself had been initiated into the Shadhiliyya Arabiyya tariqah in France by the first major Western Sufi, Ivan Aguéli (Sheikh Abd al-Hadi Aqili, 1869-1917), although evidently to no immediate effect, and nine years before Guénon himself “converted” to Sufism in Cairo, joining the Hamdiyya Shadhiliyya of the “charismatic” Shaeikh al-Radi.³⁸¹ Guénon subsequently dedicated an

³⁷⁵ Dugin, “*Metafizika Natsional-Bolshevizma*”, in *Tamplery Proletariata* (Moscow: Arktogeia,1997) [<http://arcto.ru/article/73>].

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ René Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation* (Ghent: Sophia Perennis, 2004), 48.

³⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 80, 266; King, “René Guénon and Traditionalism”, 311-312.

³⁷⁹ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 80.

³⁸⁰ Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, 63.

³⁸¹ Guénon nevertheless insisted: “whoever understands the unity of traditions is necessarily ‘unconvertible’ to anything” - quoted in Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 77.

influential portion of his writings to elaborating a vision of “Islamic esotericism” and at one point recommended that Traditionalists join Schuon’s Alawiyya.³⁸² Guénon remained somewhat sympathetic towards the idea of straggling remnants of “Western traditions”, among which Guénon saw the most practical viability in certain trends of Freemasonry, but continued to adamantly insist that the vast majority of existing esoteric and occult currents of the West were “counter-initiatic” and “deviations.”³⁸³ At the same time, Guénon’s attitude towards Christianity was, in the very least, highly ambiguous. On the one hand, in his programmatic *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Guénon encouraged the Catholic Church to revive its initiatic doctrines and establish itself as the rightful heir to “spiritual unity” in the West.³⁸⁴ Guénon most explicitly asserted:

We think that if a Western tradition could be rebuilt it would be bound to take on a religious form in the strictest sense of this word, and that this form could only be Christian; for on the one hand the other possible forms have been too long foreign to the Western mentality, and on the other it is only in Christianity - and we can say still more definitely in Catholicism that such remnants of a traditional spirit as still exist in the West are to be found.³⁸⁵

On the other hand, this appreciation of Catholicism’s organizational potential was left at the level of an imperative - in the meanwhile, on a doctrinal and substantive level, Guénon argued that Christianity has spiritually declined and lost its potential. Guénon concluded: “despite its initiatic origins Christianity in its present state is certainly nothing more than a religion, that is, an exclusively exoteric tradition, and that it contains no possibilities other than those possessed by any other exoterism.”³⁸⁶ Even further, Guénon attributed the very emergence of independent “initiatic” and “esoteric” organizations to the dire need to overcome the “virtual degeneration” of Christian rites and symbols.³⁸⁷ While he humored the possibility that the “Eastern churches” might have retained initiatic practices, Guénon reduced such to being mere “clarification about the nature and methods of other Christian initiations that belong, unfortunately, to the past.”³⁸⁸

This unresolved imperative of the “choice of tradition” was taken in different directions by different Traditionalists. Schuon built the largest Sufi organization in the history of the West, and elaborated his own version of a perennialist theology emphasizing the transcendental unity of religions. Guénon’s own Sufi affinity and Schuon’s activism established a firm precedent for an Islamic trajectory for Traditionalism. This stream was initially taken up by Dugin’s mentor, Geydar Dzhemal, only for Dzhemal to reject

³⁸² Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 91.

³⁸³ Ibid., 80-83.

³⁸⁴ Guénon, *Crisis of the Modern World*, 64-65, 111-114.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 26-27.

³⁸⁶ Guénon, *Insights into Christian Esotericism* (Hillsdale: Sophia Perennis, 2004).

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

Traditionalism altogether as “paganism” in a series of lectures and articles during Dugin’s National Bolshevik days, from which Dzhemal kept his distance, busying himself in Islamic movements. By the late 1990’s, Dugin would refer to Dzhemal as a “post-Traditionalist.”³⁸⁹ Julius Evola, on the one hand, was particularly drawn towards pagan traditions and the spiritual heritage of Europe, ultimately rejecting the notion that the East has preserved “traditional civilization” in contrast to the West.³⁹⁰ On the other hand, Evola defied the seeming imperative of conforming to one established tradition or “initiatic organization”, instead professing that the “absolute individual” might be able to achieve “self-initiation” through the studious pursuance of the “transcendent” across religious and esoteric traditions. In the final analysis, Evola argued: “the theme of ‘integral traditionalism’ can be detached from such problems.”³⁹¹ In Hans Thomas Hakl’s words:

Evola developed a concept of self-initiation that stood in sharp contrast to René Guénon’s idea that only traditional orders with a chain of initiates could confer a valid and real initiation. As Evola, however, deemed it nearly impossible for Westerners to enter into contact with such orders, his teachings tried to supply the basic principles that would enable an individual to conquer the transcendent realms with his own forces, a path naturally open only to a very limited number of gifted and dedicated individuals.³⁹²

