

‘THE BIRDSONG IS DROWNED BY THE FACTORY HOOTER’ :
**KONSTANTIN BALMONT’S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA DURING HIS WORLD
TOUR OF 1912**

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Konstantin Balmont was easily the most widely travelled Russian writer of his generation. His first-hand investigations of foreign countries began in 1892 with a brief trip from Russia to Scandinavia and in following years, basing himself largely in Paris, Balmont travelled very extensively throughout Europe. A prominent member of the Russian émigré community in France, he was also respected in England, where he lectured at the Tylor Institute in Oxford and published articles in the *Athenaeum*. By 1903 Balmont was planning more ambitious and extensive journeys further afield and these plans were brought partly to fruition in trips to Mexico and California in 1905, to Egypt in 1909 and to Japan in 1916. His longest and most extensive voyage was a tour beginning from London in February 1912 which took him to Australia and the South Pacific by way of Tenerife and South Africa on the outward trip, and to South-East Asia, Ceylon and India on the return. [1] This article aims to explore Balmont’s response in his poetry and travel writing to his experience of Australia, and to set it in the context of his general approach to Oceania.

Balmont’s reasons for travelling were complex. His longer voyages in particular were, or became, a direct source of income both through the articles he wrote for newspapers and journals and through the lectures which he delivered on his return. Alongside his famous manifesto on the poetic function of language, *Poeziia kak volshebstvo* (Poetry as Enchantment, 1915), Balmont’s impressions of the Pacific, for example, seem to have formed an important and popular component of the lecture tours he made through Russian provincial towns in 1915 and 1916. [2] At the same time, travel was in a sense fundamental to Balmont’s poetic method. He had begun his literary career as a translator of poetry, and over the course of his lifetime translated an extraordinary range of material from the literatures of many different countries. He was knowledgeable in most European languages and had at least a working knowledge of many others, including Ancient Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew and the indigenous languages of Mexico. Balmont was also widely if unsystematically read in the cultures and histories associated with all these languages, and his reading found its way almost universally into his original poetry. [3] Physical as opposed to armchair travel represents a further extension of Balmont’s appropriation of other cultures into his own intellectual and poetic vision, a practical means of expanding his imaginative ethnography and mythology which complemented and confirmed the fruits of his reading.

The clearest manifesto of Balmont’s philosophy is contained in his most famous collection of poetry, *Budem kak solntse* (Let Us Be Like the Sun, 1903). This volume is

significant in the history of Russian literature for many reasons, but what is important for present purposes is its apotheosis of spontaneity and the concomitant rejection of the values of polite society which it contains. 'Ia v etot mir prishel, chtob videt' solntse' ('I have come into this world to see the sun'), writes Balmont, [4] and the sun becomes the pre-eminent symbol for freedom and creativity, which he espouses even at the risk of self destruction. [5] In his poetry after *Budem kak solntse*, and notably in the 1905 collection *Liturgiia krasoty* (Liturgy of Beauty), Balmont explicitly links his cult of the sun with the lives of 'ancient' peoples, whom he sees as living not through the mind like over-civilised Europeans, but through the senses. [6] His gradually developed comparative mythology of the sun, which causes Bal'mont to identify with pre-Columban Mexicans and other early peoples in *Liturgiia krasoty*, was, among other things, to lead to a celebration of ancient Egyptian civilisation in which his main purpose is "to help us revive within ourselves the sun-worshipping Egypt of old". [7]

In view of this agenda, one of Balmont's principal objectives on his round the world voyage was to seek further confirmation of his vision by observing at first hand the cultures and life-styles of the non-Europeanised indigenous inhabitants of the countries through which he passed. Accordingly he spent the majority of his time in places where indigenous cultures were easily visible: in South Africa, for example, where he was struck by the "khudozhestvennaia odarennost' bushmenov, beskorystnoe druzheliubie naroda zulu" ("artistic giftedness of the Bushmen, the disinterested friendliness of the Zulu people"); and in Polynesia, where he sought the uncorrupted childhood stage of the human race. [8] Balmont's rapturous response to Tonga is characteristic of his reception of the Pacific islands and their inhabitants in general:

