

## ABSTRACTS

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### **Cross Kissing: Keeping One's Word in Twelfth-Century Rus'**

YULIA MIKHAILOVA AND DAVID PRESTEL

In this study, Yulia Mikhailova and David Prestel suggest that the political culture of pre-Mongolian Rus' may be similar to that of post-Carolingian Europe, where public order still existed in the absence of a strong centralized authority. In Rus' as also in the west, there was an order of norms rather than of institutions. Drawing on sources such as the *Testament of Vladimir Monomakh* and the *Homily of Princes*, Mikhailova and Prestel maintain that cross kissing was considered a sacred obligation for Rus' rulers, a view given further support by the behavior of princes as recorded in the chronicles. They appear to trust oaths made on the cross and accept that there will be negative consequences for those who break them. Violations threaten one's salvation, and when chroniclers are favorably disposed to certain princes, they attempt to demonstrate that their violations are justified by an offence on the part of the prince with whom the agreement was enacted.

### **Prosaic Witchcraft and Semiotic Totalitarianism: Muscovite Magic Reconsidered**

VALERIE KIVELSON AND JONATHAN SHAHEEN

Studies of witchcraft belief and persecution in Russia have been profoundly, and to a significant degree mistakenly, shaped by European understandings of witchcraft as fundamentally demonic and integrally linked to the power of the devil. Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson's concepts of "prosaics" and "semiotic totalitarianism," derived from their readings of M. M. Bakhtin, offer a productive way to set imported preconceptions aside and to comprehend the specificities of Muscovite witchcraft beliefs. Pre-Petrine ideas about witchcraft conformed to no uniform, overarching ideological or explanatory schema, satanic or otherwise. Muscovite witchcraft operated instead as a diffuse, resolutely prosaic collection of beliefs and practices, whereas the more demonologically inflected European beliefs approached the imposed uniformity of "semiotic totalitarianism." In this article, Valerie Kivelson and Jonathan Shaheen propose a corrective to a widespread propensity for reading Russian material through European paradigms and analyze Russian beliefs on their own, prosaic terms.

### **Genre and Actuality in Belinskii, Herzen, and Goncharov: Toward a Genealogy of the Tragic Pattern in Russian Realism**

ILYA KLIGER

In this article, Ilya Kliger describes the workings of "tragic realism" during the early to mid-1840s in Russia by engaging with the critical essays and letters of Vissarion Belinskii as well as with the first novels of Ivan Goncharov and Aleksandr Herzen. Kliger seeks to show that the concepts

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and forms produced by the authors standing at the inception of the realist tradition in Russia can be usefully seen as transpositions of the Hegelian theorization of modernity and of its privileged formal companion, the *Bildungsroman*. Seen against the background of Hegel's post-tragic conception of contemporary "actuality," these authors can be understood as developing a historico-formal paradox, a vision of tragic realism. Tragic realism grasps contemporary life in terms of destructive and irreconcilable collisions and presupposes the broader historiographic vision of Russia's anachronistic position vis-à-vis the Hegelian vision of modern life.

### **Of Hats and Trains: Cultural Traffic in Leskov's and Dostoevskii's Westward Journeys**

ANNE DWYER

The first train line connecting St. Petersburg with western Europe opened in 1862, providing the occasion for Fedor Dostoevskii and Nikolai Leskov to take positions in regard to train travel, cultural traffic, and Russia's insertion into modernity. Anne Dwyer's analysis of Dostoevskii's *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* and Leskov's "From a Travel Diary" reveals an essential paradox. While Leskov is eager to foster the railroad, he switches hats with ease and offers pragmatic performances of an imperial identity based on his competency in the languages of the borderlands. In contrast, the nationalist Dostoevskii fulminates against train travel yet explores the ways in which modernity's onset changes human experience and literary possibilities. Their bifurcated yet equally ambivalent responses to modernity as emblemized by the railroad illuminate the diversity of attempts to articulate a Russian identity in relationship both to Russia's own people(s) and to western Europe in the modern age.

### **An Odessa Odyssey: Vladimir Jabotinsky's *The Five***

BARRY P. SCHERR

Vladimir (later known as Ze'ev) Jabotinsky is remembered today largely for his Zionism, but in his younger years he had gained recognition for his literary career, which he never entirely abandoned. His final novel, *The Five* (1936), written in Russian long after he had left his native country, depicts Jewish life in his native Odessa at the beginning of the twentieth century. The novel contains two main narrative lines. One involves a paean to the Odessa of Jabotinsky's youth—to its vibrancy, its physical charms, and even its peculiar dialect of Russian. The other chronicles the decline of a family, through the fates of its five children, as well as of an entire way of life, in a manner reminiscent of that employed by Sholem Aleichem in *Teve the Dairyman*. The chief link between these outwardly disparate and even opposing lines is the semi-autobiographical narrator, a figure who has heretofore received less attention than deserved. In this analysis by Barry P. Scherr, the narrator appears not only to unify the fragmentary elements of the work but also, through his Zionism, to suggest a way out of the malaise that afflicted many of his contemporaries.

## **Milcho Manchevski's *Before the Rain* and the Ethics of Listening**

GORDANA P. CRNKOVIĆ

An artistic, popular, and critical success, the film *Before the Rain* (1994), written and directed by Macedonian-American Milcho Manchevski, has been the subject of much critical work largely dominated by issues related to the setting of the story (early 1990s Balkans) and also by the concepts of seeing, watching, and being watched, and the relation of all this with the Balkan discourses. Gordana P. Crnković argues for moving away from this framework in order to explore the film's aesthetic achievements operating in a different sphere, and specifically the film's creation of the practice of proper listening taken in a more philosophical sense envisioned by Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Gemma Corradi Fiumara. Intertwining close readings of the film's scenes and especially the film's soundscape with these philosophers' insights, Crnković shows how listening in this film grounds personal ethics and political acts, and how it relates to the spheres of childhood, nature, and one's own inner voice or *daimon*.

## **The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine**

OXANA SHEVEL

Through a comparison of post-Franco Spain and post-Soviet Ukraine, Oxana Shevel examines state responses to the challenge of dealing with divided historical memory. Both countries embarked on the transition from authoritarian rule divided by the memory of the recent past, but each dealt with this similar challenge very differently. This article discusses Spain's "democratization of memory" policy centered on the state's refusal to define a common historical memory for the society as a whole and on the official recognition of the multiplicity of "personal and family" memories and examines why no comparable policy has emerged in Ukraine so far. Shevel considers the potential applicability of the Spanish solution to Ukraine in light of both social realities and theories of nation building, in particular the debate over whether national unity necessitates a cultural nation and shared collective memory, or whether unity in a democracy can be built on other foundations.