Thus, in Evola’s corpus, Traditionalism was not reduced to a “choice of tradition”, but alternatively was formulated as the basis for a comprehensive “revolt against the modern world”, as a political philosophy for the “men among the ruins”, or could be pursued by “riding the tiger”, i. e., through spiritual introspection amidst the collapse of modernity.³⁹³ In the Yuzhinsky Circle, Mamleev strove to reconcile Orthodoxy with Hinduism and Buddhism in an attempt to elaborate Russia’s “Eastern” spiritual identity, a mission originally motivated by Western occultist sources. Golovin pursued his own intuitions into a unique philosophy of alchemy and magic, and Dzhemal turned towards Islam. Between the legacies of Guénon, Evola, and the Yuzhinsky Circle, and amidst the attempt at “Evolian politics” in influencing the National Bolshevik Party, Dugin was inevitably confronted with addressing this key dilemma of Traditionalism. Dugin would depart from the National Bolshevik Party in 1998 following his conversion to the Old Believers Rite in 1997.³⁹⁴

³⁸⁹ Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 260, 341, f. 95.

³⁹⁰ See: Julius Evola, *Ride the Tiger: A Survival Manual for Aristocrats of the Soul* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2003).

³⁹¹ See: Julius Evola, “The Concept of Initiation”, in *The Bow and the Club*, 121-151; Ibidem, “René Guénon and ‘Integral Traditionalism’”, in *Recognitions*, 273.

³⁹² Hans Thomas Hakl, “Deification as a Core Theme in Julius Evola’s Esoteric Works”, *Correspondences* 6:2 (2018), 169.

³⁹³ See: Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World; Men Among the Ruins: Post-War Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist; Ride the Tiger: A Survival Manual for the Aristocrats of the Soul*.

³⁹⁴ Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow*, 230-231.

A very similar posing of the question of “choice of tradition” can be detected as relevant in the currents of völkisch occultism, especially Ariosophy, as well as in Wirth’s conceptions. One of the key doctrinal differentiations between Austrian Theosophical and Anthroposophical currents and the völkisch occultism of Guido von List was the “disenchantment with Catholicism coupled with the popularization of mythology, folklore and comparative religion.”³⁹⁵ List’s doctrine was characterized by a profound “vilification of Christianity”, as he believed that the Wotanist gnosis of the Aryo-Germanic Volk had been violently suppressed by Christians.³⁹⁶ List thereby “identified Christianity as the negative and destructive principle in the history of the Ario-Germanic race.”³⁹⁷ To recall, in List’s vision, it was precisely out of the “secret Armanist heritage” passed down through “secret societies, which would be responsible for fostering the holy gnosis during the Christian era”, that the secret initiatic language of Armanist gnosis was developed and passed down through folk symbols, “occult words”, and other “cultural materials.”³⁹⁸ If List’s reconstruction of the Germanic *Wihinei* was therefore overtly anti-Christian and emphatically “pagan”, then Liebenfels’ doctrine of Ariosophy pursued the altogether different line of positing “Ario-Christianity” to be the central Ariosophical confession, practiced by the Ordo Novi Templi. Unlike List, Liebenfels was deeply indebted and committed to Christianity, which he conceived not as the bane of the Ario-Germanic gnosis, but, on the contrary, as an historical revival of Aryan gnosis, as the anticipation of “a new Church of the Holy Spirit [that] would arise to create a supranational Aryan state, the government of which would fall to an eternal priesthood privy to the secrets of the ancient sexo-racist gnosis.”³⁹⁹ While it is difficult to assign one single esoteric or ideological preference to Sebottendorff, his Thule Society lectures betray a heavy indebtedness to List’s Germanic pagan reconstructions.⁴⁰⁰ The SS völkisch occultist Karl Maria Wiligut’s Irminism celebrated “a Germanic god Krist, which the Christian religion had later bowdlerized and appropriated as its own saviour”; and Wiligut reportedly “welcomed Lanz’s intended publication of a second *Ostara* series for the light this might throw on the real Aryan origins of Christianity.”⁴⁰¹ Herman Wirth, meanwhile saw in the primordial Arctic culture a “cosmo-monotheistic” worldview, his theological

³⁹⁵ Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots*, 30.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

reconstructions of which are strikingly resonant with Christianity.⁴⁰² This established dilemma in völkisch occultist conceptualizations of and approaches to Christianity forms, in rather understandable conjunction with Dugin's Traditionalist apperception, the second major context in the history of esoteric ideas in which *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* is unmistakably situated.

It is precisely to these "problems" of Traditionalism and völkisch occultism with regards to the "choice of tradition" and the appreciation of Christianity, to which Dugin's *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti* is devoted.