Ia uvidel eti skazochnye ostrova voochiiu, s ikh tonkim, dalekim uzorom
prizrachnykh pal'm, kotorye kak budto znal uzhe s detstva i vseгда toskoval o nikh
... serdtse moe pronizalos' bol'iu. Potomu chto, ia znal, chto ia ne ostanus' zdes'
navsegda, v etom goluboi dali. Gde vse sozdano iz krasoty I schast'ia ... Esli est' na
zemle schastlivye liudi, eto -- oni [tongantsy]. [9]

I saw these fabled islands with my own eyes, with their delicate distant fringe of
transparent palms. I felt as if I had known them from childhood and always
yearned for them. My heart ached because I knew that I could not stay here for
ever in this blue prospect. Where everything is made from beauty and happiness ...
If there is a happy people on earth it is they [the Tongans].

Apart from his travel articles and lectures, later collected in French translation in a volume entitled *Visions solaires* (Solar Visions), between 1913 and 1916 Balmont published versions of one Melanesian and thirteen Polynesian legends which tend to emphasise the antiquity, nobility and generous sensibility of the islanders. [10] Balmont also wrote numerous poems inspired by his voyage of 1912, most of which were included in the volume *Belyi zodchii* (White Architect), published two years later. [11] Here again Balmont's prevailing view of the Pacific is an idealised one and at times, as in the poem 'Tish'' ('Stillness'), even mystical:

Vot ona -- neogliadnaia shir' okeana, kotoryi zovetsia Velikim
I kotoroi Moanoi zovut v Gavaiiki v strane Maori.
Chelovek ostrovov, chto vulkanami vstali, viden'em voznik smuglolikim
I korally rastut, i nad sinei volnoi bez chisla ostrova-altari. [12]

Here it is -- the vast expanse that we call the Great [Pacific] Ocean,
And which is called Moana in Hawaiki, the land of the Maori.
The people of these islands, which arose as volcanoes, have sprung up
[in a dark-faced vision
And corals grow and on the blue wave the island-altars are without number.

In *Poeziia kak volshebstvo* Balmont includes Australian Aboriginal legends among his examples of how meaning has been given to the world through the poetry of 'primitive' peoples, all in Balmont's view true guardians of the poetic word. [13] Here he describes Australia as he describes the Pacific islands, as a source of startling, elemental, pre-European wisdom:

Pervobytnyi chelovek chernogo tsveta, zhivushchii zdes', zapechatel v napevnykh svoikh skazaniakh tu stepen' proniknoveniia v zhizn' Prirody, tu luchistuiu stupen' Miroshchushcheniia, kogda otdel'noe chelovecheskoe Ia bez kontsa tonet i vnov' voznikaet v slitnom snovidenii Mirotvorchestva. [14]

The primitive black people living here fixed in their melodious tales that degree of penetration into the life of Nature, that radiant level of Sympathy with the World where the individual human I is constantly appearing and disappearing in the continuous dream of Creation.

Something of the same innocence is found in Balmont's poem 'Ostrov Chetverga' ('Thursday Island'), the first of two Australian poems that appeared in *Belyi zodchii*, and presumably written as Balmont passed the tip of the Cape York peninsula on leaving Australia. This poem views the island from the perspective of Balmont's version of the cult of the Pacific Island and focuses on its tropical appearance. The poem nostalgically finds points in common with the Russian countryside, the only place that Balmont found to rival Oceania in the elemental 'simplicity' of its people. [15]

Ostrov Chetverga

Svezhii den' s zareiu novoi,
Svetlyi ostrov Chetverga.
Zdravstvui, ostrov Chetvergovi,
Vyreznye berega.

My proplyli, i priplyli
V ostrovnoi morskoi venets.
Ty li znak davnishnei byli?
Ya s toboiu nakonets.

Potonuvshie vershiny
Vydvigaiutsya nad dnom.
Mezh krasivyykh ty -- edinyi,
I lagunnyi tsvet krugom.

Ele zrimoe rasten'e
Sinii tsvetik na zemle.
I selen'e kak viden'e
Tam daleko, tam vo mgle.

Dym polzet po krasnoi kryshe,
Legkii steletsia tuman.
A nad Morem vyshe-vyshe
Vozletaet pelikan.

On sedoi kak prividen'e,
No skol'zit k inomu vzglyad: --
Ozherel'noe spleten'e,
Gusi dikie letiat.

