the birch

a journal of Eastern European and Eurasian culture



Columbia University □ Spring 2010

creative writing □ literary criticism □ culture & affairs □ photography

editor's note

A lot has happened in the post-Soviet region so far this year. There has been political upheaval in Kyrgyzstan: at the time of writing, the latest news was that the interim government had retaken official buildings from protestors demanding the return of ousted President Bakiev.

There has been violence in other parts of the region as well. Moscow saw its Metro attacked by suicide bombers. Then 96 people, including President Lech Kaczynski, died in a plane crash as Poland's top government officials were on their way to Katyn forest to commemorate the thousands killed there by the Soviet secret police.

And Ukraine began the year with a crucial presidential election, which replaced Viktor Yushchenko with Viktor Yanukovych.

There is a kind of constancy in all this change. The region continues to be fascinating, terribly sad, and confusing. And undergraduates continue to be fascinated, saddened, and confused by the history and politics and culture there—and they continue to study it and write about it, for which *The Birch* exists. Enjoy the issue.



special thanks

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the birch

a national, student-run, undergraduate journal

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Belorusskaya Station in the Moscow Metro

Jenny Jalack

ГУМ

(*GUM*: *Glavnyi Universalnyi Magazin*)

Red Square, Moscow, Russia

Lauren DeVestern



Home for the Holidays

Takeshi Atwater-Kaji

This past winter, I escaped the New York cold to spend three weeks in my hometown of San Francisco. I grew up in the city's Richmond District, a historically Russian neighborhood. In the Richmond, bakeries, delis, and restaurants advertise themselves with bilingual window signs, children beg their parents for Dadu ice cream, and babushkas in head scarves guide grocery-laden pushcarts home from the produce markets. As I made my way home from the bus stop one particularly balmy evening, I couldn't resist popping into Moscow and Tbilisi Bakery Store on Geary Street. I walked in a bit hesitantly, as if I was doing something I wasn't supposed to be doing.

(in Russian)
Me: Good evening. How much do potato pirozhki cost?
Stoic woman behind counter: Two dollars each.
Me: I'll have one, thank you.
Stoic woman behind counter: (mutters unintelligible question)
Me: What?
Stoic woman behind counter: (repeats question)
Me: Yes, please.

Stoic woman behind counter fetches potato pirozhok, places it in paper bag, and puts it in the microwave for thirty seconds. I hand her two dollar coins.

Me: Here you are.
Stoic woman behind counter: Thank you.
Me: Do you have . . . (fumbles for Russian word) business card (English)?
Stoic woman behind counter: карточки? Yes.
Me: Thank you.

As I walked home, I was no longer on 17th Avenue, but walking down the streets of St. Petersburg, my chin tucked resolutely down, arms crossed over a hefty shin-length winter coat, brows furrowed under a five-sided cap made from some large Siberian rodent. I walk across a bridge and laugh the smelly laugh of an old Russian man as he sees his wife's wig fall off in public.

. . .

Whenever a car approaches the intersection as I begin to cross Clement Street, I always think that maybe the driver doesn't see me—it's always possible. This time, however, I imagined the emergency response scene. *He was hit by a silver BMW. He clutched in his hand an empty brown paper bag, transparent with grease. The half-eaten potato pirozhok lay thirty feet away, splattered across the windshield of a parked UPS truck; the impact had propelled it through the air.* I laughed, my mouth full of half-chewed potato-grease-bread, and continued down the street.

The Honey-Hive

RJ Ingram

I
Bear, oh Bear, you walk below the beech
of silken leaves, fragrant blossoms. Hunting
castle treasure, merry figures of glue
and gold. Scary Bear, fangs of fire,

guillotine jaw, scrape the bark of mountain
trees, bees, the bees, Bear, you plead,
"Please, the bees" and knock blocks,
and terror—stories born. Sunken ships

send bears off, to city limits, treeless groves.
Seek the scents of honey dreams,
deviant bear, cold mattress ground
holds Bear. Care to share the sin

wine? Your honey spell smells divine.
Such a spell, castle smell burns
pages I choose to tell: simple story
from folklore trees of Bear, and Bee.

i
Castles, castles, once a petal,
under morning trees, bright and bold,
still a blossom of golden bottles.

Amber ants etch into tree rings;
one mushroom kingdom shades
two violet eyes, a blue bell nose

sneeze in resin and ashy dhows
to sail their three islands, a cap, pen,
and grandmother gown. Four's a tree

for ants five's the tree for me. Six,
six, unworthy six, finds the home
for Bee, a clever quirk, a father

too with seven, on the way, eight
branches for birds perch and nine
leaves for ladies to coo and munch,

ten the tops of honey castle tips, tip
tops for kerns and myrrh mortar,
still below Bear waits for six and ten.

II
My grandmother was a bear too
with sticky fingers of marzipan,
sweet stinky armpits below argyle
lines and designs. Yes, her frail pocket

book hid an impetuous past, but I'm sure,
without a doubt, her celadon nails,
cerulean hair, and Monday night bowling
was meant to cover up truth—

Truth that she was the missing link.
Man evolved—no, grew out of her wool
eiderdown lap and crawled
through Russian tundra, primordial trees,

found hobbies, ice-skating, or rolling on hip-
hop boxes, soap boxes alike. These bear-men
scrawled letters and numbers on trees,
hoping the keeper would leave so the bees

could be left for their thieving. My grandmother,
The Bear of Russian lore could stand on two feet,
one paw in the air, recite poetry backwards,
and dance until the daylight was over.

ii
Castles, Castles, morning tree
once a petal, bright and bold,
still a blossom of golden bottles.