The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism

The point of departure of *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* is the affirmation that "Traditionalist circles" have neglected the metaphysical vitality of Christianity and dismissed Christianity as a legitimate and desirable tradition from a Guénonian standpoint. Dugin forgives this, acknowledging: "It can be said that although Western Traditionalists had the intellectual apparatus developed by Guénon, they did not have an adequate object for applying such, since Catholicism fundamentally prohibits one from going from the exoteric to the esoteric and metaphysical levels."⁴⁰³ The solution to this impasse, Dugin argues, is to be sought in a "fully-fledged object, the Orthodox Christian Church Tradition."⁴⁰⁴ At the same time, however, Dugin remarks that Orthodox Christians "have hitherto lacked an adequate metaphysical apparatus", i.e., Traditionalism, and "Orthodox esotericism" itself has been "somewhat marginalized and 'frozen.'"⁴⁰⁵ While recognizing such an endeavor to be "extremely difficult and risky in light of the near complete absence of references to Orthodoxy among Traditional authorities", Dugin proposes that *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti* take up the task of a Traditionalist formulation of (Orthodox) Christian metaphysics, "thanks to Russians' first acquaintance with the ideas of Guénon."⁴⁰⁶ In the introduction, Dugin thus employs *ezoterizm* as an "inner metaphysics" or "spirit" distinct from the "exoteric" dogma or "letter" of religious traditions, among which, Dugin pays homage, "Traditionalists have rather well mastered Islamic metaphysics, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and even some

⁴⁰² Godwin, "Out of Arctica? Herman Wirth's Theory of Human Origins", 4. Evola references Wirth's reconstructed *prisca theologia* as a "primordial Nordic monotheism and a 'cosmic Nordic Christianity'" - *The Myth of the Blood*, 124. Dugin also references such as a "Polar Christianity" - Dugin, "Herman Wirth: Runes, Great Yule, and the Arctic Homeland."

⁴⁰³ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, in *Absolutnaia Rodina*, 208.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 208.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 209. "Russians' first acquaintance with the ideas of Guénon" is a reference to the proliferation of translations between 1992 and 1996 (in which Dugin played no small part). In the footnote, Dugin lists: "*The Crisis of the Modern World* (Moscow, Arktogeia: 1992), *The King of the World* in the journal *Voprosy filosofii* from 1993; *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* (Moscow, 1994), *Fundamental Symbols of the Sacred Science* (Moscow, 1996), and articles in the journal *Mily Angel* No. 1, in the journals *Voprosy filosofii*, *Literaturnoe obozrenie*, and *Volshebnaia Gora* (chapters from the books *An Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, and *The Symbolism of the Cross*, etc.)."

archaic cults.”⁴⁰⁷ This understanding of “esoterism” in Dugin’s Traditionalist analysis of Orthodoxy is quite faithful to the conceptualizations advanced by Guénon in the ninth chapter, “Esoterism and Exoterism”, of his *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, and in his *Perspectives on Initiation*.⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, it is precisely Guénon who is the guide most summoned in *Metaphysics of the Gospel*’s opening arguments.

The first part of the book, “The Metaphysics of Orthodox Dogma”, is devoted to reconciling a number of Orthodox Christian theological and metaphysical dogma with the terms of Guénon’s *The Multiple States of Being*. Most centrally at this point, Dugin argues that the Holy Trinity is in agreement with Guénon’s understanding of the “internal quality” of the Absolute.⁴⁰⁹ The authority which Dugin most frequently evokes on Christian metaphysics is that of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, recognized as the author of *Corpus Areopagiticum*. It is chiefly on the basis of discussing the works attributed to the latter, as well as the theology of Basil of Caesarea/Basil the Great (329/330-379), and the hesychastic doctrines of Gregory Palamas (1296-1357/59) in dialogue with Guénon’s above work, that Dugin arrives at his argument: “If our intuition is true, then Christian metaphysics is in its essence not only a variation of the one traditional metaphysics, but a special and exclusive variety of such.”⁴¹⁰

The main problem which confronts any Traditionalist assessment of Christian metaphysics, Dugin surmises, is the contradiction between creationism and manifestationism, represented by what he calls the “Judeo-Christian” and “Helleno-Christian”⁴¹¹ currents respectively, on the most central questions: the “ontologization of the trinitarian absolute”⁴¹², and the “metaphysics of the incarnation of the Son of God.”⁴¹³ Ultimately, Dugin argues that Christianity is an “atypical monotheism” which cannot be reduced to one or the other. Although there is a “fundamental difference between creationism and manifestationism,” Dugin postulates, “Christianity in fact harbors individual aspects of both approaches, in its essence being neither one nor the other, but something *third*.”⁴¹⁴ Within Christianity, if Catholicism (in agreement with Guénon) had been too submerged in creationism, had “come to be identified with exoterism, becoming only a religion”, and “had lost the initiatic meaning of its mysteries”, then “Byzantine and in succession Russian Orthodoxy”, Dugin writes, “has over the course of its whole history never made a decisive move in that direction.”⁴¹⁵ Dugin

⁴⁰⁷ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 209.

