

Literature (Russian Empire)

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Summary

This article outlines the corpus and characteristics of Russian literature during the First World War. It will discuss the reasons why this body of texts – in contrast to the literature of other belligerent nations – could be marginalised and to a large extent even ignored for decades. The aim of this study is to show the inner context of literary development in the first third of the 20th century.

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Introduction

Well into the 20th century, Russian literature was an important forum for societal self-understanding. This function, however, was lost during the First World War. [Revolution](#) and [civil war](#) completed the transformation of the literary establishment, although another brief flowering followed in the 1920s. The chronological pattern of Russian literature at the

beginning of the 20th century is mostly oriented towards the diverse movements, groups, and schools. Although some structures persisted in part into the years after 1917, they did not prove resistant to the political, social, economic, and cultural upheavals triggered by the war. Analogously, the authors changed not only their view of the world, but also their subjects and means of expression. For this reason, the war as an historical context of literary creation (with the decisive years of 1904/05, 1913/14 to 1917/18, and 1921/22) moves to the centre, including its interrelationship with the global revolutionary undercurrent of the time.

When the First World War broke out, merely four years had passed since [Lev Tolstoj](#) (1828-1910) died and with him the Russian literature of the 19th century had been laid to rest.

With his main work, the novel *War and Peace* about the Patriotic War of 1812, the *Sevastopol Tales* about the time of the Crimean War (1853-1856) as well as numerous journalistic articles and pamphlets, he had set a standard in [Russia](#) for the artistic discussion of the war. Any public debate regarding the influence of war on the individual, the family and society had to refer to Tolstoj. Radical pacifists who rejected any form of military service invoked his influence. Tolstoj had questioned the spiritual authority of the Orthodox Church, which, according to his conviction, did not preach [pacifism](#) but declared war service a patriotic duty and even blessed [weapons](#). Yet, the [Russo-Japanese War \(1904-1905\)](#) already produced images of the destructiveness of modern war that went beyond anything previously known. This memory was still fresh when Russia was surprised by the “German War” in 1914.

By contrast, the literary establishment of the Tsarist empire was well prepared to take on the challenge of the modern war to the [arts](#). In the course of expanding the industry, the advance of new technologies in agriculture, and the growing social pressure to adapt, the scope of activities for publishers and authors had expanded considerably. The illiteracy rate had dropped rapidly, especially in the cities. Knowledge and expertise became parameters of progress, and state institutions found it increasingly difficult to meet the growing demand and regulate the countless independent educational initiatives. Formerly almost unrestrained regulatory institutions such as [censorship](#) could hardly keep up with the flood of publications on perpetually changing fields of knowledge. In 1904/05, the preliminary censorship was abolished, but an important part of its powers was transferred to the criminal courts. “Serious” literature was still cultivated in salons and circles and distributed in the large (“thick”) journals. At the same time, “light” genres such as the adventure novel, the detective story, or the secular graphic narrative (*Lubok*) conquered growing shares of the market for books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers.¹ Increasingly, a sophisticated popular culture and a differentiated, opinionated news system with high circulations aimed at the “mass reader.” [Railways](#) and [telegraphs](#) shortened the distribution channels and enlarged the resonance space for a “public” that wanted to be kept up to date. Domestic politics and international relations, economics and science, religion and culture were being reported on and discussed more controversially than ever before.

Initially, established writers also benefited from this boom in the printed word. Nevertheless, the growing competition from popular genres, but above all from the emerging humanities and social sciences, endangered the exclusive claim of the established literary figures to interpretative sovereignty in questions of everyday life and world view. Compared to the preceding decades, the impact of “serious” literature gradually diminished. The large form and the individual author became relative. In this respect, it was not the First World War that fundamentally changed the literary world. Rather, it accelerated what the previous explosion of the literary culture had already triggered. Regardless of the increasingly strict military

ensorship, the aesthetic and thematic spectrum of prose and poetry continued to expand and paved the way for self-taught writers to enter the literary world. These were welcomed as rising stars “from among the people,” who thereby gained their own voice and emancipated themselves from intellectual paternalism. Whilst the “Silver Age” seemed to continue beyond 1914, a fundamental cultural change was taking place, which in turn the revolutions of 1917 took up and tried to steer “in a democratic direction.” Even before the war, literary critics had observed a tendency that was then massively intensifying: the focus of literary creation shifted noticeably in favour of journalism under the new exceptional circumstances of the state of emergency.

“War Literature”

There is no established term in Russian for the literature of the First World War. This may be surprising for several reasons. On the one hand, military subjects, officers as modern heroes, and extended campaigns as peripeties of history have been an integral part of Russian literature since the 18th century. From the victory odes of [Gavril R. Derzhavin \(1743-1816\)](#), to [Mikhail IU. Lermontov's \(1814-1841\)](#) poeticisation of the decades-long Caucasian War and Tolstoj's epic depiction of the war against [Napoleon Bonaparte \(1769-1821\)](#) as a test of an entire society, to [Vsevolod M. Garshin's \(1855-1888\)](#) harrowing tales from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and [Leonid N. Andreev's \(1871-1919\)](#) and [Vikentij V. Veresaev's \(1867-1945\)](#) perception of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 as a prelude to coming catastrophes, the war was always present amongst the educated elites, yet also increasingly to the mass reader, even in times of peace. On the other hand, in almost all national literature of the countries involved in the First World War, a branch of literary studies emerged that collected the literary heritage, categorised it according to genres, themes or social contexts, and ultimately examined it.²

The reason for the absence of Russia in this series is the result of a historical-political drama. For the Bolsheviks, it was considered a foregone conclusion that the revolutionary events of 1917 and the subsequent civil war were sufficient to remove the three devastating years of the World War from [historical memory](#). Not until the rediscovery of the “Great War,” which began before the commemorative year of 2014, was the “loss” of the political and social epochal break before the revolution called to mind.³ Meanwhile, the methods employed to conceal the gap between 1913, the threshold year of this cultural break,⁴ and 1918, had already been developed during the war. It was a matter, as one military censor characterised the informational practice of the general staff, of “systematically denying” facts, texts, and memories or “interpreting them extremely arbitrarily.”⁵ In Soviet Russia, the ideological

conflict was openly played out. Instead of the Great War, the “Red October” was established as the epochal turning point. Military virtues, heroisation, and patriotic sentiments passed to the victors in the civil war, which was described as a revolutionary “decisive battle.” From then on, all the resources of history and literature were devoted to this reconstruction and repetition.⁶ “War literature,” as it developed in the countries of the former Entente and the Central Powers, was thus deprived of the opportunity to develop in the Soviet Union.