Tochno eto Sever milyi,
Tochno eto zhuravli.
Skol'ko zhizni! Skol'ko sily!
Tot, kto zhiv -- svoi mig prodli! [16]

Thursday Island.

A fresh day and a new dawn,
Bright Thursday Island.
Greetings, Thursday Island,
Sculpted shoreline.

We have sailed and arrived
At an island crown in the ocean..
Are you a sign of the distant past?
I am with you at last.

Soaring peaks
Rise over the depths.
You are unique among beauties,
In the flower of your lagoon.

Scarcely visible
Are the dark blue flowers.

And the people like a vision
Are distant in the gloom.

Smoke moves across a red roof,
A light mist hangs in the air.
And high up over the Ocean
A pelican soars.

It is grey as an apparition,
But my vision slides elsewhere:
Like the lacing of a necklace,
The wild geese are flying.

This is just like the dear North,
Just like cranes.
So much life! So much strength!
May whoever is alive make the moment endure!

In his description of Thursday Island Balmont succeeds in looking beyond the present -- he ignores, for example, the impact of the still flourishing pearling industry -- into a mythical and romantic past. In the same way he had failed to react to European encroachment on Samoa and other Pacific islands, notably to the undoubted commercialisation of the tourist experience which was already well entrenched by 1912. [17]

However, Balmont's actual experience of the realities of early twentieth-century Australia during the several weeks he remained in that country provide an instructive counterpoint to his response to the Pacific Islands and the other 'exotic' destinations of his voyage. Balmont's idealised vision of Australia falls startlingly short of what he perceives around him. Here the evidence of *Visions solaires* and the published fragments of Balmont's correspondence during the voyage may be supplemented by newspaper and archival records available in Australia concerning his movements. [18]

Balmont and his third wife, Elena Konstantinovna Tsvetkovskaia, landed first of all in Hobart where they arrived from Cape Town on the *Corinthic* on 10 April 1912. Reporting the unexpectedly early arrival of the vessel, the Hobart *Mercury*, the following day, also gave an account of the crossing:

The White Star Liner R.M.S. *Corinthic* put in an unexpected appearance at Hobart yesterday forenoon from London, via Capetown. It was anticipated that she would arrive today, but fine weather was experienced from the Cape, which accounts for her fast trip. [...] The *Corinthic* proceeding [from Capetown...] after picking up a number of passengers, amongst whom were several well-known variety artists. Exceptionally fine weather prevailed on the run to Hobart.

During the passage from Capetown several concerts were held in the first, second, and third class, and at each of these the services of the professionals were kindly given, and greatly appreciated by everyone. [19]

Whatever Balmont's reaction to the entertainments provided on board the *Corinthic*, his response to the town of Hobart was at best ambivalent. He notes its excellent museum and attractive botanical gardens, but at the same time confesses to an overwhelming sense of depression. [20] This may be partly attributable to the weather: it appears from his later essays that Balmont was not prepared for the chills of the Tasmanian autumn after the warmth of the South African spring. [21] Mostly, however, Balmont's unease is caused by the evidence of English colonisation: the intrusive residual presence of the convict settlements, and especially what he sees as the destruction of the land, its fauna, vegetation and people in the interests of a blinkered drive for economic profit. [22] The destruction of the Tasmanian Aborigines is for Balmont symptomatic of a much broader philistinism throughout the continent. He writes with considerable vehemence on the subject, noting that the Aboriginal population of the Australian mainland had shared the fate of the native Tasmanians:

Les Anglais au visage blanc ont agi exactement de la même manière avec les Noirs d'Australie. S'étant emparés de leurs terres pour transformer cet empire en pâturages à moutons et en villes industrielles, ils ont systématiquement exterminé les indigènes, ils ont pour ainsi dire réduit à néant leur existence effective. Maintenant que les derniers survivants sont parqués dans des camps déterminés, les autorités anglaises d'Australie entourent de leurs soins ces moribonds, tout comme ils veillent à ne pas laisser périr définitivement les rares spécimens de ces kangourous dont ils ont massacré des troupeaux innombrables dans l'aveuglement de leur avidité. Sur toute la surface du globe, les Anglais traînent derrière eux leur Angleterre. Promoteurs de la liberté politique, ils restent fermés à la notion de la liberté proprement humaine qui refuse de se conformer à telle ou telle mesure invariable. Ils sont également incapables de concevoir la liberté de la nature qui, en tout lieu, veut demeurer exclusivement semblable à elle-même. [23]

