

SLAVIC REVIEW

Mark D. Steinberg, Editor

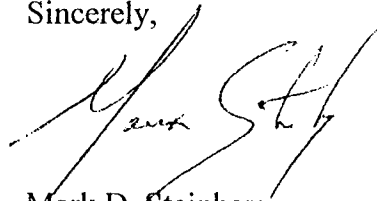
INTERDISCIPLINARY QUARTERLY OF RUSSIAN, EURASIAN, AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

September 7, 2006

Dear Contributor:

I am pleased to enclose one tear sheet of your book review that appeared in the most recent issue of *Slavic Review*, vol. 65, no. 3 (Fall 2006). (Books reviewed and their reviewers are also listed on our web site: <http://www.slavicreview.uiuc.edu/>). The membership of the AAASS and the readership of the *Slavic Review*--more than 3,500 individuals and institutions--highly value the efforts of scholars like you who provide these careful evaluations of current scholarship. Your generosity is essential to us all. Thank you again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark D. Steinberg', written over a horizontal line.

Mark D. Steinberg
Editor

Enclosure

legacy, the essays chronologically span the period from the early nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century.

The essays can be grouped into those that address Khomiakov's place in Orthodox Church culture proper and those that trace Khomiakov's imprints on Russia's culture more broadly defined. Essays by Archimandrite Luke (Murianka), dean of Holy Trinity Seminary, and Paul Valliere are the volume's foundational pieces. They illustrate the complexity inherent in evaluating Khomiakov's intellectual roots. On the one hand, Archimandrite Luke emphasizes the formative role that Khomiakov's religious background played in the development of his thought—namely, his upbringing, his deep knowledge of patristic writers, and his experience of "church." Valliere, on the other hand, while not disagreeing, focuses on the broader external influences at work in shaping Khomiakov as a philosopher and theologian. He argues for understanding Khomiakov as a quintessentially modern thinker, one whose ideas were not "a natural unfolding of his Orthodox spirituality" but a product of "theological pragmatism" in staunch response to modernity (131). Sergei Khoruzhii considers Khomiakov's notions of organism and *sobornost'* in light of the Palamite teaching on personhood and thereby situates Khomiakov in the neo-patristic tradition. Richard Mammana and Richard Tempest reflect on Khomiakov's intellectual development and influence in light of two of his most prominent western Christian counterparts—the convert from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, I. S. Gagarin, and the Anglican sympathizer with Orthodoxy, William Palmer.

Three essays discuss the impact of Khomiakov's work in other aspects of Russia's culture. An essay by Viacheslav Koshelev examines a debate between Khomiakov and Aleksandr Pushkin over the figure of Peter the Great and his role in Russia's history, a debate that Koshelev maintains foreshadowed later exchanges between Slavophiles and Westernizers. A thought-provoking essay by Natalia Kazakova explores the gradual "vulgarization" of Slavophile ideals in the early twentieth century by tracing the religious philosopher Vasilii Rozanov's reversal with respect to Khomiakov's ideas and rhetorical style. The last essay in the volume, by Valeria Z. Nollan, offers a creative though somewhat speculative reading of what aesthetically united the composer Sergei Rachmaninoff and the theologian Khomiakov.

A brief essay by Marc Raeff introduces the volume and outlines the historical and intellectual setting in which Khomiakov lived and worked. The volume concludes with remarks by Robert Bird, who deftly re-synthesizes the essays in a brief piece of his own that positions Khomiakov at the interface between Russia's Orthodox theological and religious philosophical traditions.

Containing essays ranging from the descriptive pieces by Mammana and Tempest to the more analytical ones by Valliere and Khoruzhii, this volume offers a good introduction to those interested in an overview of Khomiakov's long-lasting impact on Russian culture. While appreciative of his genius, the essays for the most part avoid panegyrics and are duly critical in their approach. Both Tempest and Kazakova, for instance, address the issue of Khomiakov's sometimes harsh polemical style and its potential to alienate those who were in dialogue with him, both during his lifetime and posthumously. While perhaps not suitable for undergraduates, since three of the most important essays are in Russian (those by Khoruzhii, Koshelev, and Kazakova), the volume offers a valuable resource for those teaching about Khomiakov and for graduate students seeking a brief and accessible overview of some of the broader issues characterizing Khomiakov's legacy.

