

# Summary

## Lacuna: Loss, Gape, Absence

Guest Editor: Irina Sandomirskaja

The texts included in this section were first presented at an interdisciplinary symposium organized in 2018 at Södertörn University (Sweden) called “Missing: Legacy, Heritage, Historical Justice.” The theme that unites the works are lacuna and lacunarity, “missing”: a kind of negative presence. If a missing person then returns, they return as a non-person. This is shown by **Daniel Heller-Roazen** in his article “Disseverances: On the Laws and Fictions of Absence.” His essay opens with an analysis of the plot of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novella *Wakefield* about the mysterious and unexplained disappearance of a husband from the bosom of a happy marriage and his just as mysterious return back to his family, also unexplained, after many years had passed. The numerous “not” and “neither” are diverse, these negative categories of the individual, in the matrix of which a person’s absence shines. Heller-Roazen then reads legal treatises from Hammurabi to the present days on laws on missing persons as subjects of law and civil status.

**Mikhail Iampolski**’s article “The Gape (Instead) of I: Culture and Melancholy” presents a critical overview of European philosophical reflection from Descartes to Judith Butler, and thoughts on culture under the sign melancholy. The author observes a gape in place of the subject, or “I,” which reflects the world. In European thought, the subject is a shadow that casts aside by the object. Melancholy, however, complicates the scheme and sets up the subject in an entirely

different way — not as a shadow of the object, but as the shadow of the object’s loss. It is this substitution of the object with a lacuna that leads to a crisis of subjectivity, and to the replacement of the world with its loss.

The article “The Lacuna in an Eschatological Dimension: From the Totality of Memory to the Infinity of Unforgetting” by **Irina Sandomirskaja** continues the theme of legacy, ruminating upon how the post-Blockade world as a whole transformed into a lacuna, crying out about the grievous loss and demanding justice. It is in this void that the regime started restoring suburban palaces as symbols of imperial indissolubility and continuity. Authentic work with memory and grief, however, leads to a subject that is not political restoration, but rather “eschatological.” Every minimal loss has meaning, and not as a defect that slated for repair and renewal, but as an event on a global scale, tantamount to the loss of the whole world, and it is in this that it is subject to memorialization.

The inexhaustibility of the lacuna as an endless resource is the subject of **Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback**’s essay “The Lacuna of Hermeneutics: Notes on the Freedom of Thought.” Schuback searches for a new method in hermeneutics and offers a revision of the methodological apparatus of the humanities, with the goal of the actualization of the critical potential of hermeneutics. This “today” is the current era of the depletion of the meaning of things and words. The

“lacunary method” in hermeneutics that Schuback proposes consists of turning to the great poets of the 20th century — Paul Valéry, Fernando Pessoa, Paul Celan — in order to learn how to counteract

this pseudo-positive, pseudo-productive “anything goes” state — a negative principle of subtle differentiation, “understanding of not understanding,” and “distraction of attention.”

## The Middle Ages: An Iconic Twist

Guest Editor: Oleg Voskoboynikov

**Oleg Voskoboynikov's** article “Nicolas Maniacutia and Living Icons in 12th-Century Rome” discusses the famous icon known as Uronica, which to this day decorates the papal private chapel, the Sancta Sanctorum, and has possessed the special significance of an acheiropoieton since the mid-8th century. It is considered one of the most important relics of a city that has laid claim to the status of capital of the Christian world, and it has been the subjection of reflection for intellectuals. One of the most interesting testimonials of such a reflection is a sermon by the Lateran canon Nicolas Maniacutia of the 1140s. The analysis allows us to compare the discursive and visual practices of medieval Christians connected with venerated images. The article ends with a full translation of the sermon with commentary.

In his article “The Image of Moscow in Russia in the 17th Century,” **Petr S. Stefanovich** analyzes the images of Moscow in the icon *Panegyric to Our Lady of Vladimir* by Simon Ushakov (1668) and in the miniatures of the *Book on the Election for the Most High Throne of Great Ruler, Tsar and Prince Mikhail Fyodorovich*

(1673). The author compares them with the presentation of Moscow as the sacred and political center of Russia in texts of the mid-16th through mid-17th century. By revealing the specific symbolic content of the image of Moscow in images and texts, the author concludes that in the 17th century, Moscow as a city as a whole and an aggregate of separate objects (sacred, historical, etc.) formed a “realm of memory” (in accordance with Pierre Nora’s terminology) of Russian culture and identity.

**Andrey Vinogradov's** article “The Virgin Hagiosoritissa in Ktitor Portraits: Visualizing the Idea of Divine Intercession” examines the iconography of the Virgin Hagiosoritissa in ktitor portraits in the Eastern Christian world. This icon of the Virgin with the arms stretched out in a gesture of prayer, venerated in Constantinople, was often reproduced in fine art and on seals and coins, but it was rarely included in ktitor portraits. Analysis of such cases shows that the presence of the Virgin as a divine intercessor for the donor is explained by their personal or ancestral veneration of the Virgin as their protectress.

## Readings

**Igor Pilshchikov's** article “Dante’s Virgil in the Italian Original and Russian Translations” analyzes the different strategies

Russian translators of the *Divine Comedy* developed in order to convey the presence of Virgil in Dante’s text. Examples are

taken from the first complete translation of the *Divine Comedy* by Dmitri Min (1853—1885), Mikhail Lozinsky's translation (1939—1945), which is the current standard translation, and Aleksandr Ilyushin's experimental translation (1995). The twentieth-century translators chose two antithetical approaches,

which may be described as “domestication” and “foreignization.” The situation is made more complicated by the fact that Russian culture has not yet produced a standard version of the *Aeneid*, while the *Divine Comedy* is permeated with quotations and allusions from Vergil's poem.