The white-faced English have acted in precisely the same way with the blacks of Australia. Seizing their lands in order to transform this empire into grazing land for sheep and industrial cities, they have systematically exterminated the native populations, and, as it were, reduced their effective existence to nothing. Now that the last survivors have been penned up in fixed camps, the English authorities in Australia surround these dying people with their attentions, just as they are careful not to allow the total extinction of the remaining specimens of the kangaroos of which they have massacred countless herds in the blindness of their greed. Over the whole surface of the globe the English take their England with them. Advocates of political freedom, they remain impervious to the notion of a human freedom that refuses to conform to their inflexible standards. They are just as incapable of understanding the liberty of nature, which in every case wishes only to retain its original state.

From Hobart the Balmonts travelled overland to Launceston, finding the countryside much more to their liking than the town:

Si les jardins des Hespérides de l'Espagne, ces bosquets merveilleux dont les pommes d'or s'appellent des oranges, évoquent la vision des jardins engloutis de l'Atlantide, -- ce sont des rêves lémuriens que nous inspirent les fruits énormes des pommiers de Tasmanie, les majestueuses forêts de mimosas et de fougères arborescentes qui parent cette île extrême, les eucalyptus australiens, dont les troncs et les rameaux bleus s'enveloppent d'une odeur d'encens, les kangourous si semblables à l'homme, témoins des cycles cosmiques différents du nôtre, tous ces aboutissements vivants de la nature transformée. [24]

If the gardens of the Hesperides in Spain, those marvellous groves whose golden apples are called oranges, evoke a vision of the drowned gardens of Atlantis, it is dreams of the lost continent of Lemuria that are called up by the huge fruits of the Tasmanian apple trees, the majestic forests of mimosas and tree-like ferns which adorn this remote island, the Australian eucalyptuses whose blue trunks and branches are bathed in the smell of incense, the kangaroos which look so human, and witness different cosmic cycles from ourselves, all these living issues of transformed nature.

Sailing from Launceston for the mainland of Australia by the *Loongana* on 20 April, the Balmonts arrived in Melbourne the following day. [25] Predictably, the poet's first impressions of the Victorian capital were unfavourable. The day after his arrival he wrote to his friend and distant relative A.N. Ivanova:

Na trame i peshkom, vchera i segodnya, issledoval chut' li ves' Mel'burn.
Chudovishchno-ogromnyi, bezzhiznennyi gorod. Zhiteli -- kakaia-to angliiskaia
pomes' 3-go sorta. Khorosha lish' bukhta ogromnaia. [26]

By tram and on foot, yesterday and today, I have explored almost the whole of Melbourne. A monstrously huge, lifeless town. The inhabitants are a sort of third-rate English cross-breed. The only good thing is the huge bay.

This image of Melbourne as an immense, nightmarish industrial sore on the Australian landscape is repeated also in *Visions solaires*: “Voici Melbourne. Ville industrielle de l’Australie du Sud, ville immense, pareille à un cauchemar” (“Here is Melbourne. An industrial city of Southern Australia, a huge town, like a nightmare”). [27]

Adelaide received more favourable treatment even though the Balmonts were detained there longer than anticipated by the illness of Elena Konstantinovna. [28] Balmont seems to have found a particular affection for the Botanical Gardens, where, ever conscious of the reversal of seasons from the northern hemisphere, he was able to escape from the city itself into the tranquillity of stylised nature:

Bienque n'ayant absolument rien à faire à Adélaïde, j'y demeure jour après jour, grâce à l'installation que j'ai trouvée, en ville, mais parmi des arbres. Tous les matins je m'en vais au Jardin Botanique, j'y reste des heures entières, passant d'une allée à l'autre, des eucalyptus aux figuiers, de l'étang des lotus bleus à l'étang des cygnes blancs, du lac d'arums blancs aux corbeilles d'anémones pourpres; je me réjouis doucement, je languis doucement, je réfléchis et m'étonne devant la mouvante incertitude des notions humaines les plus simples, telle que l'hiver, le printemps, l'été, l'automne. [29]

Although I have nothing at all to do in Adelaide I remain here day after day since I have managed to install myself in town, but among trees. Every morning I go to the Botanical Gardens and stay there for hours on end wandering from one avenue to another, from the eucalyptuses to the fig trees, from the pond with the blue lotuses to the pond with the white swans, from the lake of white arums to the baskets of purple anemones. I am quietly happy, I am quietly sad, I think and wonder at the shifting incertitude of the simplest human ideas such as winter, spring, summer and autumn.