VERA SHEVZOV
Smith College

The Story Dance: Unity and Gesture in Andrey Bely's Petersburg. By Timothy Langen. Studies in Russian Literature and Theory. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005. xiv, 191 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Figures. \$75.95, hard bound.

This is a book of critical connections, associations of sound and sense, of Andrei Bely's own theoretical writings and his novel, of Bely's contemporaries and subsequent schol-

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ars—all in an effort to go from “meaning” to “significance” in the distinction made by E. D. Hirsch. Timothy Langen admits as much when he concludes: “Bely could not possibly have foreseen, let alone intended, every possible connection that his readers would make, and yet it is impossible to read this novel—and especially to re-read it—without perceiving a dense web of connections that the author *might well have intended*” (146, emphasis in the original). Yet Langen is also aware of the dangers of going too far in the search for the relevant: “The difficulty, then, is to know when to *stop* decoding, when to stop looking for hidden worlds behind the seemingly ordinary objects of the novel” (14, emphasis in the original).

Langen succeeds brilliantly. His own critical connections are bold, thought-provoking, enlightening, convincing. His method is to draw on the novel to reach a clearly stated conclusion about Belyi that he then goes on to illustrate. “Bely could not abide philosophy. He visited it, obsessively, sometimes for protracted periods, but he never made a home of it” (27). Belyi’s mind is characterized as “dysfunctional luminescence” (31). Langen leads us first into Belyi’s world(s) of objects that coexist in two separate worlds of existence. Then he illustrates how the novel is constructed around the bomb, armed and primed by geography, a plot, characters, history, language, confusion; add it all up and what do you get: *Petersburg*. Langen’s associations are drawn in part from Belyi but always seem to go one step further. Thus in his section of “Thing,” he points to pyramids; Arthur Schopenhauer, Vladimir Solov’ev, and Rudolf Steiner; and the Greek *sumballein* (throwing together = symbol).

The second section, “Pattern,” highlights Belyi’s integration of his sense of two worlds with the concept that creative patterns are the means to clarification. We are treated to beginnings and endings, the apocalypse and arithmetic, fathers and sons, space and time. The critical reading identifies, elaborates, and convincingly demonstrates the dozens of interconnected elements in Belyi’s multilayered novel. In the final section on “Gesture,” Langen summarizes Belyi’s method, perhaps commenting on his own approach to the novel: “Petersburg will treat its elements, not by keeping them separate (revolution versus reaction, powerful versus weak, sober versus intoxicated) not by squashing them together (with loyal families, loyal government servants, loyal revolutionaries), but by weaving them into and out of contact with one another” (159).

Langen knows his literary criticism, displaying a broad knowledge of critics from Giorgio Agamden to W. K. Wimsatt, and a depth of appreciation for scholars of Belyi from Vladimir Alexandrov to Alexander Woronzoff. Somehow he draws on them all to uncover or create breathtaking new perspectives on the novel. Chemistry gives way to alchemy, sound and sense come together, as the lead “Pb” of Petersburg changes before our eyes into gold “Au.”

Russians celebrated the 125th anniversary of Belyi’s birth in 2005, and this book continues a long tradition of western scholars providing invaluable insight into the mind of one of Russia’s most enigmatic geniuses. Langen’s work is itself one of genius, of brilliant observations and speculations. In adding his own set of interpretations to a novel read more than it is comprehended, Langen enfranchises a new generation of readers who are, in his words, responsible for *Petersburg*’s “perpetual rebirth” (159). The notes, bibliography, and index only enhance the value of this wonderful birthday gift for Belyi.

THOMAS R. BEYER JR.
Middlebury College

Litso Kvadrata: Misterii Kazimira Malevicha. By Innesa Levkova-Lamm. Moscow: “Pinakoteka,” 2004. 208 pp. Notes. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. Paper.

Kazimir Malevich’s work remains difficult to interpret, despite the numerous essays that he wrote on his aims, development, teaching, and even his historical importance. His infamous canvas, *Black Square*, was first displayed at “0,10 The Last Futurist Exhibition” in Petrograd in December 1915. Malevich considered it his most significant work; and it provides the appropriate central focus of Innesa Levkova-Lamm’s book.