⁴⁰⁸ Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, 107-113; Guénon, *Perspectives on Initiation*.

⁴⁰⁹ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 215.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 248-254.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 223, 247.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 288-289.

postulates: “This initiatic meaning, the former source and foundation of early Christianity, being wholly and entirely initiatic and esoteric, was preserved in Greek, Slavic, Georgian, and Romanian Orthodoxy, as well as in some other Churches of the East.”⁴¹⁶ That Russian Orthodoxy has retained key “manifestationist” and “deificative” qualities which offer initiatic realization to the faithful is argued by Dugin in an analysis of various icons, parables, gestures, and in the representative arrangements of Church ceremonies. However, it is not merely this proportional retainment of such doctrines that distinguishes “Orthodox esoterism” as a path to “Christian initiation”, but the very type of knowledge offered by Orthodox Christianity in its initiatic dimension that Dugin identifies as fundamentally substantiating of Christianity. The initiatic knowledge that ties together and yet transcends the manifestationist and the creationist in Christian metaphysics is revealed to be none other than Eschatological Gnosis, enshrined in Orthodoxy in the “supra-temporal coincidence of two sacred moments: the First and Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴¹⁷ Knowledge of the End Times and the Final Judgement, in Dugin’s assessment, constitutes the uniqueness of Christian initiation; it determines the limits of the alienation of creationism and gives meaning to the eternal cycle of manifestationism by establishing for man the End, which is synonymous with both salvation and deification.

These theological and metaphysical arguments aimed at a revision of Traditionalist views of Christianity make up the greater first half of *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, and are decidedly unique in the history of Traditionalist discourse. Indeed, such is a testimony to Dugin’s own established apperception as a Traditionalist, and can be seen as a culmination of Dugin’s applications of Traditionalist notions to Christian data which had surfaced in the early 1990’s in *The Ways of the Absolute*, *Mysteries of Eurasia*, and across issues of *Mily Angel*. However, *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* does not end on such a thesis, but proceeds to validate Christianity in terms of “folk etymology” and the “metaphysics of the Christian Year.”⁴¹⁸ The “metaphysics of the Christian Year”, in this context, concerns reconciling Russian Orthodox calendar traditions with the primordial Arctic Sacred Year which Wirth conceived to be the archetypal symbol of all derivative languages, writing systems, mythemes, and religions. Dugin agrees with Wirth that the Year is the “revelation of the metaphysical structure of reality” and the “secret foundation of the most ancient traditions, myths, sacred texts, and esoteric and initiatic doctrines.”⁴¹⁹ It is amidst this theoretical preface to the discussion of the “Russian Orthodox Sacred Year” that Dugin introduces his most developed position on Wirth up to this point:

Of the greatest interest in the field of research into the symbolism of the year are the works of the German scholar Herman Wirth. In his books - *Der Aufgang der Menschheit* (Berlin, 1927), *Die Heilige Urschrift der Menschheit* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1936), *Euroasiatische Prolegomena zur Geschichte der*

⁴¹⁶ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 296.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 331.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 335, footnote 165, 344.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 334-335.

indoeuropaeischen Urreligion (Leiden, 1973), *Die Ura Linda Chronik* (Berlin, 1936), and *Die Symbolhistorische Methode* (Marburg, 1955), etc. - Wirth traced in great detail and across the most diverse ancient traditions, all the way down to cave paintings and rock inscriptions, the consistency of the single universal paradigm of the Sacred Year, that which gave rise to all the languages and writing systems of the peoples of the earth, as well as all mythological and religious tropes. Wirth's texts are just as important to studying the symbolism of Tradition as the books of René Guénon, although Wirth does not adhere to a Traditionalist point of view, and in his treatment of certain phenomena he often expresses a profane scientific education. However, given adequate reconciliation of Wirth's studies with Guénon's concepts, one can achieve the most unique results in ascertaining the general structure of the Primordial Tradition which, as it turns out, not only does not contradict Christianity, but is revealed to be its anticipation, its natural yet simultaneously divinely-inspired testament.⁴²⁰

Evoking Wirth as the “greatest scholar of primordial sacred paradigms”⁴²¹, Dugin's essential argument is that “the identification of strictly Christian festivals with the Russians' pre-Christian sacred calendar tropes should be seen as a providential, spiritually founded and absolutely uncoincidental phenomenon reflecting the Christianization of the cosmos, the Churching and transfiguration of one of the branches of the most ancient Japhetic tradition which Orthodoxy takes to a higher metaphysical perspective.”⁴²² By reconciling Orthodoxy with Russian pagan traditions, and by utilizing Wirth's paradigm to relate such to both the greater narrative of Traditionalism and Wirth's own theory of calendric sacrality, a connection which Dugin presents as “initiatic”, Dugin effectively opens up his narrative to address the implicit question of his analysis' significance to the cosmic role of Russian *Volk*.

