

incorporated capitalist characters, plots, and environments, but at the expense of meaning, as historical causality, narrativity, and even human communication recede from the representational purview of Chekhov's late prose.

While Shneyder focuses closely on the work of Tolstoi, Chekhov, and especially Dostoevskii, his readings of the three headlining authors is complimented by illuminating analysis of many other realist texts; the approach lends horizontal breadth to *Russia's Capitalist Realism*, and evidences the pervasive extent of literature's attention to capitalism in the period. Among its many valuable insights, the book demonstrates how Russia's emerging free market influenced the actual poetics of realism. Shneyder details how realist methods of narrative focalization, character interiority, and even empirical observation are problematized in attempts to represent capitalist activity, from industrial labor to commodity circulation. These close readings are facilitated by an interdisciplinary methodology that draws upon narrative theory and New Economic Criticism, and balanced by careful attention to economic and social histories that shaped the material conditions of realist literary production.

Referencing the late Mark Fisher's book *Capitalist Realism* (2009), the title of Shneyder's study alludes to both a historical literary tendency, and to the way realist fiction expedited the normalization of Russian capitalism as an ineluctable economic reality. Fisher notes how capitalism articulates itself as "a pervasive atmosphere," an ideology assimilated not as value, but as fact (16). Though Russian capitalism had achieved this ambient quality by the end of the nineteenth century, when Shneyder's book concludes, industrial production and the free market seemed alien and alarming in the 1860s—as capitalism threatened traditional economic and social relations, and Russian realism approached its full development as a discursive system. *Russia's Capitalist Realism* traces how literary realism evolved from a defamiliarized outlook on capitalism, to one that reflected capitalist practices as familiar, but alienating. This well-written study combines rigorous analysis, expansive research, and persuasive argumentation; it is highly recommended to scholars and students of nineteenth-century Russian literature, as well as readers interested in literary theory and Russian cultural history.

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***Redefining Russian Literary Diaspora, 1920–2020.*** Ed. Maria Rubins. London: University College London Press, 2021. 264 pp. Notes. Index. £45.00, hard bound; £25.00, paper.

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The collection under review examines "key 'angles' of... diasporic literature" (6), focusing on how it "reframe[s]... master narratives, question[s] the... canon" (7) by capturing a "multiplicity of perspectives, accents, origins and identities" (257). Intricately intertwined terms ("diaspora," "emigration," "exile,") abound; settled ideas are questioned; fresh perspectives are explored. Not content with the announced 1920–2020 limit, it reaches deeper into the Russian diasporic canon (in an early sign of how unsettled this canon happens to be Andrei Kurbsky, 1528–83, is mentioned only as an epistolary writer and not the creator of *Istoriia o velikom kniaze moskovskom*, the first semi-fictional exilic narrative in Russian [21, 63]); an entire essay is devoted to Nikolai Ivanovich Turgenev (1789–1871).

Admitting that Turgenev was not "a literary figure" (39), Andreas Schönle invites seeing Turgenev's life work "not as a private act, but a series of gestures performed

with an eye towards the public” (38), thus revealing peculiar artifice close to the heart of his deeds, of which *La Russie et les Russes* is but one. Turgenev’s seldom remembered legacy benefits from a refreshing perspective—even if his single most important literary act, his contribution to the manifesto of Russian liberalism as penned by a certain seventeen-year-old at Turgenev’s Fontanka Quay quarters remains beyond the essay’s scope.

After foregrounding a philological analysis of the term “exile,” first out of its Russian context and next in it, Pamela Davidson contributes three close studies of Ivan Bunin’s, Vladimir Nabokov’s, and Vyacheslav Ivanov’s responses to displacement. Along with her explorations of such familiar texts as Bunin’s “The Mission of the Russian Emigration” and Ivanov’s *Roman Sonnets*, Davidson’s scholium on “Groza,” an understudied specimen of Nabokov’s juvenilia, proves particularly helpful.

(Self-)translation (literal, literary, or metaphorical) serves as the collection’s leit-motif—and a point of tension (see such renditions of “stranstvovaniia” as “pilgrimage” and “[r]aspad atoma” as “the atom explodes,” 17). Adrian Wanner probes Marina Tsvetaeva’s, Nabokov’s, and Joseph Brodsky’s forays into auto-translation, seeking information on what they “tell us about their self-positioning within the Russian diaspora” (114). As presented here, Wanner’s comparative analyses of Tsvetaeva’s *Mólodets/Le Gars* and Brodsky’s Anglicized poems stimulate and enlighten; his treatment of Nabokov’s *Poems and Problems* in toto rings excessively declarative in its reliance on such shortcuts as Nabokov’s “killing” Aleksandr Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* or Nabokov’s being an “average” poet next to Tsvetaeva (122]).

Pointing out startling parallels between Theodosius Dobzhansky’s and Nabokov’s views on developmental biology, David M. Bethea builds a case for their exilic survival being a manifestation of mysterious and monumental evolutionary forces at work. Encyclopedic in its range, Bethea’s study is an unorthodox contribution to evolutionary literary studies (frequently mislabeled “Darwinian literary studies/theory”) and a re-interpretation of Nabokov’s “Father’s Butterflies,” in which a new reading of this difficult text competes with Brian Boyd’s insights into its implications.

