this tradition. His plays present a complex and differentiated social world, where character retains its integrity and everyone, even secondary figures, demands our attention and interest. He may not give us "life as it is"—he was too modest to claim the knowledge of what life "is"—but he comes close.

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Maria Deppermann. *Andrej Belyj's ästhetische Theorie des schöpferischen Bewusstseins: Symbolisierung und Krise der Kultur um die Jahrhundertwende.* (Slavistische Beiträge, 150.) Munich: Otto Sagner, 1982. v, 256 (paper).

This work is an important contribution to the rapidly expanding literature about Andrej Belyj's life and work. Ms. Deppermann continues and complements studies in German of Johannes Holthusen and Jutta Pflanzl by providing a systematic and comprehensive analysis of Belyj's aesthetic theory. The significance of her work lies in its ability to impose an order and organization on the thoughts and statements of Belyj concentrated primarily in several hundred articles written between 1902 and 1910, but which continued to make occasional appearances in Belyj's writings up until his death in 1934.

Deppermann shows an excellent knowledge of the secondary literature on Belyj and more importantly a deep understanding of those who influenced him at the turn of the century. Her introduction examines reactions to Belyj's theories, from his contemporaries Brjusov and Stepun up until Cioran's work on his symbolism, and she concludes this introduction with a statement of unanswered questions and areas for her study. Part I continues with three chapters which place Belyj in clearer focus for contemporary readers. First there is the general historical and philosophical context of European culture and its own crisis of culture at the turn of the century. One by one Deppermann examines the crises of consciousness, language, and society in which Belyj found himself. Chapter 2 examines Belyj in the specifically Russian context of the "intelligencija." Chapter 3 discusses Belyj's own specific reaction to the problem: his recognition and consciousness of the crisis, his response in aesthetic practice, and his peculiar individualized mixture of the natural-scientific method with the philosophical. Chapter 4 outlines briefly but incisively four voices of Belyj: the scientific, the philosophical, the rhetorical-situational and the artistic. This identification provides a valuable key to the paradoxical and seemingly chaotic nature of Belyj's writings on art.

Part II also has an introduction and four chapters. The introduction sets the three major elements of Belyj's theory of symbolism: the sense of reality, the artistic method, the justification or "legitimation" of these artistic principles and practice. Again the theory is methodically examined by answering the questions of what is reality, what is art, and how they are related. Next comes a chapter on "symbolization" and its gradual development coinciding with the three different phases in Belyj's philosophy. One of the more fascinating chapters concerns Belyj's prolific attempts to defend his work, called by Deppermann a "Bedürfnis nach Legitimation." She examines his reliance upon the methods of the natural sciences and in particular mathematics to indicate the validity of his own work. One is struck by the thought that Belyj's own theory and practice are in his own way an attempt to emulate his father. The other validation of Belyj's symbolism is found in Ibsen and Nietzsche. Chapter 4 of Part II concerns the transformational aspect of art, "preobraženie," in particular as it occurs in the reader. A final chapter attempts to summarize both verbally and graphically Belyj's aesthetic theory.

method is that of an iconographer before a medieval triptych, a cabalist worrying the Talmud, a Freudian making his way through the tangled overdeterminedness of the dream. Unlike these, however, he does not subscribe to any controlling theory of the text, literary, metaphysical, or psychological, except for the view that the plays are symbolic, or that symbols lurk behind their naturalistic surface, so that words must mean more than they seem to. As a result his essay takes the shape of a string of aperçus. The conclusion, that a central theme of Čexov's theater is "usurpation"—others have called it dispossession—reads like an afterword.

Many of his observations are interesting. Peace's meticulousness leads him to study things critics normally overlook. He pays careful attention to Čexov's settings, those implied in the dialogue as well as made explicit in the stage directions, and his remarks should be helpful to directors and audiences. He is particularly suggestive about imagery, noticing patterns besides the more obvious: the moon and the sun in *The Sea Gull,* migratory birds and snow in *The Three Sisters.* To these we may add gestures of speech and action which, when repeated, take on the image's function as metonym or metaphor: the importance of eating in *Uncle Vanja,* the way the characters of *The Cherry Orchard* confuse the animate/inanimate distinction of the Russian accusative, the word play on the root "rod" in the same play. His scrutinizing eye picks out telling details: Act II of *Uncle Vanya* ends on the forbidding word *nel'zja,* striking a note of impossibility upon which chords are played in Act III; the offstage sound of a shepherd's reed at the conclusion of Act I of *The Cherry Orchard* invokes a climate of pastoral, continued but turning ominous in Act II with the striking of the mournful string.