Moscow the Third Rome and *Absolute Homeland*

If in *The Ways of the Absolute* Dugin established the supremacy and centrality of Eschatological Gnosis, and if in *Mysteries of Eurasia* Dugin postulated that the Russian people is the bearer of “Hyperborean sacrality”, which relates in Traditionalist and völkisch occultist discourses to the primordial Tradition and *Urheimat*, then in *The Metaphysics of the Gospel*, Dugin qualitatively advances this argument. “The entire history of the Russians”, Dugin asserts, “is the history of Orthodoxy, of which the history of the people and state are an indelible part. Along with Orthodox metaphysics, dogma, and ritual, Rus also received Orthodox eschatology.”⁴²³ If Traditionalist and Wirthian metaphysics are employed to substantiate Russian Orthodoxy, then Dugin chooses one of the most iconic discourses of Russian Orthodoxy, the notion of “Moscow the Third Rome”, to place Russia at the center of the transcendent and immanent cosmic meta-history of Christianity which, Dugin maintains, is the final “eschatological” transfiguration of earlier traditions. “The point”, Dugin writes, “is that the pre-Christian tradition of the Slavs practically completely passed over into the sphere of Russian Orthodox traditions, and it should be sought not outside of the Church, but

⁴²⁰ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 548-549.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 482.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 346.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 383.

precisely within the Church itself, where it has acquired metaphysical fullness, transfigured in the rays of the Gospel.”⁴²⁴

The first attestation of “Moscow the Third Rome” is to be found in 1511, when Filofei of Pskov (1465-1542) declared to Vasiliy III that the first two bastions of Christianity, Rome and Constantinople, had fallen away from their providential Christian missions, thus designating Moscow to be the Third Rome, “and a fourth shall never be.”⁴²⁵ In Filofei’s highly influential doctrine, the Russian Church, the Russian Tsar, and the Russian state itself are tasked with realizing the mission of *katechon*, the final stage in the history of Christianity on Earth associated with the “withholding” of Christian unity in anticipation of the coming of the Antichrist, the Second Coming of Christ, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.⁴²⁶ In *Metaphysics of the Gospel*, Dugin unequivocally affirms that “Moscow the Third Rome and all of Holy Rus were seen by the Russians as a providentially chosen ‘island of salvation’, as a special land that had been designated by the Holy Spirit.”⁴²⁷ Dugin identifies the reforms of Patriarch Nikon (1605-1681) and the Church Council of 1666-1667, which implicitly renounced the Third Rome doctrine and saw the split of the Old Believers, who canonized Filofei and the Third Rome, as: “the true ending of ‘katechon’, Holy Rus, and the Third Rome. From this moment on, the Russian State cannot be said to have been fully Orthodox and traditional.”⁴²⁸ Only the Old Believers, according to Dugin, “were (and continue to be) heroes of the ecclesiological Resistance, the last loyalists of Holy Rus, defenders of ‘imperial ontology’, the ones who have refused to compromise with the spirit of this world.”⁴²⁹

In the final lines of the first edition of *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, Dugin thus argues that the coming of the End Times, most fully articulated in Orthodoxy in the spirit of Eschatological Gnosis, is directly connected to the role of Russia, whose folk icons and Orthodox doctrines harbor such an “esoteric” revelation. Dugin concludes *The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism* thusly: “Orthodox Rus will have to play the most important, central role in this final eschatological mystery.”⁴³⁰ This narrative is elaborated even more extensively in an addendum to the second edition of *Metaphysics of the Gospel*, “We are the Church of the End Times.” In the latter, Dugin urges that the End Times “will happen very soon...From all sides and in all directions, we are battered by the winds of the

⁴²⁴ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 347.

⁴²⁵ Peter J.S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 11.

⁴²⁶ Michael Hagemester, “The Third Rome Against the Third Temple: Apocalypticism and Conspiracism in Post-Soviet Russia”, in Asbjorn Dyrendal, David G. Robertson, and Egil Asprem. *Handbook of Conspiracy Theory and Contemporary Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 430.

⁴²⁷ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 385.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 389; Duncan, *Russian Messianism*, 13.

⁴²⁹ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 515.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 420.

