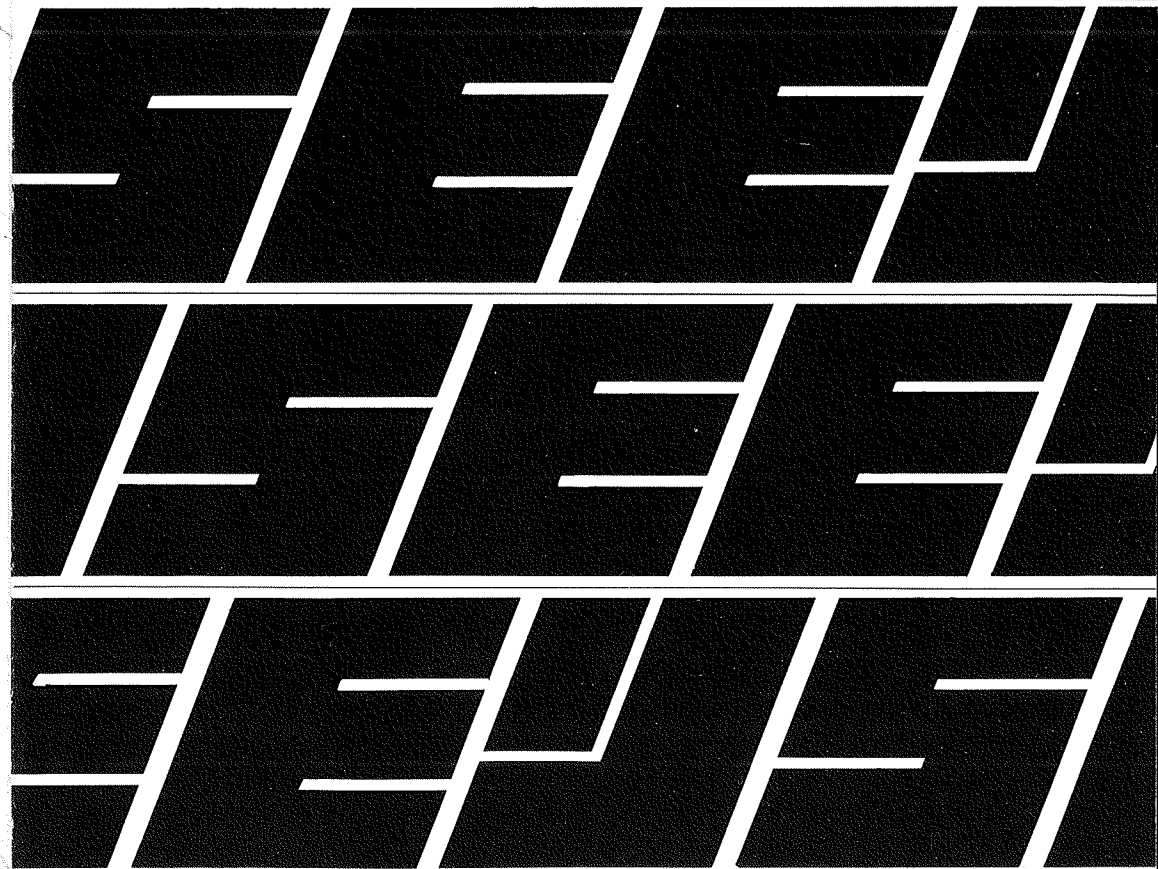


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Department of Slavic Lan-
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scholarship in the original languages. *SEEJ* does not pub-
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Andrey Biely. *The Silver Dove*. Tr. and introd. George Reavey. Pref. Harrison E.
Salisbury. New York: Grove Press, 1974. xlii, 419, \$4.95 (paper).

With the publication of *The Silver Dove*, which joins *St. Petersburg*, tr. John Cournos
(New York: Grove Press, 1959) and *Kotik Letaev*, tr. Gerald Janacek (Ann Arbor:
Ardis, 1971), the American reader now has the completed triangle of Andrej Belyj's
first and finest novels. The text used, *Serebrjanyj golub'* (2 vols.; Berlin: Epoxa,
1922), was originally published serially in 1909 in *Vesy*, but this novel was not ex-
tensively rewritten as was *Petersburg*. The front matter contains valuable informa-
tion for the American reader on Belyj's life and works with special reference to his
theory of art. A few minor points. Salisbury's characterization of Stalin as a "true
Dove" is curious. Reavey is slightly off in his date for Belyj's *Art of Gogol'* (1934,
not 1935), and Mixail Sergeevič Solov'ev was the originator of Belyj's nom de plume,
not Sereža Solov'ev. His explanation that "*Glossalolia*" (i.e., *Glossalolija*) was in-
spired by the "babel of wartime tongues" encountered by Belyj during his years in
Switzerland contradicts Belyj's own admission that his work was an offspring of
Rudolf Steiner's theory and practice of eurythmy in Dornach.