The literary response to the experience of the World War and its consequences was preserved, as it were, in the state left behind by contemporaries. That this legacy represents more than a disorganised archive is attributable to the writers, literary critics, and publicists who, immediately after the war began, began to discuss the characteristics of a literature that faced an unrequited challenge. Under the impression of the [mass deaths](#) at the very beginning of the conflict, the question was raised as to the role of each individual author, how the events could be appropriately captured linguistically and formally and, last but not least, what “duty” (*dolg*) and what “responsibility” (*otvetstvennost'*) the intellectuals should assume as citizens of the state.⁷ Over were the days when battles seemed to be conducted according to fixed rules and the duel, a relic of the declining aristocratic culture, epitomised by the possibility of duels at the front, which could be fought face to face.

Any attempt to explore the Russian literature of the First World War must be directly linked to this heritage, which has been preserved but not newly appropriated for the respective generation through transmission.⁸ This literary resource has a scope and quality that calls for theoretical exploration and conceptual order. Following the genre of “war art” (*batal'nyj zhanr*, *batal'naia zhivopis'*), it has recently been suggested to speak of “artistic” or “literary war literature” (*khudozhestvennaia or literaturnaia batalistika*). The fluid transitions to authors of “the second and third tier,” but above all to trivial literature and *kitsch*, are not always clearly discernible. This is especially true when – due to a lack of current theoretical development – interpretive patterns of Soviet provenance are resorted to.⁹ In these, educational, didactic, ideological, and moral evaluations of the work and author are often given more weight than aesthetic or scientific criteria.¹⁰ Notwithstanding this, approaches that examine the interrelationship between [historiography](#) and fiction and take up suggestions from international research are productive. This also applies to parts of recent military historiography.¹¹

The revision of literary creation of the years 1914 to 1917/18 had thus begun. Its aim was to recognise the war as the dominant creative impulse. In addition, a wealth of forgotten works and unknown biographical evidence was being made accessible.¹² Both the renowned authors

of these years and those familiar only to contemporaries were much more directly involved in the events of the war than Soviet literary scholarship would have us believe.¹³ Large sections of international research follow this distorted portrayal in part up to the present day.¹⁴ One of the few exceptions, Ben Hellman's thorough study of symbolism in the war years, did not appear until after the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Since then, international historiography has shifted the epochal break from 1917 back to 1914.¹⁶ It was the war that shook world views, disrupted social relations, and ultimately led to revolutions. Accordingly, the war dictated themes and motifs also in literature. In the disintegrating political order, authors sought orientation; [social barriers fell](#); [women seized new rights](#); peasants and workers made their way into literature.¹⁷

The extent to which the widespread network of publishers, journals and distribution channels, libraries, associations, and private and public meeting places were affected by the restrictions imposed by the conversion to wartime economy can be reliably reconstructed in broad outlines.¹⁸ Individual studies substantiate this knowledge.¹⁹ Yet numerous questions remain unanswered. How did literary trends change and which emerged anew? What influence did cultural authorities have on the literary establishment? For a long time, there was more conjecture than fact about military censorship. In many respects, however, it seems to have been weaker than in England or France, for example.²⁰ One sweeping accusation concerned the quality of literary works. Contemporary critics lamented that there were mainly [nationalistic](#) devotional writings, mediocrity, and rubbish.²¹ There is no doubt that the tabloid press, with its sensational reporting, achieved even greater attention than before 1914. At the same time, however, it offered authors a modest livelihood in difficult times. Reviews were not infrequently characterised by the heated atmosphere. In order to learn more about the social discourses, it is necessary to find out more about the actual tastes of the public.²² In itself, the place of publication said nothing about the significance of the stories, essays, and articles. On the one hand, the development of the war polarised the literary scene. On the other hand, the organisational and personnel shifts in journalism were not always transparent and therefore increased mutual distrust. Harsh criticism was widespread. Nevertheless, many intellectuals were united by the desire to preserve serious literature. It becomes apparent that the image of the public sphere of the Tsarist empire during the war is now viewed in a thoroughly differentiated way.²³ The cultural life of the war years as a whole now appears wholly diverse and contradictory.²⁴

The aforementioned stereotypes of Soviet literary studies had a twofold disparaging effect.

On the one hand, trends or groups such as Akmeism and Symbolism were widely suspected of aestheticising and idealising the war. On the other hand, [Vladimir Lenin's \(1870-1924\)](#) dogmatic theorem of "imperialist war" served to politically discredit writers who perceived the events rather as a complex anthropological state of emergency. Terms such as "on the eve of the revolution" (instead of "before the war") or "after the revolution" (instead of "after the war" or "after the empire") linguistically fixed the change of perspective. It was not individual experience, emotional involvement, or moral evaluation that was to characterise the "man at war," but political conviction. Accordingly, authors were judged according to criteria that dominated the political discourse of the radical parties: they were distinguished as "militarists" or "pacifists," as "defenders of the fatherland" (*oborontsy*) or "defeatists" (*porazhentsy*), "nationalists," "chauvinists," or "internationalists." The degree of deviation from the party line determined whether these were merely temporary or fundamental "errors" (*zabluzhdeniia*) that – with Lenin's help – could be "overcome" or alternatively abandoned thanks to insight into post-revolutionary realities.²⁵ Individual creative profiles, however, show how diverse and at times contradictory authors responded to the impending catastrophe.

Soldier-Writers and Civilian-Writers

On 28 September 1914, the newspaper *Russkie vedomosti* published the proclamation "On the Occasion of War" written by [Ivan A. Bunin \(1870-1953\)](#). More than seventy renowned writers, artists, and actors, as well as a large number of other signatories, protested against the barbaric destruction of irreplaceable cultural assets as a result of the German troops.²⁶ Not only was this example emulated throughout Russia itself, but comparable appeals from the fields of [science](#), literature, and art appeared [in other countries](#) as well. Though it was not clear in every case whether they were intended more for self-assurance or merely to fend off external reproaches.²⁷ Contemporary witness-bearing knew many forms, among which that of the literary figures was only one, albeit one that could hardly be overestimated for the collective memory. The journeys of writers through the war were only in rare cases straightforward.²⁸ This is probably the reason as to why only very few later had an interest in reprinting their works from this period or in revealing their supposedly disreputable biographical details. [Vladimir V. Maiakovskij \(1893-1930\)](#), for example, volunteered after war broke out, but was rejected for being politically "unreliable." In October 1915, however, he did eventually receive a draft notice. He served in an automobile school as a technical draughtsman in uniform. Along the way he developed his extraordinary artistic talent, drawing illustrations (*lubki*) with satirical verses. After the revolution, when Maiakovskij placed his popular poster art in the service of the Bolsheviks, the [photography](#) of those mobilised for the Tsar's army disappeared into the archives, while he suppressed the genesis

of his famous ROSTA posters.²⁹ While some of the authors served at arms or in [hospitals](#), others worked to provide for the soldiers and the general population, solicited solidarity on behalf of the Imperial Army, or took part in the [propaganda](#) against enemy states, and advocated peace for personal or political reasons. These experiences, whether personal or mediated, found expression in stories and novellas, poems and poetry, feuilletons and pamphlets, and diaries and letters, resulting in a multi-layered panorama of realistic scenes, fictional dialogues, intellectual experiences, rational deductions, and emotional empathy. This underlines the importance of literature for the image that the contemporary public formed of the experiential space of “world war.”