End Times...Dark heresies, liberal reforms, and the open aggression of the West hurl themselves at this ship of Salvation with new, hitherto unwitnessed force.”⁴³¹ In the wake of the immanent Final Judgement, Dugin concludes, it is up to “those who, despite everything, have remained loyal to the True Church and the True Kingdom, to the invincible Final Kingdom, to the indestructible Sacred Rus that calls out as an anxious toll from the depths of our souls.”⁴³²

On the one hand, Dugin’s elevation of the Third Rome, the Old Believers Rite, and the eschatological mission of the Russian state, can indeed be contextualized in the history of the Russian Orthodox canon itself, within which Dugin in *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* definitively sought to establish his apperception and “choice of tradition.” On the other hand, this major work, and the implications of its conclusions, are simultaneously inseparable from the esoteric sources and discourses well established in Dugin’s early philosophical trajectory. With *The Metaphysics of the Gospel*, Dugin decisively committed himself to Orthodoxy as an answer to the Traditionalist dilemma of the “choice of traditions,” relying heavily on Guénon and Wirth to substantiate both the “traditional” and “initiatic” quality of Orthodoxy. The striving to affirm an “esoteric” and “metaphysical” Russian Orthodox tradition at the center of spiritual palingenesis was an intimate concern of Mamleev and the Yuzhinsky Circle he founded. At the same time, while the eschatological accent of Dugin’s “Orthodox manifesto” can easily be classified in precisely this Orthodox context, the anticipation of a new spiritual era was by all means part of Dugin’s worldview since the Yuzhinsky days. Finally, the connection which Dugin draws between the universal metaphysical potential and mission of Orthodoxy and the cosmic role and fate of Russia in particular, is a glaring attestation of the völkisch occultist “templates” with which Dugin had been operating. Alongside the commitment to Tradition, the “Russian Ariosophy” anticipated in *Mysteries of Eurasia* and openly proclaimed in Dugin’s *The Hyperborean Theory* seems to find most acute expression in *The Metaphysics of the Gospel*’s assignment of the cosmic mission of the Third Rome to “Sacred Rus.” In effect, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti* put Orthodox Rus, the Third Rome, and the destiny of the Russian *Volk* at the center of the metaphysical drama of Tradition and the End Times.

At the same time, however, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti* should not be reduced to a mere recapitulation of earlier themes, as it very much represents a point of departure in Dugin’s early philosophy. Dugin’s “choice of Christianity” and proclamation of Orthodoxy as the ideal “Russian tradition”, entailed significant theoretical, and indeed political divergence with the paths of Golovin and Dzhemal. Indeed, in 1997 Golovin wrote a highly critical review of the book.⁴³³ While a discussion of the perspectives of Golovin’s critique is beyond the scope of the present study, it is worth noting that the very points which Golovin specifically contested - the assessment of manifestationism vs. creationism in Christianity, the

⁴³¹ Dugin, *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, 493, 520.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 521.

⁴³³ Evgeniy Golovin, “*Retsenziia: Aleksandr Dugin, Metafizika Blagoi Vesti. Arktogeia, Moskva, 1996 god*”, *Knizhnoe obozrenie* (1997) [<http://my.arcto.ru/public/blagovest/golov.htm>].

relationship between “esotericism” in Western Christianity and Orthodoxy, and the singling out of Russia as a salvational actor - are precisely the pivotal theses of *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti*, the conclusions to which Dugin had taken his Traditionalist and völkisch occultist considerations. In 1999, Dugin would republish *The Ways of the Absolute*, *Mysteries of Eurasia*, and *The Metaphysics of the Gospel* as a three-part volume under the title *Absolute Homeland*, prefaced thusly:

This book includes the main metaphysical works of the author which have gone through more than one edition and have been translated into many foreign languages. The unification of these three programmatic philosophical works of Dugin into one book allows one to illuminate a fully-fledged picture of the Traditionalist worldview, to clarify the link between traditional metaphysics and Orthodoxy, and to study the possibility of applying the principles of sacred geography to contemporary geopolitical reality. Religious and philosophical doctrines, the decoding of ancient myths and legends, and a panorama of theology and sacred history are incarnated in a common synthesis which allows one to understand in depth the complex and contradictory nature of the eschatological reality surrounding us. This book tells of the high destiny of man and mankind, their transcendental origins, and, alas, the depth of their fall, degeneration, and self-denial in the modern era. All of the texts have been substantially re-worked by the author and equipped with a new series of notations for this edition.⁴³⁴

In particular, in the new foreword to *Ways of the Absolute*, the praises of Mamleev, Golovin, and Dzhemal were removed. Instead, Dugin alludes to the Yuzhinsky Circle in the past tense, saying that in his earlier work he relied on “a particular metaphysical tradition...developed in a quite closed and insular intellectual milieu tied to such thinkers as Geydar Dzhemal, Yuri Mamleev, and Evgeniy Golovin, from whom [we took] a taste for the paradoxical pivot of metaphysical intuition, attempted to combine it with orthodox Traditionalism, and to subject it to corrections arising out of the spirit of the above-mentioned school.”⁴³⁵ Dugin advertises that he has come to a “whole series of new metaphysical conclusions, which are embodied in our other works, first and foremost, *The Metaphysics of the Gospel*.” Concluding his introduction to the new edition, Dugin says that he has introduced “considerable corrections” to remedy various “suspicions” and “inadequate orthodox Guénonian terms”, but emphasizes: “Nonetheless, it is extremely important to take into consideration the chronology of the writing of the first edition of this book, as such was the first step in what was in its own right a ‘Traditionalist revelation.’”⁴³⁶