Katharine Hodgson explores how certain anthologies of exilic poetry “construct... the relationship between literary canon, community and nationhood” (165). From anthologies published in their “natural” habitat abroad Hodgson proceeds to their perestroika-era and post-Soviet counterparts, peering into the role they played in Russia’s fraught nation (re-)building project. No matter how hard he tries, this reviewer cannot fathom the exclusion of Vladimir Markov’s prodigious anthologizing efforts, of which *Priglushennye golosa* (1952) and *Modern Russian Poetry* (1966; with Merrill Sparks) are the most audacious and successful attempts not only at canon-building, but also at canon-mending in the entire history of Russian letters.

Citing “internet age” advances in connectivity, Mark Lipovetsky calls for a “radical reassessment” of “the concept of the diaspora” (195), as “it becomes almost impossible to... delineate homeland from diasporic texts” (197). Kevin M. F. Platt agrees: “rise in... mobility... electronic communication... and erosion of the nation...” will “efface” familiar cultural national hierarchies (239). Using the examples of Dina Rubina (Israel) and Shamshad Abdullaev (Uzbekistan), Platt advocates the creation of a “new category,” that of “extraterritorial Russian writers” (223; George Steiner, mentioned elsewhere in the collection, is conspicuous by his absence here).

Galin Tihanov’s contribution acts as a built-in review (“seminal volume,” “excellent collection” [244, 245]) and a contemplation of “an epistemological move beyond diaspora” (245). More helpfully than elsewhere here, Tihanov contrasts “diaspora” and “exile,” reminding that interchangeable these terms are not (246).

Seen from the wrong side of February 24, 2022, the collection under review cannot but appear a monument to a time when it was possible to wonder whether the

terms “diaspora,” “emigration,” “exile” had not become “archaic,” “aged” (245, 246, *inter alia*). As Russia’s aggression against Ukraine wiped the slate clean, the vaunted “global connectivity” has revealed the ugly face of censorship as vicious under Putin as it is absurd under Mark Zuckerberg (the exile of Lyudmila Petrushevskaya’s graphic anti-war poetry from Facebook is an instructive example of an age-old punishment thriving in “the internet age”).

*Plus ça change*, then? So it would seem. Geography and language affect little apart from the newly relevant notions of centrality and periphery; once again exile, internal or external, begins with alienation, violence, and trauma.

Whatever means of communication they employ, expat Brits trading tips on where to obtain Marmite will not amount to a “literary diaspora,” whereas Santa Monica-based Christopher Isherwoods and Manhattan-bound Quentin Crisps of this world will, and not in the obvious way. Similarly, as long as they published in Russia, globally dispersed, digitally linked Russophone literati could go on perching wherever they fancied—before 02.24.22, that is. Diasporas and exile are back with a vengeance, replacing nuance and fluidity with a livid reality of a war of extinction, its barbed wire cruelly undercutting dreams of barrier-free wireless connections.

Those interested in exilic literature, meanwhile, will find in Rubins’s collection outstanding contributions by David Bethea, Pamela Davidson, and Adrian Wanner, along with fine works by Katherine Hodgson and Andreas Schönle; students of diasporas, cultural centers, and peripheries will do well to consider Mark Lipovetsky’s and Kevin Platt’s essays while Rubins’s and Galin Tihanov’s framing pieces will not fail to stimulate much-needed thinking at a time when rampant archaism makes mockery of progress, enlightenment, and “global connectivity.”

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***Songs in Dark Times: Yiddish Poetry of Struggle from Scottsboro to Palestine.***

By Amelia M. Glaser. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2020. xiv, 353 pp.

Appendixes. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$39.95, hard bound.

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Amelia Glaser’s *Songs in Dark Times* is a tour de force, joining literary studies and political history to evoke the power of poetry at times of catastrophe. Focusing on Yiddish poets who wrote from their adherence to communism in the 1920s and 1930s, Glaser tells the story of how these poets responded to key violent injustices throughout the world, from the pogroms in eastern Europe, to the 1929 Arab uprising against Jews in Hebron, to the lynching of African Americans in the US around the Scottsboro trials, to the rise of fascism in Spain and the Spanish Civil War, to the Soviet suppression and persecution of Jewish culture and Ukrainian nationalism. The international range of these world-changing events during decades of crisis is reflected in the poets themselves, who lived in the United States, Canada, and the Soviet Union, and who subscribed to and embodied in various ways the communist ideas of internationalism.

Glaser organizes the book into six chapters, through which she traces the concept of “Yiddish passwords,” a term she defines in the Introduction as meaning “a culturally coded word, name, or phrase that conveys group identity” (3). She argues that with these passwords, which appear as motifs or metaphors in the poetry, the diverse poets “developed and merged a vocabulary of collective Jewish identity with a poetics of internationalism” (4). What this means is that the poets, all born in eastern Europe,