

ABSTRACTS

“Maria Ivanovna Was Reclining on a Settee”: Gleb Uspenskii’s Search for a New Optics

ANNA SCHUR

To Gleb Uspenskii’s contemporaries, his preference for short forms like sketches, notes, and fragments masked an artistic flaw – his inability to produce a novel. The paper reconsiders Uspenskii’s generic choices as a deliberate critique of the novel form. This critique reflected Uspenskii’s anxiety about the significance of individual personality and experience overvalued by the novel. Uspenskii’s aspiration to transcend the novel’s preoccupation with an individual human fate in order to lay bare the conditions shaping the shared destiny of all led him to exchange the novel’s “microscopic” optics for a broader, panoramic lens. Such change in perspective dictated several other elements of his poetics: from rejecting the novel’s aesthetics of small detail to reconfiguring the traditional character structure.

Odessa as “Point de Capital”: Economics, History, and Time in Odessa Fiction

SVETLANA NATKOVICH

Odessa was founded on the fault line between autocratic agricultural Russia and the international trade routes of emerging global capitalism. It was the place where the use value of agricultural products was converted into the exchange value of commodities. In the rift between these two systems of values, and between the epistemological and psychological perceptions associated with them, a third kind of ontological and epistemological space emerged. This space was conditioned by the evolving patterns of the Odessa grain trade regulated by stock trading, and induced in its turn a unique perception of time, history, and the relation between the real and fictitious. This article pinpoints the link between the mechanisms of the Odessa grain trade, the patterns of subjectivity and temporal perception that were molded by Odessa’s business culture, and the modes of literary representation that elaborated these patterns into a specific literary idiom associated with Odessa literature.

The First World War and the Polarization of the Russian Right, July 1914–February 1917

MIKHAIL N. LOUKIANOV

On the eve of the World War I, members of the Russian right deeply differed in their visions of the status quo and the means of its proper reconstruction. The war further differentiated the Right. The rightists, regardless of the ideological nuances, perceived the war as a chance for political revival. The outburst of patriotism in July and August 1914 became the most serious argument in favor of political reform. Their opponents, on the contrary, saw in it a chance to get rid of democratic institutions and practices. While the more moderate

Slavic Review 75, no. 4 (Winter 2016)

rightists leaned towards consensus, with liberals looking at political dialogue as the most effective instrument for securing social stability, the extreme ones concluded that strict control from above was a more adequate instrument for achieving this goal. All this aggravated the pre-war conflicts within the Right and led to its disintegration on the eve of the Revolution of 1917.

Viacheslav Ivanov in the 1930s: The Russian Poet as Italian Humanist

EMILY WANG

In the 1930s, Viacheslav Ivanov – erstwhile leader of Russian symbolism – found himself suspended between two totalitarian regimes, Stalin’s Soviet Union and Mussolini’s Italy. A Soviet citizen living in Italy, he adapted to his new circumstances, converting to Catholicism and embracing Italian cultural traditions, including Petrarch’s legacy of transnational humanism. In this period, however, fascist and Nazi thinkers were also claiming humanism for their own nationalist purposes. In his Italian-language writings, Ivanov navigates these dangerous waters by attempting to represent himself as simultaneously national and transnational, and as both a Russian poet and a latter-day Italian humanist.

Unraveling a Tradition, or Spinning a Myth?: Gender Critique in Czech Society and Culture

LIBORA OATES-INDRUCHOVÁ

The hostility that met feminist ideas and gender equality issues in east central Europe (ECE) after the demise of the Communist regimes was accompanied by a notion that feminism was *imported* to these societies after 1989. In the Czech Republic, the record of the publishing output by feminist scholars in the 1990s, however, speaks against this myth. Drawing on existing scholarship and the author’s own research on cultural discourses of gender and on socialist state science policies and censorship, this article argues that there has been a long tradition of gender critique that was present in a variety of discourses even during late state socialism. It proposes that the feminist impulse began in the 19th century and continued in some form throughout the 20th century. It then examines how the myth of the feminist import came to exist and what were the possible sources of the hostility toward feminism in the 1990s.

Imagined Institutions: The Symbolic Power of Formal Rules in Bosnia and Herzegovina

KARLO BASTA

Through a detailed examination of institutional discourses in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, this article demonstrates that formal political institutions may play a more layered role than is allowed by existing theories of nationalist and ethnic conflict. Competing institutional preferences of Bosniak, Serb, and Croat elites are not simply instruments for the achievement of collective or individual goals. They are symbolically salient expressions of collective

identity as well. For Bosniak elites, the stated preference for a non-ethnicized territorial framework and majoritarian central government suggest the vision of a multiethnic, but not institutionally multinational, *Bosnian* political community. Their Serb and Croat counterparts, by contrast, insist on the continued “ethnicization” of the territorial architecture and the central government apparatus. These preferences express an understanding of Bosnia as a state of three discrete political communities. Any attempts at comprehensive institutional reform must thus reckon with the opposing and deeply embedded visions of institutions-as-symbols. The theoretical implications of this work go well beyond the Bosnian case.

Transnationalism in One Country? Seeing and Not Seeing Cross-Border Migration within the Soviet Union

LEWIS H. SIEGELBAUM and LESLIE PAGE MOCH

In the early 1990s social scientists began to refer to migrants who retained familial and economic ties with their country of origin as transnational. The term eventually gained currency among historians who had found multiple examples of such ties in earlier decades and centuries. Although migrants traveling among former Soviet republics came to be understood as transnational, Soviet-era migrants never have been so characterized. We contend that this is due to a double blindness: that of migration scholars to the Soviet Union as a “state of nations,” and that of historians of the Soviet period to migration as a complicating element in the construction of nationality. By emphasizing the transnational dimension of “internal” Soviet migration, we seek to sharpen awareness of how nationality worked in the Soviet context, particularly in its last decades. We thus posit the maintenance of economic, familial and other affective ties across Soviet national boundaries as the Soviet version of transnationalism—transnationalism in one country. We also suggest the ways that despite its well-deserved reputation for limiting international migration and otherwise restricting its citizenry, the Soviet state facilitated transnationalism within its borders.