Though Peace's close readings will provide food for thought to those who teach and write about Čexov, they nevertheless give a skewed image of his art. His compulsion to lend ulterior significance to every word and action, besides resulting in numerous arguable assertions, empties the plays of the randomness of actual life. They turn into a series of hieroglyphs to be decoded for hidden meanings, a jigsaw puzzle where every piece must be placed in its proper slot. Peace is dismissive of the naturalistic reading of the plays—the ordinary reader's and viewer's response that "everything is as it is in life"—but Čexov had the uncanny and unsurpassed knack of giving poetic richness and symbolic nuance to mimetic representations that are totally convincing in their authenticity, their rendering of felt life. As Peace's exhaustive rationalism deprives the plays of the play of life, it also takes away their mystery, as much as he insists upon its presence. Everything is subject to ruthless explanation. It is not enough that a map of Africa is as oddly out of place in his estate office—Čexov writes "unnecessary"—as is Vanja in the world. Africa, as we all know, is hot, and heat for Peace means passion. If Kulygin of *The Three Sisters,* one of Čexov's pedantic schoolteachers, dots his conversation with Latin, it is more than comic affectation. Since the Tsarist government demanded knowledge of Latin and Greek as a subterfuge to restrict educational opportunitites, Kulygin's Latin idiocies must have "pointed social relevance." When Firs comments in *The Cherry Orchard,* "We used to have generals, barons, and admirals dancing at our balls, but now we send for the post-office clerk and the station master, and even they don't come too willingly," the remark does not merely refer to the estate's decline in fortune; rather "the presence of such figures is in itself significant—they represent the modern world of rapid communication . . ." (128). A rose is never a rose is never a rose. Everything "reflects," as in a room of mirrors.

Or it "echoes." Characters exist to "comment" on each other. Thus in *The Cherry Orchard* Gaev is "an obvious comic shadow for the childlike and naively romantic aspects" of Ljubov' Andreevna; Piščik is "the embodiment of her feckleness"; Epixodov is a "comic projection" of "the tragic overtones" of her life, and so on (125–26). Now we may ask why not the other way around, why doesn't Ljubov' Andreevna "comment" on the characters around her? Or more to the point, why can't Gaev, Piščik, and Epixodov be romantic, feckle and foolish in their own right? Products of the same culture, facing the same social situation, creations of the same artist, they are bound to have things in common. There are writers (Gogol', Poe, E. T. A. Hoffman, Kafka) for whom character is not delimited, turning into psychological projection, comic humor, or symbolic emblem. Čexov, for all his symbolic overtones, does not belong to

There are clear indications in the work of meticulous scholarship as well as breadth and depth of knowledge of those who influenced Belyj. The some fifty pages of notes remind one of Belyj's own notes to *Simvolizm.* The bibliography covers a broad range of philosophers as well as writers, and Deppermann is at home with Schopenhauer, Rickert, and Nietzsche as well as with V. Ivanov, Solov'ev, and Belyj. This is a true intellectual history of the times and of Belyj's debt and contribution to them. The systematic organization of the work provides a context in which to explore the essence of Belyj's thought and present it clearly to interested readers. Along the way the author provides a number of insights which help to clarify much of the confusion which surrounds Belyj. I particularly enjoyed her isolation of four voices and her sense that Belyj dealt with the problems of content and form not "systematically" but "perspectively."

Belyj scholarship, in particular information about his life and thought, seems to be increasing exponentially. Along with several collections of the past few years and such exhaustive works as Kozlik's study of Belyj and Anthroposophy, this work will serve as one more key to literary scholars seeking to unlock the mysteries of Belyj's own prose and poetry.

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David M. Bethea. *Khodasevich: His Life and Art.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983. xxiv, 380, $27.50. [Bibliogr., index]

Xodasevič's new day has come. Recent reprints and editions of his poetry, critical writings and letters, and new scholarly articles on him have brought his name to prominence once again. Bethea's literary biography (the first on Xodasevič in any language) is the final important step in this renewal of his reputation. Whether one agrees with Nabokov's statement of 1962 that Xodasevič is "the greatest Russian poet that the twentieth century has yet produced," which I think is hardly justifiable, we have nevertheless until now not taken Xodasevič's measure with proper seriousness. Bethea's book does this very well.