## Anthropology of Literary Forms

**Dmitry Kharitonov's** article “New Journalism and Psychoanalysis: Towards an Anthropology of Literary Forms”, through psychoanalytic metaphors, examines New Journalism, which in the 1960s changed the balance of power in American literature. The main ideologist and practitioner of New Journalism was Tom Wolfe, who in the early 1960s realized the inadequacy of the journalistic language known to him to the new socio-cultural realities and discovered new creative possibilities for himself. In the early 1970s, Wolfe summed up the existence of New Journalism, describing its role, formulating its theoretical propositions and describing its history as he imagined it. A strong link in the chain of literary journalism, New Journalism is an important topic in conversation about the anthropology of literature.

In his article “Supraconscious Gasparov: Native American Names in *Notes and Excerpts*,” **Ilya Vinitsky** establishes that the Indian theme is linked in Gasparov's memoirs with Alexei Kruchenykh's po-

lemical poem “The Military Call of Zau,” which was directed against Pushkin scholars, and the childhood memories of the scholar himself about “The Last of the Flatfeet,” a humorous story by American satirist Richard Connell, published in the late 1920s. The biographical, literary, and historical subtexts of these notes show that they are part of a general philological theory or even the author's philological credo: the protagonist of *Notes* is a man who believes in the existence of meaning, who tortuously strives to understand his fellow man, but — and herein lies the author's characteristic philological irony — recognizes the impossibility of this task. The article argues that for Gasparov, Zaum (Supraconscious) is not simply a scholarly problem, but a key existential riddle. This linguistic and aesthetic problem fits into a broader theoretical and physical conception of the universe (quark theory, popular in Gasparov's intellectual circle), world literature (Joyce), and a philology that connects physics and literature as sciences of understanding.

## American Experimental Writings: The Poetics of Language and Ethnic Poetry

This section features texts that are concentrated around the latest experimental practices in American literary writing.

Opening the section, **Vladimir Fe-shchenko's** article “Charles Bernstein's Experimental Semiotics. Language

Poetry Between Russian and American Traditions” shines a spotlight on the history of Language movement in the United States and Charles Bernstein’s role as one its main ideologues on the East Coast, demonstrating intercultural connections and transfers between American Language writing and Russian avant-garde poetry, from Andrei Bely to Arkadii Dragomoshchenko.

The article is followed by an essay (translated by Vladimir Feshchenko) by another protagonist of the Language movement, from the West Coast — **Barrett Watten**. The essay “Language Writing’s Concrete Utopia: From *Leningrad* to Occupy” could be considered autobiographical — the activities of the Language poets are conceptualized as a “practical utopia,” an alternative means of opposing linguistic, societal, and political conventions. The poetic and critical practices of Language writing are presented here as experiments in collective authorship: the book *Leningrad*, a kind of travelogue, which tells the story of the visit of four Language authors to post-Soviet Russian on the invitation of Dragomoshchenko; the project *The Grand Piano*, a Language School experiment in collective autobiography; and participation in the Occupy movement as a poetic contribution to contemporary radical politics.

For the first time, a chapter of the experimental book *Leningrad*, written jointly by **Michael Davidson**, **Lyn Hejinian**, **Ron Silliman** and **Barrett Watten** in the wake of their trip to the USSR in 1989, is being published in Russian (translation by Ivan Sokolov). In the text, the voices of all four authors are interspersed throughout, marked by a logogram at the beginning of a paragraph, and as a result, a document spreads out before us about a collective experience of interaction between American and Russian intellectuals, poets, and philologists at the end of the Cold War. The text is not free of factual inaccuracies and errors, but in this is also the creative work of memory, captured in the travelogue genre.

Finally, the last part of the section is dedicated to Clayton Eshleman, a figure that, while practically unknown to the Russian reader, is significant for recent American innovative poetry. **Ivan Sokolov**’s article “The Poet Is Always under Arrest. A Study in Cavernous” presents this name in the context of the alternative poetry of two Americas (North and Latin) of the last decades. Also remarked upon is his attraction to ethnic poetry as a specific means of handling a poetic text, taking into account both traditional and avant-garde and experimental cultures. The section concludes with a series of poems by **Clayton Eshleman** translated by I. Sokolov.

## In Memoriam: Vyacheslav Koshelev (1950—2020)

This section is dedicated to the memory of Vyacheslav Koshelev (1950—2020), the well-known philologist who was one of the foremost specialists in the area of the history of Russian literature. The text by **Vyacheslav Koshelev** published

here, “*Onegin’s Album and Chapter 10 (An Episode from the Creative History of Pushkin’s Novel in Verse)*” is dedicated to the work by Alexander Pushkin, which the poet conceived during the Boldino Autumn of 1830.

**Inna Bulkina's** article "Griboedov as a Cultural Hero" focuses on Koshelev's book *Griboedov in "Given Circumstances,"* a collection of notes of various genres and years. In this book, Griboedov is presented not only as the first Russian theatrical writer and a "leader of

the theatrical literature of his day," but also as a "special cultural hero of the Russian nation."

This section also presents a list of monographs by V. Koshelev.