Returning to Melbourne, the Balmonts left almost immediately on 22 May for New Zealand on board the steamer *Warrimoo*. [30] After brief stops at Hobart and southern New Zealand ports they arrived in Wellington in the early morning of 31 May. [31] From there they travelled overland to Auckland where they boarded the *Tofua* and departed for Tonga and Samoa on 19 June. [32] In part no doubt because of the different status of New Zealand Maoris and Australian Aborigines in the context of Balmont's search for the 'noble savage' in harmony with nature, New Zealand impressed him greatly. The following description of Dunedin, written on the strength of a few hours' acquaintance, may be compared with Balmont's reactions to Australian cities:

Segodnia my pribyli v krasivyi Dēnidin -- kakaia-to smes' Norvegii s Shotlandiei à la polynesienne, i ia bluzhdal v okrestnykh kholmakh tak vysoko, vol'no i prostorno. [...] Ia radiius' srokam, vremia prokhodit, ia schastliv priezdom siuda, -- vot uzhe preddver'e Okeanii. [...] Na Avstraliuu i gliadet' mne ne khotelos'. Teper' opiat' poveialo chem-to svetlym. [33]

Today we arrived in beautiful Dunedin--a sort of mixture of Norway and Scotland in the Polynesian style, and I wandered in the nearby hills, so high, so free and so unconstrained. ... I am glad of the moment, time is passing, I am glad that I have come here -- this is already the gateway to Oceania. ... I did not even want to look at Australia. Now it has become somehow bright again.

After six weeks based on Samoa, where the state of preservation of the native culture met with his definite approval, Balmont returned via Fiji to Australia on the *Atua*, arriving in Sydney on 8 August. [34] Notwithstanding his predisposition against Australia and the 'English', he seems to have been unable altogether to dislike Sydney and particularly the geography of its harbour. [35] Sydney does not, however, rate a mention in *Visions*

solaires. The Balmonts left Sydney on their return trip to Europe on 16 August on the Dutch ship *Van Linschoten*. [36]

The anti-urban, anti-capitalist theme that runs through all Balmont's prose comments on Australia is taken up in the second Australian poem included in *Belyi zodchii*, 'Chernyi lebed'' ('Black Swan'). [37] Balmont's disgust at the intrusive signs of industrialisation which interrupt his idealised vision of Australia combines with a clear statement of his attraction to nature and his nostalgia for a lost world of childhood innocence in which Balmont's own childhood merges with his conception of the remote childhood of humanity itself. [38]

Chernyi lebed'

Avstraliiskii chernyi lebed' na volne
Slovno v skazke na kartinke viden mne.

Nastoiashchii, proplyvaet predο mnoi,
Ves' zmeinyi, ves' uzornyi, vyreznoi.

I voistinu vlechet mechtu v igru
Nastoiashchimi pryzhkami kenguru.

I v khranimom zacharovannom prudke
Svetiat lotosy vo vlazhnom tsvetnike.

Golubeet evkalipta stroinyi stvol,
Kust nevidannoi akatsii rastsvel.

Kak kolibri, medosos pripal k tsvetku,
Ptitsa-fleita zasvirelila tosku.

I khokhochut zimorodki po vetviam,
Slovno v skazke, chto skazali v detstve nam.

Tol'ko eto vse lish' malyi ugiok,
Gromche pen'ia ptits na fabrike gudok.

Net Avstralii tekħ detskikh nashikh dnei,
Vsia sgoriala mezħdu dymov i ognei.

Rel'sy vrezalis' vo vzmakhi zheltykh gor,
Skovan, stseplen, ves' raschislennyi, prostor.

Tam, gde Chernye slagali stroinyi plias,
Odnokii belolikii volopas.

Tam, gde bystraia igrala kenguru,
Ovtsy, ovtsy poutru i vvecheru.

Millionaia tolpa ikh zdes' proshla,
V kholodil'niki zamknuty ikh tela.

Zamorozhennye trupy uvezut,
Ovtsy novye pasutsia tam i tut.