Among the writers who wrote about the war during or shortly after it, those who fought at the front as ordinary soldiers or officers with weapons or were on medical duty near the front were a small minority. [Nikolaj S. Gumilëv \(1886-1921\)](#), [Sergej M. Gorodetskij \(1884-1967\)](#), [Valentin P. Kataev \(1897-1986\)](#), [Benedikt K. Lifshits \(1886-1938\)](#) and [Mikhail L. Slonimskij \(1897-1972\)](#), for example, had volunteered, while [Fëdor A. Stepun \(1884-1965\)](#), Boris A. Timofeev, [Vsevolod Ivanov \(1895-1963\)](#), [Nikolaj N. Aseev \(1889-1963\)](#), [Aleksandr A. Blok \(1880-1921\)](#), [Efim A. Pridvorov \(1883-1945\)](#), better known by his pen-name Dem'ian Bednyj, and [Nikolaj S. Tikhonov \(1896-1979\)](#) had been drafted. [Sof'ia Z. Fedorchenko \(1888-1957\)](#) and [Nadezhda A. Lokhvitskaia \(1872-1952\)](#), known as “Téffi”, served as medical [nurses](#) (*sëstry miloserdiia*). Somewhat more numerous were those who, such as [Valerij IA. Briusov \(1873-1924\)](#), [Fëdor D. Kriukov \(1879-1920\)](#), [Evgenij N. Chirikov \(1864-1932\)](#), [Viktor V. Mujzhel' \(1880-1932\)](#) and Aleksej N. Tolstoj were active as [war correspondents](#). They often served close to the battlefields or in the trenches. They had an insider's view of the battlefield or the everyday life of the soldiers. That which they documented often formed the material basis for future literary adaptations. [Aleksandr S. Serafimovich Popov \(1863-1949\)](#) also tried to reach the front as a war correspondent. However, he only succeeded when he volunteered for the medical service. On the other hand, [Il'ia G. Ėrenburg \(1891-1967\)](#) wanted to fight at the front, was not taken, but eventually managed to reach the front as a war correspondent for a [newspaper](#). [Valentin I. Gorianskij \(1888-1949\)](#) set out for the frontlines without an assignment from a press agency. A special case arises in the case of [Isaak Ė. Babel' \(1894-1940\)](#). Exempted from military service as a student in 1914, he was assigned to the national army the following year, but never fought. [Sergej A. Esenin \(1895-1925\)](#), on the other hand, was apparently called up in 1916, but was assigned to the Tsarina's medical platoon following multiple petitions. Veresaev was mobilised as a doctor, [Georgij D. Grebenshchikov \(1882-1964\)](#) as a medic, who also reported for a newspaper. Finally, the strongest group comprised those who lived in the rear or far away from the fighting, though sometimes also abroad, but who formed their own impressions on the basis of the changes in life “on the home front” as well as on the basis of the available news, personal reports, or

rumours. These included [Anna A. Akhmatova \(1889-1966\)](#), [Boris N. Bugaev \(1880-1934\)](#), known as Andrej Belyj, [Ivan A. Bunin \(1870-1953\)](#), [Maksimilian A. Voloshin \(1877-1932\)](#), Maiakovskij, [Osip Mandelhtam's \(1891-1938\)](#), [Igor' Severianin \(1887-1941\)](#), [Dmitrij S. Merezhkovskij \(1865-1941\)](#), and [Zinaida N. Gippius \(1869-1945\)](#).

Only elaborate biographical analyses of an author's work can prove how well informed he or she actually was when reporting, writing poetry, narrating, or writing an essay about the war. They determine how reliable, credible, and "authentic" the reports or fictional texts are. The few cases in which this has already been done in the necessary breadth and depth give an indication as to the complexity of the task.³⁰ So far, the focus has been mainly on authors who were already well-known before 1914, followed by those who made a name for themselves after the revolution. The latter usually had a greater impact on the chaotic year of war and revolution, 1917, than on that of the ominous August 1914. What happened in between then easily becomes an episode, a vague prelude, or an interlude. Little attention is paid to authors whose creative period ended during the years of war or who only made their artistic appearance during this time and then perished in the civil war, for example.

Looking - Recognising - Understanding

The Great War, the fourth and largest "modern" war that Russia experienced after the Crimean War, the Russo-Turkish War, and the Russo-Japanese War, [left no part of society untouched](#). Individually and collectively perceived and remembered, the war overwhelmed people with the scale and intensity of the fighting and the over-exertion of all resources. The event unleashed a range of intense emotions that usually remain under control in peacetime – from love and hate, to grief and pain, to the courage to fight and fear, panic and fatalism, intoxication and dejection.³¹ Quasi-religious loyalty for "fatherland" and "homeland" coexisted with indifference, which was not infrequently interpreted by the patriotic press as "betrayal" or "fraternisation" with the enemy. Thousands may have died anonymously on the frontline and been buried in mass graves, but they returned to families on the home front as memories of individual fate. The war changed everything – everyday life in villages and towns and the perception of reality, as well as the lives of authors. Even after two years, there was no end in sight. For the writer [Leonid Dobronravov \(1887-1926\)](#), it seemed as if the country was "disfigured beyond recognition" and had produced "completely new people."³² For him, Russia was on the precipice of secular upheavals. Already in July 1914, but at the latest in looking back on the first year of the war, critics considered the ongoing theoretical dispute between "realists" and "symbolists" to be obsolete. The reality-oriented style of writing of the 19th century had long since entered into a synthesis with fantasy.³³ In [poetry](#), on the other hand, entire "schools" merged almost unnoticed. A "fall of the old gods" was taking place.

