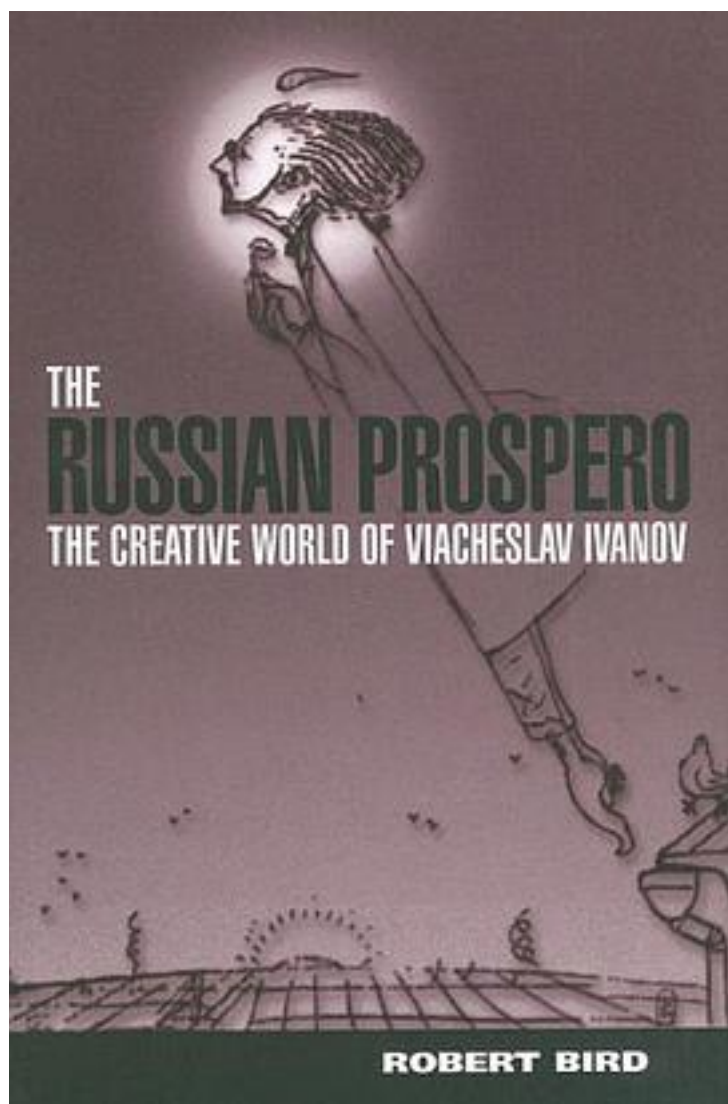


The Russian Prospero



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Viacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949), the central intellectual force in Russian modernism, achieved through his work an original synthesis of Christianity, Platonism, and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. His powerful intellect exerted an immeasurable influence in modernist Russia and the early Soviet Union, and after emigrating to Italy in 1924 he played an important role in intellectual debates in Western Europe between the wars. In recent years, Ivanov's manifold contributions have been recognized in all major aspects of Russian culture, including poetry, literary theory, philosophy, and theology. In "The Russian Prospero," Robert Bird uncovers the foundations of Ivanov's poetic and theoretical universe, traces its evolution, and explores its connections to cultural and intellectual currents in international modernism. Blending a close reading of Ivanov's work with a thoughtful analysis of his place within twentieth-century thought, Bird finds that Ivanov's ecstatic creative psychology leads directly to a consideration of history as a continuum of human interpretive activity, and to a conception of art as a historical force. He emphasizes and dramatizes Ivanov's quest to harness the power of art and apply it to concrete life-situations. It is the dilemma of Prospero, who must liberate his attendant spirit Ariel in order to restore full sovereignty over his own creative self and to regain ethical agency. The productive tension that resulted from Ivanov's struggle was a remarkable force in Russian modernism and remains a powerful spur for our own reflections on modernity. " Bird's] clear explanations of Ivanov's ideas and his informed, insightful, astute readings of the poetic works make this book required reading for anyone interested in modern poetry, intellectual history, cultural studies, and philosophy of early 20th century Russian and European thought. . . . Essential."--"Choice" " Bird] makes a welcome contribution to our understanding of Russian modernism in its broader European context In this undertaking he has not only succeeded admirably, but will undoubtedly inspire others to follow him."--Pamela Davidson, "The Russian Review" "The most comprehensive overall treatment of Ivanov's work to date."--David N. Wells, "The Slavic and East European Journal"

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