I ot goroda do goroda vseгда
Voiut, kopot' rassevaia, poezda.

I ot ulitsy do ulitsy svistok,
Vsia i muzyka u Belogo -- gudok.

Sami vybrali takoi sebe udel,
Chto ikh belyi lik tak griazno poserel.

Obezdolili ves' krai svoei gur'boi.
Chernyi lebed', pesn' proshchal'nuiu propoi. [39]

Black Swan

I hold the image in my mind of a fairy-tale
Australian black swan on the crest of a wave.

A real one swims before me,
Snakelike, patterned, sculpted.

And the real bounds of a kangaroo
Set my imagination into play.

And in a preserved, enchanted pond
The lotus blooms in a watery parterre.

The slim trunk of a eucalypt shines blue,
A wattle shows its extraordinary blooms.

Like a humming-bird, a honey eater descends on a flower,
A bird-flute pipes its melancholy tune.

And the kingfishers laugh in the trees,
Just like they did in our childhood fairy tales.

But this is only one small corner,
The birdsong is drowned by the factory hooter.

The Australia of our childhood days is gone,
All burnt up in smoke and fire.

Railways have cut through the yellow hills,
Space is all counted out, fettered and chained.

Where the Blacks once made their ordered dances
There is now a lonely white-faced shepherd.

Where once the lively kangaroo played
There are now sheep, sheep morning and evening.

A million-strong crowd of them has passed this place,
And their bodies are shut up in cold storage.

Their frozen bodies are carried away,
And new sheep graze in all directions.

And from city to city trains constantly
Howl, scattering soot.

And from street to street there is a whistle.
The Whites' only music is the factory hooter.

They themselves have chosen this fate,
Which has turned their faces such a dirty grey.

They have wasted the whole land with their throng.
Black swan, sing your final song.

Just as many Victorian and Edwardian tourists from northern Europe were disappointed that the contemporary Mediterranean was but a pale reflection of the classical world their reading and imagination had conditioned them to expect, [40] so Balmont's encounter with Australia was the site of bitter disappointment at the gap between his constructed image and his observed experience. Balmont's view of industrial Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century was by no means entirely typical. Other writers were more inclined to see Australian modernity in a positive light, especially when Australian cities were compared with their counterparts in Britain and the United States. Mark Twain, for example, writing in the mid-1890s, while no apologist for white treatment of the Aborigines, had seen Melbourne as "stately" and "majestic", as a vibrant modern city which successfully combined industry with social amenity. [41] A few years later, E.M. Clowes found a great deal she considered progressive in Australian social organisation and economic practice. [42] Others, of course, including the Russian Robert Glan, who

like Balmont visited in the 1910s, considered that the 'real Australia' was to be found in the countryside, not in the city, [43] and a contrast between what was expected and what was found is a very common theme in Australian, as perhaps in all, travel writing. Yet Balmont provides a particularly extreme example of this phenomenon. His record of Australia and the Pacific, informed in contrasting ways by his 'solar vision', with its mythologising emphasis on spontaneity, freedom in nature and the poetry of innocence, and its refusal to accept the philosophical validity of the modern world, is a clear example of the symbolist poet's consistent willingness and desire to use the filter of aesthetic theory to transform lived experience into art.

Notes

[1] On Balmont as a traveller see K.M. Azadovskii and E.M. D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 4-35.

[2] See *ibid.*, pp. 32-3; K.D. Bal'mont, *Stikhotvoreniia*, ed. V. Orlov, Leningrad, 1969, p. 34; M.S. Rozhdestvenskaia, 'Fol'klor Okeanii v skazkakh K.D. Bal'monta', *Russkii fol'klor*, XVIII, 1978, pp. 103-4.

[3] Avril Pyman, *A History of Russian Symbolism*, Oxford, 1994, p. 59.

[4] Bal'mont, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 204.

[5] Tatyana Schmidt, 'K. Bal'mont: Escapism as a Form of Revolt', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 47, 1969, p. 331.

[6] Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, pp. 10-11.

[7] Martin Bidney, 'Land of the Solar Androgyne: The Russian Symbolist K.D. Bal'mont as Poet-Ethnographer of Ancient Egypt', *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1992, p. 358.

[8] Rozhdestvenskaia, 'Fol'klor Okeanii v skazkakh K.D. Bal'monta', pp. 96-114. The quotation is from p. 97 of this article. See also Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 30.