Ego-futurists, kubo-futurists and acmeists rebelled against tradition.³⁴ The “war in poetry” now existed in a double sense – as a literary motif and as a literary-historical metaphor.³⁵

At the beginning of 1915, the publishing house A.S. Suvorin published an extensive anthology of poetry written during the first three months of the war.³⁶ It included Anna Akhmatova (with the poem “Solace” [*Uteshenie*]), Aleksandr Blok (“Antwerp”), “Téffi” (i.e. Nadezhda A. Lokhvitskaia) (“White Clothing” [*Belaia odezhda*]), Fëdor Sologub (“Stanzas for Poland” [*Stansy Pol’she*], “God Against Him Who Begins” [*Na nachinaiushchego Bog*], “To the Brothers” [*Brat’iam*], “Belgium’s Consolation” [*Uteshenie Bel’gii*], “William the Second” [*Vil’gel’m Vtoroj*]), Zinaida Gippius (“Three Crosses” [*Tri kresta*]), Valerij Briusov (“To Poland” [*Pol’she*], “The Last War” [*Posledniaia vojna*], “An Old Question” [*Staryj vopros*]), Konstantin Bal’mont (“Battle Bells” [*Blagovest’ boia*]) and Igor’ Severianin (“Blessing” [*Blagoslovenie*]). Numerous other poems were written by lesser-known poets. The volume was arranged thematically, according to historical landscapes on the western periphery of the [empire](#), which had now become the scenes of fierce fighting and [occupation](#) by the Central Powers, such as Galicia. This was followed by the Allied war powers [Great Britain](#) and [France](#), as well as the Slavic “victim” nations [Poland](#) (the proceeds of the volume were to go to “Polish aid”), [Serbia](#), and [Bulgaria](#). Several poems were also dedicated to [Belgium](#), which German troops had invaded at the beginning of the war. In the section “Enemies,” the focus was explicitly only on the [German Reich](#), although individual works also addressed “[Austria](#).” The majority of the other verses were assigned to keywords or differentiated according to external form. For example, the sections “Slavdom” (*slavianstvo*), “Home” (*rodina*), “[Cossacks](#)” (*kazaki*) and “Medical Nurses” (*sëstry miloserdiia*) can be found. These were popular motifs that were updated with reference to the war. In particular, the voluntary service of women in military hospitals occupies an exceptional position, in keeping with its place in state propaganda. Drastic verses from the genres of “humour and satire” or folklore (*narodnoe tvorchestvo*) follow at the end.

The extensive volume, which was produced under considerable time pressure, claimed to give poetic expression to the overwhelming feelings of the population at the beginning of the war. In this early phase, an optimistic patriotic mood prevailed despite the first defeats that resulted in heavy losses. Russia, it is said elsewhere, will stride to victory “in the whirl of battle” with “fire” and “iron” and thus end a war that it did not want but had to wage “to save its brothers.”³⁷ Individual basic motifs recur in several variations: the unbreakable unity of “all the tribes” of the country with the Tsar, Russia’s willingness to sacrifice for the “Slavic brothers” beyond its imperial borders, the “innocent blood spilt” in repelling the aggressor, the grief of women and [children](#) over the loss of their husbands and fathers, the lonely death of the hero and the deaths en masse, [war captivity](#), the [war atrocities](#) of the Germans on the

[Western Front](#), the return of the Old Slavic warriors (*bogatyri*), and the protection of the saints, especially St. George, for the faithful sons of Russia. It is precisely the religious motivation that is omnipresent, whether in the image of God's retributive fist in Sologub's work, in the victorious pose of the resurrected Christ in Téffi's work, or in the consistent shaping of a poem as a prayer in Kopytkin's work.³⁸

More than 300 almanacs and anthologies appeared between 1914 and 1917. Because of its diversity of content, this format was highly popular and can be read as a barometer of the respective moods in the army and the population, which depended decisively on the fickle fortunes of war and the supply situation.³⁹ But poetry that was committed to a collective cause also aroused doubts as to whether art – despite its diversity – was not being sacrificed entirely to social engagement. “A veritable poetic deluge” had followed the outbreak of war, remarked one critic. Unknown poets felt called upon to “strum the battle lyre,” they based their rhymes on everyday knowledge, and in the end produced “pure newspaper style” (*chistaia gazetnost'*).⁴⁰ This harsh judgement may have been true in many cases, especially when patriotism and national pathos “guided the pen.” The war upended the cultural scene and shook up the supposedly established concepts. How fickle and contradictory the judgement could turn out in individual cases can be studied in the case of Sologub, who was not infrequently reduced to a “chauvinist” poet, or Gumilëv, the “most unread” poet of the 20th century, who had the reputation of paying homage all too lightly to the “idea of aggression.”⁴¹ Critics also used the term *lubochnost'* in a generalising and occasionally disparaging way when the widespread effort to be “close to the people” or to use accessible, pictorial, and lively language was criticised as vulgar, primitive, or banal.⁴²

Whilst some voices called for the defence of the “national culture,” which they seemed to become aware of only through the newfound external threat, others speculated that it could not be avoided that the ongoing struggles would bring irreplaceable losses of material and ideal values. Society had to be prepared to start completely anew after the war. In this sense, Blok and Voloshin saw poetry as a “seismograph” that not only indicated the coming destruction, but just as much the great expectations of reconstruction.⁴³ Maiakovskij, who had a thoroughly ambivalent relationship to the war, believed that it was not enough to merely “write about the war” (*pisat' o vojne*), or about its “decorative side,” but that the poet must “write with the war” (*pisat' vojnoi*), now that “everything is war,” thereby giving it the opportunity to speak for itself.⁴⁴

Among the prose writers, Aleksej N. Tolstoj was one of the most renowned. He did not fight in

battle, but reported from the front as a war correspondent. His articles and notes gave rise to stories and novels, most of which were published after the revolution. It is therefore important not to look at his view of the war solely in retrospect. A. Tolstoj was thirty-one years old at the beginning of the war. For a short time he had tried his hand at verse, but then switched to prose and achieved his first successes as a dramatist. In the story "An Ordinary Man" (*Obyknoennyj chelovek*), written in 1914, he brings the reader up close to the first battles. Like a mosaic, he put together snippets of conversations, everyday scenes in the fighting positions, and views of destroyed villages and towns. In the midst of dirt and stench, soldiers and officers give free rein to their feelings of hatred, contrasted with stylised descriptions of the landscape. A wounded officer, thrown to the ground and looking up at the stars, suffers a near-death experience. The episode is obviously based on a famous scene in Lev Tolstoj's novel "War and Peace." Vaguely, the injured man believes he sees a hidden meaning behind the façade of fighting, senses a majestic silence, sees familiar things and faces passing by, all bathed in bright light. A strange feeling of joy seizes him.⁴⁵

A. Tolstoj's endeavour, not only to describe the war drastically, but also to interpret it from different points of view, is even more distinct in the "Narrative of a Man on the Road" (*Rasskaz proezzhego cheloveka*). It was published in the third year of the war, immediately before the October upheaval of 1917. The war as an event affecting the whole of society to varying degrees of intensity can already no longer be separated here from the revolutionary crisis that followed, which destabilised Russia after the abdication of the Tsar in March of that year. In the midst of dramatic events, A. Tolstoj paints a fleeting portrait of a generation of self-sufficient intellectuals who had profited from modernisation, but who were increasingly shown to be incapable of action (without agency) during the Great War and Revolution. In the face of battles with heavy losses and an unprecedented tension of forces, they shift to thinking of the multi-ethnic empire as a "nation." But the flight into patriotism proves contradictory and ultimately self-destructive. The author succeeds in making the experience of shock comprehensible to the first volunteers and draftees who moved to East Prussia in the summer of 1914. Stunned, yesterday's civilians stare at a burning railway station as they pass by, wince at the first cannon thunder and see the first dead lying next to them. They have no time to comprehend the "dark magnitude" of what is happening and to orient themselves in the "fire and smoke." They think they are in a game of chance: someone else's death is the prize, but their own is the opponent's trump card. Gradually they become accustomed to the horrifying images: "And the red puddles, the torn-off hands and heads – to hell with them, I don't feel like it! Having become murderers, we, like the animals, had sensed life..."⁴⁶