Belyj's prose poses often insurmountable problems for the translator, although
The Silver Dove is more traditional and consequently less demanding than the later
novels. Reavey's translation is for the most part smooth and flowing and sometimes
even brilliant. Notwithstanding his desire to "grasp [Belyj's] rhythm" and also his
disclaimer that he has been "prevailed upon to dim some of the verbal sound effects,"
distortion occurs. It is typified perhaps by Reavey's annoying translation of *moj
geroj* as "our hero." Indeed, Petr Dar'jal'skij, "our hero," is transposed from a work
dominated by Belyj's rhythmic repetitions into a version marked by an apparently
conscious avoidance of repetition. Inconsistencies and carelessness mar the rhyth-
mic unity of Belyj's prose and the spatial orientation of the work. For example,
Petr's friend Čuxolka, the mystical anarchist, is on his way to "Dondiukov" on page
154 but later (p. 174) on the road to "Kondyukov." Belyj's *Cizik-Ajzik* appears as
"Tzizig Isaac" on page 91 and as "Tzizig Izic" on page 259. Kudejarov, the carpenter
and leader of the Dove sect, has a two-sided Gogolian face, one side of which always
seems to be saying, "Ja vot, ux, kak!" This is alternately translated as "Look what
I've done!" (p. 32), "I did it, och! and how!" (p. 38), "I'm just full of it!" (p. 65), and
"Didn't I do it well?" (p. 346). Repetition in chapter titles has a clear unifying func-
tion for Belyj, but Reavey insists on using synonyms: *proisšestvie* is "events" (plural!)
on page 207 but "phenomenon" on page 211; *žit'ë-byt'ë* is now "Life As It Is Lived"
(p. 183), now "way of living" (p. 187); *nado-ne nado* is rendered "Necessary—Un-
necessary" on page 269 but as "Not that way!" and "That is the only way!" on page
276. A constant refrain in the Russian is "nevozvratnoe vremja" which appears
eight times in two pages and which Reavey interprets as "times without return,"
"time without return," and once as "time with return" (p. 43). Likewise, "vostok"
becomes "west" (p. 48), a particularly unfortunate mistake in a novel where the
theme of East vs. West is of paramount importance. In Petr's horoscope, the sig-
nificance of which has been carefully analyzed by Samuel D. Cioran, *The Apoca-
lyptic Symbolism of Andrej Belyj* (SP&R, 274; The Hague: Mouton, 1973), "Rak" is
cited once as "Cancer" and elsewhere as "Scorpio" (pp. 237, 238). Finally, "Tol'ko
kakie že u nego mogli s etim mednikom proizojti priključenija?" is rendered as "Only
what was his bond with the carpenter?" (p. 373.) Reavey misinterprets Petr's own
premonition of death—the adventures—at the hands of the coppersmith, Suxorukov.

Then there are omissions. Matrena Semenova, the carpenter's mistress and Petr's
future lover, first appears in what is described in Russian as "krasnyj, belymi jab-

lokami, platok; the translation "red-and-white-spotted kerchief" (p. 13) by dropping the reference to white apples masks a recurring leitmotif. Words, phrases, paragraphs, and in one instance an *entire page* are inexplicably absent in the English text. The missing page, mentioned by Simon Karlinsky in his review in the *New York Times* (27 Oct. 1974, sec. 7, pp. 1-2), contains Petr's vision of the Dove Child which was to be the fruit of his union with Matrena and is thus essential for an understanding of his subsequent flight from the secret sect, not to mention the later references to this vision. The omitted page may be found in volume 2 of the Russian edition, page 154; it goes on page 347 of the English text.

Reavey's failure to include peculiarities of speech which Belyj employs to identify his characters is regrettable but admittedly unavoidable in places. General Čižikov has a speech defect and cannot pronounce *r* or *l*; for example: "Vsjudju v akgestnosti ag'jajnye bezpogjadki: b'jagopojučno gi u vas?" Reavey ignores the statement on "er" and "el" which he translates on page 144 and renders this sentence simply, "There are agrarian disorders everywhere in the neighborhood: is everything all right with you?" (p. 146.) Reavey's single attempt to convey Čižikov's speech is in the sentence "Ah, I'm so *vlad*, so *vlad*. . .!" (p. 142.) A similar difficulty occurs when Luka Silič Eropegin, who has been poisoned by the Doves, attempts to tell his wife something and manages only the syllable "OTR"; this she interprets as her maiden name, Otriganiev (p. 410). Was there no way to make the reader understand Eropegin's unsuccessful efforts to indicate that he has been poisoned (*otravili*)?

Belyj once wrote in *Arabeski* (M: Musaget, 1911), p. ii: "Let those read me for whom I am comprehensible and interesting; among them, I believe, will be found persons who are capable of transmitting my thoughts to the masses in a more generally accessible form." Belyj's prose, as well as his thought, still awaits a worthy interpreter.

Thomas R. Beyer, Jr., Middlebury College

Olga R. Hughes. *The Poetic World of Boris Pasternak*. (Princeton Essays in European and Comparative Literature.) Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974. xv, 192, \$9.00.

Reading this book, I was reminded of Borges' remark that Walt Whitman's work is "less valuable as poetry than as the mark of an exemplary poet who was himself created by it." Professor Hughes devotes considerable attention in her book to Pasternak's famous discussion (which Borges echoes) of the "Romantic manner" in *Safe Conduct* (part 3, sec. 11), but she evidently does not accept, or at least take at face value, Pasternak's renunciation of the Romantic manner: for the subject of her book is the Poet as advertised by his work, or at least by a tendentious selection from the work. Of course Pasternak invites this treatment, not because he was "inconsistent" (though Hughes says that he was), but because history interfered—in more ways than one. For one must also consider the historical context of *Safe Conduct* (1929-31), something which Hughes does not do. This naiveté is the obverse of that popular coin which is tendered for the poetry in the course of its devaluation (the reverse is pedestrianism, the use of poetry to illustrate platitudes).

"In this study," Hughes says in her introduction, "Pasternak's theoretical statements concerning art and the artist are used in conjunction with his meta-poetry and the numerous depictions of the poet in verse and prose." Period. Used for what? I was still wondering at the end of the book. Part of my problem was that