[9] Quoted in Rozhdestvenskaia, 'Fol'klor Okeanii v skazkakh K.D. Bal'monta', p. 104-5.

[10] Constantin Balmont, *Visions solaires: Mexique--Égypte--Inde--Japon--Océanie*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1923. See Rozhdestvenskaia, 'Fol'klor Okeanii v skazkakh K.D. Bal'monta', pp. 96-114.

[11] K.D. Bal'mont, *Belyi zodchii*, St Petersburg, 1914.

[12] Bal'mont, *Stikhotvoreniia*, p. 393. Balmont appears to have identified Hawaiki with New Zealand: see V. Markov, *Kommentar zu dem Dichtungen von K.D. Balmont 1910-1917*, Cologne, 1992, p. 79.

[0] "Pervichnyi chelovek vseгда Poet", K.D. Bal'mont, *Poeziia kak volshebstvo*, Moscow, 1915, p. 55.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[15] Cf. Balmont's comment on New Guinea: "Ia dumaiu, chto seichas na vsem zemnom share est' tol'ko dve strany, gde sokhranilas' sviatynia istinnoi pervobytnosti: Rossiia i Novaia Gvineia" ("I believe that there are now only two countries on the surface of the globe where the sacred object that is genuine primitiveness has been preserved")--quoted in Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 26. Nostalgia for Russia is a strong theme throughout *Belyi zodchii*, reflecting the fact that Balmont had been in political exile since 1905.

[16] Bal'mont, *Belyi zodchii*, pp. 95-6.

[17] See Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 198-222; Casey Blanton (ed.), *Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875 to 1925*, Daytona Beach, Fla., 1995.

[18] Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to consult N.I. Novikova, 'Puteshestvie K.D. Bal'monta v Avstraliiu i Okeaniiu', *Nauchnaia konfeentsiia po izucheniiu Avstralii i Okeanii, 19-ia : tezisy dokladov*, Chast' 2, Moscow, 1988, pp. 252-6.

[19] *Mercury*, 11 April 1912, p. 4.

[20] Letter to A.N. Ivanova, 21-22 April 1912. Quoted in Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 21.

[21] Balmont, *Visions solaires*, pp. 264, 297.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 263.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 261-2.

[25] *Mercury*, 22 April 1912, p. 4; *Age*, 22 April 1912, p. 6.

[26] Quoted in Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 22.

- [27] Balmont, *Visions solaires*, p. 298.
- [28] Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 22.
- [29] Balmont, *Visions solaires*, p. 287.
- [30] Age, 23 May 1912, p. 6; Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 22.
- [31] *Dominion*, 1 June 1912, p. 7.
- [32] *New Zealand Herald*, 20 June 1912, p. 6; cf. Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 23.
- [33] Letter to A.N. Ivanova, 28 May 1912, quoted in Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, p. 23.
- [34] Shipping Master's Office, Sydney, Inwards Passenger Lists August 1912 (Archives Office of New South Wales); *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1912, p. 10. The *Atua* left Suva on 1 August. Although he spent several weeks on Samoa, Balmont does not in fact seem to have been particularly adventurous in his exploration of the Pacific. He stayed firmly on the established route of the Union Steam Ship Company.
- [35] Azadovskii and D'iakonova, *Bal'mont i Iaponiia*, pp. 25, 27.
- [36] Shipping Master's Office, Sydney, Outward Passenger Lists, July-August 1912 (Archives Office of New South Wales); *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1912, p. 10 (which gives the date of departure as 17 August). The *Van Linschoten* called also at northern Australian ports including Brisbane.
- [37] Cf. Markov, *Kommentar zu dem Dichtungen von K.D. Balmont*, p. 78.
- [38] On the childhood sources Bal'mont may have had in mind in the first stanza of this poem, see Elena Govor, *Australia in the Russian Mirror: Changing Perceptions 1770-1919*, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 159-61.
- [39] Bal'mont, *Belyi zodchii*, pp. 97-8.
- [40] See John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South*, Oxford, 1988, pp. 167-82.
- [41] Mark Twain, *Mark Twain in Australia and New Zealand*, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp. 161, 168.
- [42] See E.M. Clowes, *On the Wallaby through Victoria*, London, 1911.
- [43] Govor, *Australia in the Russian Mirror*, pp. 161-2.