Just as poets wanted to capture the sounds at the front, the noise, the characteristic whistling

sounds in onomatopoeia, prose writers tried to imitate in narrative what battle painters (*khudozhniki-batalisty*) strived for with colours in art. Scenes were reproduced as accurately as possible with words and concise details to give the reader an outsider's perception. Compositional elements of tension served the inner experience and interpretive explanation. But there were doubts as to whether the common vocabulary was sufficient to convey the extraordinary in language. Stepun, who took part in the fighting in Galicia with the rank of an Ensign, had the impression that terms like "know" (*znat*) **and** "**understand**" (*ponimat*) lost their reliability in this war. It is no longer self-evident that one actually understands what one has seen. "The war is a strange and completely incomprehensible thing," reads the first "Letter to Mother" in his epistolary novel. It was not the material damage that was the worst thing, but what it did to people's consciousness.⁴⁷

Conclusion: Literature as War Memory

Materials and narrative forms, motifs and themes, stylistics and use of metaphors reveal insight into this epochal break. The Russian avant-garde was closely intertwined with the European and global avant-garde. This raises the question of how far the thesis that there was a special Russian revolutionary path is still plausible. Without a doubt, the Great War era, including its pre-wars (Russo-Japanese War, [Balkan Wars](#)) and post-wars (Civil War, [Polish-Soviet War](#)), marked a no less profound biographical and creative historical turning point for most Russian authors than it did for their contemporaries in other belligerent countries. Nevertheless, it is not unjustified to say that Russia lacks a "great" novel (a collection of poems, a play), which, like the works of [H.G. Wells \(1866-1946\)](#) and [Vera Mary Brittain \(1893-1970\)](#) in [Great Britain](#), [Henri Barbusse \(1873-1935\)](#) and [Guillaume Apollinaire \(1880-1918\)](#) in [France](#), [Ernest Hemingway \(1899-1961\)](#) and [John Dos Passos \(1896-1970\)](#) in [North America](#) or [Arnold Zweig \(1887-1968\)](#), [Erich Maria Remarque \(1898-1970\)](#), and [Ernst Jünger \(1895-1998\)](#) in [Germany](#), are emblematically associated with the war and stand for a collective experience. This can be countered by the fact that literary critics ignored the relevant approaches. Moreover, the chaotic circumstances surrounding Russia's withdrawal from the war and the following revolution contributed to marginalising war literature as a whole.⁴⁸ It is only today that war writers from other countries are compared with their Russian contemporaries.⁴⁹

Against the background of the body of Russian literature of the years 1914 to 1917/18, which is only briefly outlined within this article, it becomes clear how great the efforts to suppress and "forget" were. Even in the 1920s, there were attempts to continue the thread of literature from the late Tsarist Empire to the early Soviet present. After that, there were only a few striking exceptions that stood out as literary beacons at different times. Worthy of

mention in this regard are the novels "The Way of Suffering" (*Khozhdenie po mukam*) by Aleksej N. Tolstoj,⁵⁰ "The Quiet Don" (*Tikhij Don*) by [Mikhail A. Sholokhov \(1905-1984\)](#), "The Life of Klim Samgin" (*Zhizn' Klima Samgina*) by [Maksim Gor'kij \(1868-1936\)](#), "Doktor Zhivago" (*Doctor Zhivago*) by [Boris L. Pasternak \(1890-1960\)](#) and "August 1914" (*Avgust chetyrnadtsatogo*) by [Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn \(1918-2008\)](#). Valentin S. Pikul' (1928-1960), whose historical light novels were widely read in the late Soviet period but hardly considered by literary scholars, deserves special attention.⁵¹ The theme of war and the Tsar's army occupy a great deal of space in these novels. While on the one hand the author was allowed to cautiously revise some Soviet [stereotypes](#) about the world war, on the other hand his works quite blatantly promoted nationalist and [anti-Semitic](#) sentiments. Ultimately, within the small informal cultural scene, there has always been an interest in topics beyond the official Soviet canon.⁵² The literary production of the Russian emigrants, in which many wartime authors found themselves after the post-revolutionary "exodus to the West," still plays an important role today. Here, the legacy of the "Silver Age" was cultivated, newspapers and journals continued, estates were administered, and archives created.⁵³ Post-Soviet literary studies took up this groundwork when they began in order to explore the First World War as a field of study, even before historians had. Herein lies the core of the renewed Russian commemorative culture: it takes up the example of the diaspora, concerns itself with the graves of the war, the mourning for the victims, and the [cult for the fallen "heroes"](#).

Meanwhile, the discourse on "war literature" has been steadily gaining ground. Of course, it does not supersede the immense literature of the revolutionary era, but it does necessitate a revision of its presuppositions, selection criteria, and interpretive approaches. This work is in full swing. The artifice of placing the years 1914-1917/18 in the continuum of "before the revolution" is no longer valid. As an existential experience and at the same time a poetic challenge, the First and Second World Wars must go hand in hand. To what extent survival strategies, behavioural patterns, and ways of thinking or linguistic conventions, metaphors, and forms of expression, i.e. a phenomenology of literature under extraordinary conditions, were handed down here is an open question.⁵⁴ It is not unusual in history for bodies of knowledge to be left behind in their epoch.