Thus, 10 years following *The Ways of the Absolute*, Dugin unveiled a comprehensive manifesto of his early philosophy, already treated as a critical, revised edition. In this programmatic trilogy, a significantly expanded *Metafizika Blagoi Vesti* occupies the central part of the volume, and flows into a re-worked edition of *Mysteries of Eurasia*. In a new, especially eschatologically accented insert, “The Crusade Against Us”, Dugin calls on Orthodox Rus to rise up to face the “eschatological crusade” waged by the “Western Antichrist”, the “quintessence of the West” - the United States of America - and its “Liberal

⁴³⁴ Dugin, *Absolutnaiia Rodina*, 2.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

Totalitarianism” and “Protestant Dispensationalism.” Concluding this unprecedentedly (geo)political articulation of *Mysteries of Eurasia*, Dugin writes:

World wars, the collapse of empires, the disappearance of entire peoples and races, class conflicts, and revolutions are but episodes of a great conflict, the culmination of which is supposed to be the final, apocalyptic battle, the *Endkampf*, in which we will play the most important role. In the eyes of the West, our role is overall and entirely negative. The role assigned to us is that of the planetary scapegoat. The Western Antichrist is striving to convince the world that his planetary and spiritual enemy is the real “Antichrist,” that is, Continent Russia and its secret pole: us.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁷ Dugin, *Absolutnnaia Rodina*, 670.

Conclusion

The preceding study has sought to reconstruct the origins, sources, and trajectory of the early philosophy of Alexander Dugin. A brief recapitulation of this complex picture in the history of ideas which we have attempted to piece together is indispensable to recognizing both the wider historical context of Dugin's early thought and the numerous avenues for further research presented therein. As identified in the introduction and first chapter, Dugin's intellectual origins can be traced back to the Soviet underground occultist circle, the Yuzhinsky Circle, whose central motives, sources, themes, and ideas were primarily drawn from the domain of Western Esotericism. In the first chapter, we attempted to reconstruct the esoteric grammatology of the Yuzhinsky Circle as it was founded and later joined by Dugin in 1980, by investigating three of its leading figures' preoccupations with particular esoteric sources which would have a lasting impact on Dugin. The founding guru of the circle, Yuri Mamleev, set the precedent of synthesizing a search for Russian spiritual identity with a number of Western occultist currents and the envisioning of a "metaphysical East." Mamleev also professed a particular brand of metaphysics characterized by a gnostic spirituality which treated the present world order as fundamentally evil and advocated the raising of a Russian spiritual elite, to be trained through alterations of consciousness to pursue "mad gnosis." Mamleev's charismatic "successor", Evgeniy Golovin, significantly transformed the Yuzhinsky Circle by introducing two key sources which would be immensely impactful on Dugin's intellectual development: Jacques Bergier and Louis Pauwels' 1960 *Le Matin des magiciens*, and the works of the 20th century current of Traditionalism. Golovin himself developed a highly individualized philosophy out of numerous literary, esoteric, and occult tropes, and played a crucial role in translating and propagating Traditionalism, transmitting an affinity for and interest in the "conspirological" and "Nazi occultist" legacy of *Le Matin des magiciens*, and expressing a profoundly antipathetic and even conspiratorial view of the modern cosmic order.

These ideational inspirations were central to the early worldview of another Yuzhinsky thinker who rose to prominence alongside Golovin, and who would later introduce Dugin to the circle as his "disciple": Geydar Dzhemal. Dzhemal played a crucial role in the accumulation and digestion of Traditionalist sources, and with his 1979 *Orientation: North* Dzhemal set the precedent for attempting to develop an independent "theology" whose key reference was a "metaphysical North." The latter trope was dear not only to the Traditionalist doctrines of Guénon and Evola, in which the North was associated with the Primordial Tradition of the mythical continent of Hyperborea and the Golden Age, but also to the currents of völkisch occultism, particularly Ariosophy, as well as the works of the völkisch thinker Herman Wirth. In the latter current(s), the North was also associated with a lost *Urheimat* and ancient wisdom tradition, the legacy and mission of which the völkisch occultists sought to prove belonged to the Ario-Germanic Volk. Dzhemal stands at the crossroads of these esoteric currents' impact on the early thought of Dugin. Dzhemal pursued Traditionalism and the metaphysical reasonings of the Yuzhinsky Circle into Islam,

ultimately developing his own ideology of “Islamic radicalism” as his ultimate choice of tradition, which Dzhemal crucially referenced as “Aryan Islam.”