While Bethea gives due attention to Xodasevič's memoirs and literary studies, primarily of Puškin and Deržavin, he rightly focuses on the three mature collections of poems, *Putëm zerna* (1920), *Tjažëlaja lira* (1922) and "Evropejskaja noč'" (published as the last section of *Sobranie stixov,* 1927). Each of these forms the focal point of a major chapter in the book. Since Xodasevič was not a prolific poet and these three collections are relatively brief, it is possible for the author to discuss a majority of the poems in detail and indeed to quote a goodly portion of them in their entirety as well. Bethea is a commentator with a gift for clarity, precision, and succinctness. Nowhere did I feel he missed a point or, on the other hand, belabored one. In keeping with Xodasevič's own manner, Bethea's remarks are telling but brief. Commentary tends to run toward "content," carefully and convincingly establishing the personal impetus behind the poems. Yet while the real-life biography which is embodied in a lyric persona is traceable to some extent in most poets, Xodasevič's "self-ironizing, multi-voiced speaker" (347) provides an unusual critical challenge. The ironic speaker is slippery, but Bethea is never found empty-handed, making claims for which he has no evidence because the poet had eluded him.

Nor is the formal side of Xodasevič's craft neglected. But since Xodasevič' was conservative and used mainly traditional forms, little need be said. Bethea provides one exhaustive formal analysis—of "Ballada" (1921 [241–48]); this was previously published in *SEEJ* 25, No. 3

(57–65)—in which he covers rhythmic and phonetic structure, including a chart of sound patterning, all carefully linked to theme and meaning. This establishes the poet's mastery of his craft. Elsewhere much briefer comments on form are sufficient. The poems discussed are given first in cyrillic, then in the author's English translation. The translations are literal and accurate, but not very poetic, even leaving aside the problem of rhyme. Something better perhaps could have been managed with the rhythm or style to help readers who could not appreciate the Russian to feel the poetry more directly. But this is a minor inadequacy in what is clearly a definitive study of one of the century's major poets.

It is interesting to speculate on the effect such an important study will have on Xodasevič's reputation. Sometimes such studies can cap, rather than stimulate, renewed attention. I, for example, came to this book with the hope that what had been cold respect for a major figure would turn into warm admiration. Alas, that did not happen. Perhaps this is merely a matter of taste, but while I now feel I understand Xodasevič well, I suspect I am not alone in finding it difficult to love the bilious temperament of a poet of great talent who was born too late to find a proper historical niche for his muse. Although Bethea several times mentions Baratynskij in passing, he does not note what seems to me a marked similarity in the two poets' muses: "krasavicej eë ne nazovut." Bethea, however, presents all the reasons for Xodasevič's fateful disaffection.

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Sharon Leiter. *Akhmatova's Petersburg.* Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. 215 pp., $20.00 (cloth).

This attractive book with several photographs treats the theme of Petersburg-Leningrad in the poetry of Anna Axmatova who transformed the Petersburg myth, inherited from Puškin, Gogol', Dostoevskij, Blok, and Belyj, to conform to her own poetic vision. A brief preface and an introduction link facts of Axmatova's biography with her poetic practice and existing literary tradition. In Sharon Leiter's view Axmatova played a culminating role in Petersburg's literary history. One or two epigraphs precede the introduction, the five chapters, and the conclusion.

Chapter One, "The Early Petersburg Love Poems," opens with a good comparison of the city poetry of the French Symbolists with the vision of Brjusov and Blok of the "city of delirium," decadence, and spiritual chaos. Leiter immediately disassociates her stance on Axmatova's cityscapes as metaphoric transformations from that of Sam Driver on the city as a realistic backdrop for the love motifs and the drama. She therefore sets out to uncover the figurative uses for Petersburg in Axmatova's poetry while discounting any "accuracy of her observations" for this "fictional poetic" city. In the early love lyrics Dr. Leiter finds that "city images function as an emotional map, defining boundaries, designating sacred and non-sacred places." The dominant love theme in the collection *Evening* provides "momentary glimpses" of the city whose "outline emerges" in *Rosary* and strengthens in *White Flock* to designate "spatial dichotomies separating "the heroine from her beloved" and "the realm of love" from "non-love." The grouping of poems is temporal, both in terms of history and Axmatova's time of creation. Numerous examples illustrate the points under discussion. Rarely is a poem presented as a unit; instead, Leiter quotes relevant lines as the analysis progresses. The omnipresent Neva River in the Petersburg love poems serves as a barometer to the speaker's situation,