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Notes

1. Brooks, Jeffrey: When Russia Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917, Princeton 1985. ↑

2. cf. „Krieg der Geister“: Hüppauf, Bernd: Kriegsliteratur, in: Hirschfeld, Gerhard, Krumeich, Gerd and Renz, Irina (eds.): Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg, Paderborn 2009, pp. 177-191; Sherry, Vincent (ed.): The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War, Cambridge 2005; Quinn, Patrick J. and Trout, Steven: The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered, New York 2001; Norris, Margot: Writing War in the Twentieth Century, Charlottesville 2000; Savage Brosman, Catherine: Images of War in France: Fiction, Art, Ideolog, Baton Rouge 1999. [↑](#)
3. See here Petrone, Karen: The Great War in Russian Memory, Bloomington und Indianapolis 2011. [↑](#)
4. Balanced as the climax and finale of cosmopolitan modernism in Ingold, Felix Philipp: Der große Bruch. Russland im Epochenjahr 1913. Kultur Gesellschaft, Politik, Berlin 2013. [↑](#)
5. Lemke, Mikhail K.: 250 dnei v tsarskoj stavke (25 sent. 1915 – 2 iulija 1916) [250 Days at the Tsar's Headquarters (25. Sept 1915 – 2. July 1916)], St. Petersburg 1920, p. 371. Cf. the weaknesses of military censorship in Smith, John T.: Russian Military Censorship During the First World War, in: Revolutionary Russia 14/1 (2001), pp. 71-95. [↑](#)
6. Corney, Frederick C.: Telling October. Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution, Ithaca und London 2004. [↑](#)
7. Gurevich, Liubov IA.: Vojna i sovremennaja literatura [War and Modern Literature], in: Severnye zapiski 12 (1914), pp. 55-64; Koltonovskaia, Elena A.: Literatura i vojna (Paralleli) [Literature and War (Parallels)], in: Vestnik Evropy 11 (1914), pp. 246-257; Vojna i pisateli (O pisatel'skoj psikhologii) [War and Writers (On the Psychology of Writers)], in: Russkaia mysl' 12 (1914), pp. 112-123; Khodasevich, Vladislav F. (ed.): Vojna v russkoj lirike [War in Russian Lyrics]. Sbornik, Moscow 1915. [↑](#)
8. A materially rich first assessment in Ivanov, Anatolij I.: Pervaia mirovaia vojna v russkoj literature 1914-1918 gg [The First World War in Russian Literature 1914-1918], Tambov 2005. Cf. Geller, M.: Literatura perioda Pervoj mirovoj vojny [Literature in the Period of the First World War], in: Niva, Zhorzh et al. (eds.): Istoriia russkoj literatury. XX vek: Serebrianyj vek. [History of Russian Literature. XX Century: The Silver Age], Moscow 1995, pp. 603-608. [↑](#)
9. . Cf. Avdeeva, Ekaterina A.: Traditsii russkoj batalistiki v romane M.A. Sholokhova „Tikhij Don“ [The Tradition of Russian Battlefield Fiction in M.A. Sholokhov's Novel "The Quiet Don"].]. Diss. SGPU. Avtoreferat, Surgut 2011, pp. 3-6; Malyshev, Aleksej A.: Khudozhestvennaia batalistika v russkoj literature vtoroj poloviny XIX veka: kampanii 1853-1856 i 1877-1878 gg.[Battlefield Fiction in Russian Literature in the Second Half of the 19th Century: Campaigns of 1853-1856 and 1877-1878]. Diss. TGU. Avtoreferat, Tver' 2006, pp. 3-5; Toper, Pavel M.: Radi zhizni na zemle. Literatura i vojna. Tradicii. Resheniia. Geroi. [For the Sake of Life on Earth. Literature and War. Traditions.

- Decisions. Heroes.]. Monograph, Moscow 1985. ↑
10. Sekirinskij, Sergej S. (ed.): *Istoriiia Rossii XIX-XX vv: Novye istochniki ponimaniia* [The History of Russia XIX-XX Centuries: New sources of Understanding], Moscow, 2001. Between 2004 and 2008 (Volumes 1-4, Nos. 1-18) the journal *Istorik i khudozhnik* was published. ↑
 11. Seniavskaia, Elena S. et al.: *Chelovek i frontovaia povsednevnost' v vojnakh Rossii XX veka. Ocherki po voennoj antropologii* [Man and Frontline Everyday Life in Russia's Wars in the 20th Century. Essays on Military Anthropology], Moscow/Saint Petersburg 2017; Nagornaia, Oksana S.: *Drugoj voennyj opyt. Rossijskie voennoplennye Pervoj mirovoj vojny v Germanii (1914-1922)* [A Different War Experience. Russian First World War Prisoners of War in Germany (1914-1922)], Moscow, 2010; Igor' V. Narskij et al. (eds.): *Opyt mirovykh vojn v istorii Rossii* [The Experience of the World Wars in Russian History]. *Sbornik statej*, Cheliabinsk, 2007; Narskij, Igor' V. and Nikonova, Ol'ga IU. (eds.): *Chelovek i vojna. Vojna kak iavlenie kul'tury* [Man and War. War as a Manifestation of Culture], Moscow 2001. ↑
 12. See, for example, the collection of sources and analyses: *Politika i poëtika: Russkaia literatura v istoriko-kul'turnom kontekste Pervoj mirovoj vojny. Publikatsii, issledovaniia i materialy* [Politics and Poetics: Russian Literature in the Historical and Cultural Context of the First World War. Publications, Research and Materials], Moscow 2014. ↑
 13. Last normatively established by Slivitskaia, Ol'ga V.: *Realisticheskaia proza 1910-ch godov* [Realistic Prose from the 1910s], in: *Istoriiia russkoj literatury. V chetyrëkh tomakh. T. 4: Literatura kontsa XIX – nachala XX veka (1881-1917)* [History of Russian Literature. In four Volumes. Vol. 4: Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries (1881-1917)], Leningrad 1983, pp. 603-635. ↑
 14. The comparative encyclopaedia "The Soviet System and Democratic Society" did have the subject "war literature," but only compared German and Soviet Russian literature on the Second World War. For the First World War, on the other hand, the Soviet Russian counterpart to the treatise on German literature is missing. See Eimermacher, Karl: *Kriegsliteratur*, in: *Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie*, vol. 3, Freiburg et al 1969, pp. 1089-1111. Cf. Dobrenko, Evgeny and Balina, Marina (eds.): *The Cambridge Companion To Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge 2011. ↑
 15. Hellman, Ben: *Poets of Hope and Dispair. The Russian Symbolists in War and Revolution (1914-1918)*, Helsinki 1995. In 2018, a revised second edition was published in Leiden and Boston as vol. 21 of the Russian History and Culture series (as an e-book). ↑
 16. See here Holquist, Peter: *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's continuum of crisis, 1914-1921*, Cambridge 2002. ↑
 17. L'vov-Rogachevskij, Vasilij L.: *Poëziia novoj Rossii. Poëty polej i gorodskikh okrain*

