

Demon's kiss as a "loss of virginity," "deflowering," "sex" or "intercourse." Whatever, if anything, takes place between the Demon and Tamara after they kiss remains outside the text. In fact, the text suggests that the kiss itself kills Tamara outright: "smertel'nyi iad ego lobzaniia mgnovenno v grud' ee pronik" (the deadly poison of his kiss instantaneously penetrated her breast). Furthermore, Tamara is called a sinner not because "she experiences erotic desire" but because she prays to a demon and not to God and thus becomes a sinner *par excellence* (Cf. "sviatym zakhochet li molit'sia a serdse molitsia *emu*"; when she wants to pray to the saints, her heart prays to *him*). Such unjustified sexualization of Tamara might support the claim that Georgian females are presented as erotic, seductive or wild and needed to be tamed, but hardly does justice to Lermontov's complicated poem.

The key events of both "The Demon" and "Mtsyri" take place in Christian monasteries in Georgia and thus by no means support the assertion that "Russian writers exercised a selective perception which virtually filtered Christianity out of the field of vision." Pushkin's poem "Kazbek Monastery" (1829) attests to the same.

Much of what Ms. Layton says about Lermontov is flawed; the same can be said of other assertions, including her master thesis that "Russian culture's reigning perception of Georgia as 'virgin' territory" is expressed in the portrayal of the land as an "enticing female." Her example, Alexei Meisner's poem in which "Elbrus as a female entity [is] kissed by her lover, the sun" can be undercut by Evdokiia Rostopchina's "El'brus i ia" (Elbrus and I; 1836) which presents Elbrus as the powerful male lover, whose allure the speaker of the poem resists, even though it still haunts her dreams. Cf.

Эльбрус, Эльбрус мой ненаглядный,  
Тебя привет мой не почтил, --  
Зато как пламенно, как жадно  
Мой взор искал тебя, ловил ..  
Зато вдали моим мечтаньям  
Все снишься ты, гигант Эльбрус

(Elbrus, Elbrus my beloved,/ You were not moved by my greeting,/ But how ardently, how avidly / My gaze sought for you! . . . / And far away, in my dreams,/ You are there, Elbrus the giant!)

Granted that appropriation of foreign models has always been popular both with the practitioners of Russian literature as well as its scholars, I would still insist that a biased and careless application of fashionable western theories obfuscates rather than illuminates.

VLADIMIR GOLSTEIN  
*Oberlin College*

The author responds:

Vladimir Golstein accuses me of distortion and obfuscation produced by a desire to run with a pack of post-structuralists led by Edward Said. The irresponsibility of this charge should be evident to any open-minded reader of my article. Golstein avoids the core of my argument about the tendency to feminize and eroticize Georgia—the analysis of Shishkov's depiction of Georgia as a beauty awaiting a Russian male in *Ketevana*, and Odoevskii's allegory about tempestuous Georgia's "marriage" to the Russian giant. What meanings do these texts assume in the context of imperialism? And how do they interact with other Russian writings about Georgia and Georgians? These are the central questions which guided my research and led me to investigate numerous literary works, history, memoirs and documents.

Unable to contend with the heart of the matter, Golstein spars at the periphery. He pretends that I rely heavily on Lermontov's metaphor of the rivers as sisters in "Mtsyri." In fact, of course, I cite it only as one significant detail in conformity with

a Russian tendency to foreground women as the representatives of Georgia and even to feminize the land itself. The fraternal trees (mentioned four pages later in the poem) might have been acknowledged, but their exceptional appearance hardly vitiates my central argument about gender and imperial politics. Furthermore, "Mtsyri" itself contradicts the trope of masculinization by likening a Georgian woman to a "svelte poplar." Since the very interesting hero of the poem is not Georgian, he fell outside the compass of my discussion. I wonder, however, about the "sense of brotherhood" and "loving family" which Golstein attributes to the Georgian landscape explored by the tribal orphan. Nature is menacing as well as pastoral in the poem, as witnessed by the presence of wild animals and the boy's own impulse to attack one of them. In addition, Lermontov's dedication explicitly endorsed the annexation of Georgia as the protective act of a benefactor. How does this jibe with "brotherhood?" Does Golstein perhaps see in "Mtsyri" an adumbration of the Soviet doctrine of Russia as the "big brother" presiding over a happy family of nations?

With respect to "The Demon," Golstein is outraged at the assumption that the Demon had sexual intercourse with Tamara. Of course, the poem is full of lofty import about revolt from God. But for all his tragic overtones, the Demon acts as a cosmic rake, as Joe Andrew has stressed in the feminist reading cited in my article. In light of Golstein's response, I might mention as well a critic totally outside feminist tendencies, Iurii Mann, who viewed the Demon as a type of incubus (*Poetika romantizma*, 1976). As for the trope of the knife so crucial to my reading, Golstein seems unaware of recurrent phallic symbolism in Lermontov. The correlation between womanizing and prowess with a sword is blatant in "Izmail-Bey," for example. More generally, Lermontov's recurrent metaphor of poetry as a dagger clearly invites analysis as a displacement of purely sexual notions of virility onto a loftier plane of cultural identity. Finally, let us not forget how an irrepressibly phallic imagination helped send Lermontov to his grave. According to numerous memoirs, Martynov challenged Lermontov to the duel largely because the poet refused to stop making jokes about the big dagger his future assailant had taken to wearing: particularly outraged by the poet's raillery in the presence of women. Martynov shot to kill.

With respect to my argument about Russian literature's tendency to disparage and marginalize Georgian men, Golstein once again tries to use an isolated example to contest a general thesis. I might have cited the fabricator of a weapon in Lermontov's "The Dagger" but precisely as a tiny, one-line exception to the rule of impotence and sloth. Gudal in "The Demon" conforms to this rule, a fact in no way altered by the guardian angel's failure to protect Tamara. As for Golstein's remark about monasteries, I never say that Russian writers totally erased Christianity in Georgia but rather that they minimized or eclipsed it in rendering the country oriental.

In his final objection, Golstein attempts to annul the significance of Alexei Meisner's lines about Elbrus. The literary Caucasus for the most part favored tropes of masculinization for mountains (as I have pointed out at some length in "The Creation of an Imaginative Caucasian Geography," *Slavic Review* 45 [Fall 1986]). However, Meisner contradicted the norm and in this way lends support to my argument about the impulse to feminize and eroticize Georgia.

Finally, I must object to Golstein's gross misrepresentation of my article as an effort to provide "a generalized picture of Russian literature." In fact, I treat only a sub-section of the nineteenth century literary Caucasus and declare in my first paragraph that major works about Muslim tribes show a depth of ambivalence which cannot be adequately elucidated by the principles set forth in Said's *Orientalism*. Modes of resistance to tsarist ideology about civilizing the tribes actually absorb much of my attention in a book now in preparation. It so happens, however, that full complicity in imperialism was the rule in literature about Georgia.

SUSAN LAYTON  
*Institut d'études slaves*