

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN RUSSIAN
LITERATURE

**Three Russian writers and
the irrational**

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN RUSSIAN
LITERATURE

General editor HENRY GIFFORD

In the same series

Novy Mir:

A case study in the politics of literature 1952–1958

EDITH ROGOVIN FRANKEL

The Enigma of Gogol:

*An examination of the writings of N. V. Gogol
and their place in the Russian literary tradition*

RICHARD PEACE

Word and music in the novels of Andrey Bely

ADA STEINBERG

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Three Russian writers and the irrational

ZAMYATIN, PIL'NYAK, AND
BULGAKOV

T. R. N. EDWARDS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521109857

© Cambridge University Press 1982

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1982

This digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 81-6148

ISBN 978-0-521-23670-6 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-10985-7 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To my parents

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Foreword | <i>page</i> ix |
| Abbreviations | xi |
| Transcription | xi |
| 1 The irrational in Russian thought: an approach | 1 |
| 2 Zamyatin's <i>We</i> : the necropolis of The One State | 36 |
| 3 Pil'nyak: the fatal confusion | 87 |
| 4 Bulgakov's <i>The Master and Margarita</i> : the long perspectives | 137 |
| 5 Conclusion: 'toward the unknown region' | 181 |
| Notes | 189 |
| Bibliography | 206 |
| Index | 213 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Foreword

In the following chapters an attempt has been made to examine aspects of the irrational in the works of Zamyatin, Pil'nyak and Bulgakov. In choosing these authors rather than others I may seem to imply that a preoccupation with the irrational marks their writing to a degree that distinguishes them as a group from other Russian authors of their time. This is not my intention. A case could be argued for almost all Soviet literature of merit being concerned at least to some extent with the romantic and the irrational; a comprehensive survey of the whole question would be valuable, but demands more space than this book allows. Why, then, Zamyatin, Pil'nyak and Bulgakov? Perhaps one need not rationalise a personal preference; nevertheless it seems to me that these very different writers cover a wide range of style and approach, and are representative of what is best in independent Soviet prose of the 1920s and 1930s. They are certainly important in their own right: Zamyatin for his keen and influential perception of the dangers of totalitarianism, Pil'nyak as probably the most popular of Soviet authors of his time, and Bulgakov for the way he looks beyond the immediate context to a broader idea of man. And the breadth of Bulgakov's view has suggested my own approach: I have not sought to root these writers in their age and society; Zamyatin's and Pil'nyak's place in the Soviet literary world and the pressures that bore on them have been examined elsewhere, and much is now appearing on Bulgakov in this connection. Instead I have tried to look outwards, towards the ideas and the literature which appear to have informed their thought and their writing. I hope I have thereby succeeded in indicating something of their debt to the great Russian literary tradition of the nineteenth century.

I acknowledge with pleasure help from various quarters. I must firstly thank Henry Gifford, as principal supervisor of the Ph.D. thesis on which this book is based; also my second supervisor, Richard Peace. Their guidance has been invaluable. I should like to

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Foreword

thank the staff and students of the Department of Russian Studies at Bristol University, Elena Whittington for her assistance with certain problems of translation, and Barbara Case for typing the manuscript. I am indebted to Lesley Milne, of the Department of Russian Studies at Hull University, for elucidating some points which arose in connection with Bulgakov, and to Michael Falchikov, of the Department of Russian at Edinburgh University, for letting me see his notes for a talk he gave on Pil'nyak at the BUAS Soviet Literature Study Group Conference at Oxford in September 1977. And I should also like to thank the Publications Committee of Bristol University for help towards the cost of preparing the typescript.

All translations in the text and notes are mine unless otherwise stated.

T.R.N.E.

Bath

September 1980

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10985-7 - Three Russian Writers and the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak,
and Bulgakov

T. R. N. Edwards

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <i>Izbr.</i> | <i>Izbrannaya/oe/ye</i> |
| <i>Poln.</i> | <i>Polnoe</i> |
| <i>SEEJ</i> | <i>Slavic and East European Journal</i> |
| <i>SEER</i> | <i>Slavonic and East European Review</i> |
| <i>Sobr.</i> | <i>Sobranie</i> |
| <i>Soch.</i> | <i>Sochineniya/iy</i> |

Transcription

In transcribing Russian words I have followed the system of *The Slavonic and East European Review*, although I have not used *y* before the soft vowel *e* initially or when it follows another vowel. Proper names are given in the form usual in English, e.g. Scriabin, and I have rendered names ending in *-skiy* as *-sky*.