- [Poetry in New Russia. Poets of the Field and Urban Outskirts], Moscow 1919. ↑
18. See, for example, Literaturnye ob"edineniia Moskvyy i Peterburga 1890-1917. Slovar' [Literary Associations of Moscow and St Petersburg, 1890-1917. A Dictionary], Moscow 2004; Bialik, B.A. (ed.): Russkaia literatura i zhurnalistika nachala XX veka, 1905-1917 [Russian Literature and Journalism of the Early 20th Century], Vol. 1-2, Moscow 1984. ↑
 19. Cf. Delaney Grossman, Joan: Rise and decline of the "literary" journal 1880-1917, in: Martinsen, D.A. (ed.): Literary Journals in Imperial Russia, Cambridge 1997, pp. 171-196; Agapov, Vadim: Pered katastrofoj. Rossiia v Pervoj mirovoj vojne 1914-1918 gg v zerkale russkogo 'tolstogo' zhurnala [Before the Catastrophe. Russia in the First World War 1914-1918 in the mirror of the 'thick' journals], Vladivostok 2014; Andreeva, O.V.: Knizhnoe delo [Bookmaking], in: Ocherki russkoj kul'tury. Konets XIX – nachalo XX veka. Vol. 1: Obshchestvenno-kul'turnaia sreda [Essays on Russian Culture. End of the XIX – Beginning of the XX century. Vol. 1: Social and Cultural Environment], Moscow 2011, pp. 230-286; Dergacheva, L.D.: Periodika [Periodicals], in: ibid., pp. 287-339. ↑
 20. Smith, John T.: Russian Military Censorship During the First World War, in: Revolutionary Russia 14/1 (2001), pp. 71-95. ↑
 21. Hellman, Poets of Hope and Dispair 1995, p. 3 also speaks of the "common knowledge that the First World War did not give birth to any great literature in Russia." ↑
 22. Rejtlat, Abram I. (ed.): Kniga i chitatel' 1900-1917. Vospominaniia i dnevniki sovremennikov [Book and the Reader 1900-1917. Memoires and Diaries of Contemporaries], Moscow 1999. ↑
 23. For war journalism see Zhdanova, Irina: Press/Journalism (Russian Empire), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2017-07-12. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11124.) Cf. Russkaia publitsistika i periodika épokhi Pervoj mirovoj vojny: Politika i poëtika. Issledovaniia i materialy [Russian Journalism and Periodicals in the Period of the First World War: Politics and Poetics. Research and materials], Moscow 2013. ↑
 24. See Frame, Murray et al (eds.): Russia's Great War and Revolution. Vol 1: Russian Culture in War and Revolution, 1914-22. Book 1: Popular Culture, the Arts, and Institutions; Book 2: Political Culture, Identities, Mentalities, and Memory, Bloomington 2014. Cf. Gaida, Fëdor A.: Vlast' i obshchestvennost' v Rossii. Dialog o puti politicheskogo razvitiia (1910-1917) [Power and Society in Russia. Dialogue on the Path of Political Development (1910-1917)], Moscow 2016; Guzhva, Dmitrii G. Voennaia periodicheskaia pechat' russkoj armii v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny, 1914-1918 gg. [Military periodicals of the Russian Army in the years of the First World War], Novosibirsk 2009; Jahn, Hubertus: Patriotic culture in Russia during World War I, Ithaca 1995. ↑

25. Cf. the lines of development of such dichotomous models of value from the 1930s to the 1980s: TSehnovitser, Orest V.: *Literatura i mirovaia vojna 1914-1918* [Literature and the World War], Moscow 1938; Vil'chinskij, Vsevolod P.: *Literatura 1914-1917 godov* [Literature in the Years 1914-1917], in: Muratova, Kseniia D. (ed.): *Sud'by russkogo realizma nachala XX veka* [The Fate of Early Twentieth-Century Russian Realism], Leningrad 1972, pp. 228-277; Slivitskaia: *Realisticheskaia proza 1910-ch godov* [Realistic Prose from the 1910s]. ↑
26. Po povodu vojny. Ot pisatelej, khudozhnikov i artistov [About the War. From Writers, Artists, and Entertainers], in: *Russkie vedomosti*, 28. September 1914. Among the writers who signed were Maksim Gor'kij, Ivan Shmelëv, and Aleksandr Serafimovich. ↑
27. Cf. Maurer, Trude (ed.): *Kollegen – Kommilitonen – Kämpfer. Europäische Universitäten im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Stuttgart 2006; Ungern-Sternberg, Jürgen von und Ungern-Sternberg, Wolfgang von: *Der Aufruf „An die Kulturwelt!“ Das Manifest der 93 und die Anfänge der Kriegspropaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg*, Frankfurt am Main 2013. ↑
28. . Ivanov: *Pervaia mirovaia vojna* [First World War], p. 415-455 lists in a biobibliographical index a total of 142 authors whose often unknown works form the basis of his study. ↑
29. The photo and a Lubok adorn the title page of Ivanov's book, *Pervaia mirovaia vojna* [First World War]. Cf. Arenzon, E.R.: Vladimir Maiakovskij: *Ot voennykh lubkov – k „oknam ROSTA“* [Vladimir Maiakovskij: From the War Lubki to the "ROSTA Posters"], in: *Mir russkogo slova* 2019, Nr. 4, p. 116. ↑
30. See the exemplary analysis by Beyrau, Dietrich: *Die Soldaten der Sof'ia Fedorchenko: Wie sie über den Krieg reden*, in: Beyrau, Dietrich: *Krieg und Revolution. Russische Erfahrungen*, Paderborn 2017. pp. 151-179. ↑
31. On war as a historical-psychological phenomenon, as a component of social consciousness and as an anthropological "borderline situation": Seniavskaia, Elena S.: *Psikhologiiia vojny v XX veke. Istoricheskij opyt Rossii* [The Psychology of War in the Twentieth Century. The Historical Experience of Russia], Moscow 1999, p. 33-73. Cf. Plamper, Jan et al. (eds.): *Rossijskaia imperiia chuvstv: Podkhody k kul'turnoj istorii èmotsij* [The Russian Empire of Feelings: A Cultural History of Emotions], Moscow 2010. ↑
32. Dobronravov, Leonid M.: in: *Sovremennyj mir* 1916, Nr. 9, p. 129 (citation Ivanov: *Pervaia mirovaia vojna* [First World War], p. 431). ↑
33. Andrej Belyj's novel *Peterburg* was cited here as an example. ↑
34. According to Evgenij G. Lundberg, the head of the literature department of the journal *Sovremennik* (*Literatura i iskusstvo: Literaturnyj dnevnik* [Literature and Art: Literary Diary], in: *Sovremennik* 1915, Nr. 1, January, p. 207-218, here p. 216) as well as the poet, literary critic, translator, and mathematician Sergej P. Bobrov in a contribution in