It is these two currents, these two ranges of Traditionalist and völkisch occultist ideas and inspirations, that we have identified as present in the ideological matrix of the Yuzhinsky Circle into which Dugin was initiated in 1980. Over the course of his first publications, Dugin consistently claimed and demonstrated a heavy ideological indebtedness to Traditionalism and the Yuzhinsky Circle context in which he discovered such. In his first work of 1989, *The Ways of the Absolute*, Dugin established his apperception as a Traditionalist and adept of the Yuzhinsky Circle, and sought to elaborate a new metaphysical category, that of Eschatological Gnosis. As discussed in chapter two, Dugin’s subsequent book, *Mysteries of Eurasia* from 1991, also presented itself as part of Traditionalist discourse, but primarily engaged in what resembles a distinctly völkisch occultist substantiation of Russia and the Russian Volk as the heirs to Hyperborea and the bearers of a cosmic mission. Dugin’s own *Morning of the Magicians*, his 1992-3 *Conspirology*, and *The Hyperborean Theory* from the same year, reveal Dugin’s familiarity with and affinity for synthesizing völkisch occultist and Traditionalist ideas, as well as the nuances of Dugin’s engagement of the Ariosophical corpus. *The Metaphysics of the Gospel: Orthodox Esotericism* from 1996 represents the major theoretical conclusion of Dugin’s engagement with these esoteric currents in his definitive “choice of tradition.” Our study concluded with Dugin’s publication in 1999 of the *Absolute Homeland* volume, in which Dugin critically revised *Ways of the Absolute*, *Mysteries of Eurasia*, and *Metaphysics of the Gospel*, and injected a certain distance between his philosophy and that of both the Yuzhinsky Circle and Guénonian Traditionalism. Although *Absolute Homeland* is treated here as symbolically representing the conclusion of Dugin’s early philosophical trajectory in terms of the esoteric legacy of the Yuzhinsky Circle, this is by no means the end of this history. Rather, the preceding reconstruction leaves open a number of contexts and questions which deserve further consideration in the historical study of Western Esotericism.

First of all, the identification of Traditionalist and völkisch occultist sources in Dugin’s early thought and the ideational legacy of the Yuzhinsky Circle necessarily raises the question of these sources’ paths of transmission and entanglement in the history of ideas. For example, it is intriguing that the Yuzhinsky Circle of Mamleev was initially interested in the very same occultist currents which heavily influenced certain aspects of the Traditionalist and völkisch occultist authors in question, such as Theosophy and Anthroposophy. As one scholar has noted, “additional research is required to understand the precise relationship between the ‘esoteric milieu’ in German-speaking countries and the emergence of Ariosophy.”⁴³⁸ The Yuzhinsky Circle’s knowledge of Theosophical and Anthroposophical currents and their particular renditions in the spirit of “Slavic esotericism” (e.g., Roerich) predated the circle and Dugin’s affinity for völkisch occultist tropes. Similarly, the Yuzhinsky Circle was theoretically and practically familiar with a vast range of other sources and ideas before discovering (and to varying extents committing to some form of engagement with)

⁴³⁸ Strube, “Nazism and the Occult”, 343.

Traditionalism. These unexplored aspects of the circle, as well as Mamleev, Golovin, Dzhemal, and other Yuzhinsky members' corpus and philosophies, are in need of successive study.

At the same time, as we have mentioned throughout, Traditionalism and völkisch occultism were most likely found in the Yuzhinsky Circle precisely by way of their, perhaps unexpected, frequent textual, thematic, and historical intersections. Guénon and Evola's interest in Wirth and the "North", Evola's own doctrine of "spiritual racialism", and overall the correspondences (and common influences) between multiple Traditionalist and völkisch occultist ideas present an enticing sphere for further inquiry. In the very least, it appears that Dugin's original synthesis of Traditionalist and völkisch occultist apperceptions was not historically unfounded, but likely facilitated by the cross-references endemic to these texts, authors, and ideas themselves. Indeed, the correspondences and connections between these currents seem to predate the "Nazi occultist" legacy of *Le Matin des magiciens*. The above observations also point towards the need to shed further light on the enduring shadow of Herman Wirth. That Wirth's ideas appear as the most central sources of Dugin's early thought is an example of the complex ideological legacy of Wirth which has yet to receive exhaustive scholarship. In particular, Wirth's post-war works, including those which Dugin references, have not been examined by scholarship. Serious research into Wirth's life and corpus, especially with regards to Wirth's evident proximity to, and influence on, Western esoteric currents, is becoming increasingly relevant to scholarly reconstructions of the mnemo-historiographical gaps of the 20th century.

Further inquiry into the histories and ideas of these sources promises to inform more accurate understandings of the early thought of Alexander Dugin, and to contribute to illuminating the currents and chronology of the wider historical matrices of the Yuzhinsky Circle, Soviet-Russian "Occulture", and Western Esotericism.

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