- the same volume (Russkaia poëziia v 1914 godu [Russian Poetry in 1914], in: *ibid.*, p. 218-226, here p. 219). [↑](#)
35. See Khodasevich, Vladislav (ed.): *Vojna v russkoj lirike* [War in Russian Lyrics], Moscow 1915. [↑](#)
36. Glinskij, Boris B. (ed.): *Sovremennaia vojna v russkoj poëzii* [Modern Warfare in Russian Poetry]. Sbornik, Petrograd 1915. The preface is dated 19 October 1914. Glinskij was an editor and publicist. During the First World War he turned to the “progressive nationalists.” [↑](#)
37. Giliarovskij, Vladimir A.: *Vojna za mir* [War for Peace], in: *ibid.*, p. 50 f. [↑](#)
38. Sologub, Fëdor: *Na nachinaishchego Bog* [God Against Him Who Begins], in: *ibid.*, p. 47; „Tëffi“ (Nadezhda A. Lokhvitskaia), *Belaia odezhda* [White Clothing], in: *ibid.*, p. 128; Kopytkin, Sergej: *Chetyrnadtsatyj god* [Fourteenth Year], in: *ibid.* p. 53 f. [↑](#)
39. See Fedotov, A.S.: *Pervaia mirovaia vojna v russkikh literaturno-khudozhestvennykh al'manakhakh i sbornikakh (1914-1916)* [The First World War in Russian Literary and Fiction Almanac and Anthology (1914-1916)], in: *Russkaia kul'tura v usloviakh inozemnykh nashestvij i vojn. X – nachalo XX v. Sbornik nauchnykh trudov. Vyp. 2* [Russian culture in the Conditions of Foreign Invasions and War. X – Beginning of 20th Century. Collection of Scientific Works. Vol. 2], Moscow 1990, p. 259-294. Fedotov examined thirty-four of the 335 volumes recorded during the war. [↑](#)
40. A. Ozhigov (Nikolaj P. Asheshov): *Na brannoj lire* (Vojna i sovremennaia poëziia) [On the battle lyre (War and Modern Poetry)], in: *Sovremennij mir* 1915, nr. 2, p. 296. [↑](#)
41. TSekhnovitser: *Literatura* [Literature], p. 14, 44f. Cf. Pavlova, Margarita M.: Fëdor Sologub. *Razyskaniia i materialy* [Fëdor Sologub. Research and Materials], Moscow 2016; Stepanov, Evgenij E.: *Poët na vojne. Nikolaj Gumilëv 1914-1918* [Poet at War. Nikolaj Gumilëv], Moscow 2014. [↑](#)
42. Cf. Nor, Natal'ia V.: *Poniatie „lubochnoe“: Problemy terminologii* [The Concept of the “Lubok”: Problems of Terminology], in: *Vestnik RGGU. Serii: Literaturovedenie. Iazykoznanie. Kul'turologiia* [Literary Studies. Linguistics. Culturology.] 2008, Nr. 4, p. 222-248. The term, derived from *lubok*, was by no means only used pejoratively and meant – according to IU. M. Lotman – a genre-spanning, complex “playful artistry” (*igrovaia khudozhestvennost'*) (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 226). [↑](#)
43. Cf. Kuptsova, Irina V.: „Kogda pushki streliajut, a muzy molchat...“? (Khudozhestvennaia intelligentsiia v gody Pervoj mirovoj vojny) [“When the guns are firing, and the muses are silent...“? (The artistic intelligentsia during the First World War)], in: *Klio* 1997, Nr. 1, p. 108. [↑](#)
44. Maiakovskij, Vladimir V.: *Shtatskaia shrapnel' (Vravshim kist'iu)* [Civilian Shrapnel (To those lied to by the Brush)], in: *Ders.: Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v trinadtsati tomakh* [The Complete Works in Thirteen Volumes]. Vol. 1, Moscow 1955, p. 309. The essay

appeared in the newspaper *Nov'* on 14 November 1914. ↑

45. Tolstoj, Aleksej N.: *Obyknovennyj chelovek* [An Ordinary Man], in: *Ibid.*: *Dni vojny. Rasskazy* [Days of War. Stories], Moscow 1915, p. 3-32. ↑
46. Tolstoj, Aleksej N.: *Rasskaz proezzhego cheloveka* [Narrative of a Man on the Road], in: *Narodopravstvo* 1917, Nr. 11, p. 2-5. The issue appeared on 7 October 1917. ↑
47. Stepun, Fëdor A.: *Iz pisem praporshchika-artillerista* [From the letters of an Ensign Artilleryman], Prague 1926, p. 6f., 7f. A censored version of the epistolary novel appeared in the journal *Severnye zapiski* (Nos. 7-9) in 1916. ↑
48. See, for example, Stepun, Fëdor A.: *Iz pisem praporshchika-artillerista* [From the letters of an Ensign Artilleryman] (1919), Timofeev, Boris A.: *Chasha skorbnaia* [The Cup of Sorrow] (1918), Sof'ia Z. Fedorchenko: *Narod na vojne. Frontovye zapisi* [The Nation at War. Frontline Notes] (1917). ↑
49. Cf. *Vojna i otvetstvennost' v refleksii intellektualov* [War and Responsibility in the Reflections of Intellectuals] (1918-1938). Collective Monograph, Ekaterinburg 2019; Mikhailovsky, Alexander: *Fyodor Stepun and Ernst Jünger: Intellectuals at War*, in: *Studies in East European Thought* 2014, Nr. 66, pp. 77-87; Nikolaeva, S.M.: *D. Dos Passos i É. Khemingvëj o Pervoj mirovoj vojne i Sovetskoj Rossii* [J. Dos Passos and E. Hemingway on the First World War and Soviet Russia], in: *Izvestiia Samarskogo nauchnogo tsentra Rossijskoj akademii nauk* 14/3 (2012), pp. 135-142. ↑
50. Especially vol. 1, which was originally to be published as "Through Dust and Smoke" (*Skvoz' pyl i dym*), then came out as *Sisters* (*Sëstry*) before becoming part of the trilogy. ↑
51. Stites, Richard: *Russian Popular Culture. Entertainment and Society Since 1900*, Cambridge 1992, p. 151. ↑
52. Using the example of Gumilëv's history of reception: Luknitskaia, Vera: *Nikolaj Gumilëv. Zhizn' poëta po materialam domashnego arkhiva sem'i Luknitskikh* [The Poet's Life in the Private Archives of the Luknitskij-Family], Leningrad 1990. ↑
53. Cf. the three editions of the overview work: Struve, Gleb: *Russkaia literatura v izgnanii. Opyt istoricheskogo obzora zarubezhnoj literatury* [Russian Literature in Exile. An attempt at a historical overview of the literature abroad], New York 1956; Paris 1984; Paris-Moscow 1996. A comprehensive anthology, prefaced by M.L. Gasparov, attempted in early post-Soviet times to "restore" the sunken era: *Russkaia poëziia „serebrianogo veka“, 1890-1917* [Russian Poetry of the "Silver Age", 1890-1917]. *Antologija*, Moscow 1993. ↑
54. For Context: *Seniavskaia, Psikhologija vojny v XX veke* [Psychology of War in the Twentieth Century]; Thoß, Bruno and Volkmann, Hans-Erich (eds.): *Erster Weltkrieg – Zweiter Weltkrieg. Ein Vergleich. Krieg, Kriegserlebnis, Kriegserfahrung in Deutschland*, Paderborn 2002; Budnitskij, Oleg V.: *Liudi na vojne* [People at War], Moscow 2021. ↑

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