But more about the steady Bee
who feigns a heart and hearted
spark to work and grimly toil, cower

over honey-hive's castle and salient
towers. He fights and carries
buckets home with bread and wine.

The wine, the wine, oh supply
the wine—golden apple wine
of rich multiply. Give a simmer

stir the pot, the grease, for Bee
a moment glance for wine, and work
alone. He loads the tree for cycle

cells, a carrion of poppies, roses,
sweet sandalwood tulips, still sage.
The worker Bee tends the colony

trends to see The Bear below. Snout
in air, stout beware, of castles, castles—
more wine for Bee!

III
No, no, no, the bees often tell the bears.
The cubs romp and play like quirks
looking for trouble spots, and havoc follows,
seeping in and out like yeasted bread.

The bees look down from turrets high
and watch the ramble beasts pretend
their forest wood replaced by pirate seas,
sailing through thickets of waves. No, no, no,

the voices scream from above like reason;
loons and starlings begin to look, intrigued,
amused at the little folk topped in trees
cackling at the plots. The bears below

still fill out the tax forms wrong and elect
an old hat for office. It sits awake, enthroned,
agape, a fez with plumage and streamers
thrown by the bears. Monarch-Hat holds its furry fists

above the cold spindles of trees and bears. No, no,
No, the bees scream as the heralds march.
An apiary makes little room for a war,
but a castle? Yes, much can be done in a castle.

iii
Castles, castles, still a blossom,
bright and bold, once a petal
under morning trees of golden bottles.

And now the tepid Bear who child-
meek waits below the trunk, under
weights and burs for timely manor to take

hold the hive. A grimace of wind
from brush gave a gift to Bear,
a solemn sword, a sweet delight

to give The Bear a treat. Candy
wrapped in cellophane was the comb
to him, a tinsel trout, omnipresent smell

of Bee's hard earned milk and wine.
Bugaboo bear does not see little Bee,
angry from fallen castles, he only eats

the pain away, the law, harm, sting,
fur, flowers, golden apples, sting, broken
towers, sting, wait and awake, The Bear.

IV
The man there at the bar is any man,
an every man. He keeps cup of licorice,
and picks at anise rice with bamboo
chords—empty spoons. The every man

waits below his bar stool as the fruit
of sun ripens in the compost. He walks
back to the golden apiary, a belted book behind.
He knows Bear is there and needs more time

with wine. To get a bear drunk: a marvelous
feat, a tactic otherwise unconsidered.
But this particular bear drank the honey—
wine, the city's wine in fact. Every man

is sure the beast will drink to a stupor,
and once asleep with a drunken fill,
will dream of bees and bars for hours,
exploiting the creature is easy. Back at home:

The every man calls every man he knows
to help aid him in his journey. A bucket here,
a siphon there, help fill the troth again,
but this time Bear will die, and every man will win.

iv
Castles, Castles, still golden bottles
bright and bold, once a blossom,
under morning tree petals,

now just broken bottles of honey
and gold. The Keeper came with
kingdom reign to inspect the rubble:

fallen demon, drunk and sticky,
an ashen tree, an ebony trough, still
a comb—laid to rest. Inside:

The Bee? no one could tell,
The Keeper shed a tear. The city
folk came, flowers in hand, to mourn

the loss of Bees. A cart of Bear,
still suffering from the drink,
carried off to northern forests.

All still in the apiary now, alone
in the clockwork of hive, a Bee
to wait for Keeper's return.

V
The Bear and every man fought
until the sunrise, both filled with wine
and honey, both angry at the foe. Bear
swings hammer arms and man wields

a victorious blade. Each keeping pride
and stance, neither backing down. Every man
waits, and waits for the basted Bear to fall.
Bees wake from hard-earned naps to see

The Bee and hound, pulling down
until The Bear begins to falter
stepping in the mud, man keeps a steady
hand to push the black beast down. Bee

flies to aid the drunken Russian farmer
and sees a paw to sting, a muzzle, open jaw.
Sting, The Bear, sting, the paw, the hand,
thumb, palm, toe, nose, and pen. Sting

foe, villain, and scorn them until
the end. Music plays as The Bear falls,
neighbors clap and help every man
keeps a cart under The drunken Bear.

v
Castles, castles, bright and bold
once a petal under morning trees
still a blossom, golden bottles.

Myrrh ebony towers afloat sapling
young eyes, to pierce, tousle round
the Bumble branch cords.

Ah, now The Bee, the foil, a lute
crashing down from honey-hive
home. To loosen and leave

a broken clock on the wall—
still. This joyous ramp many
dirigible bears make old honey-

hive a prize, golden with liquor,
holds The Bee, thumb sized,
in palm. Still and cautious

the boughs and brambles sit
waiting for pitch to pitch, Bear
and Bee switch, but wait, and wait,

still The Bee, un-moved, crosses
stage left, and bows. The Bear:
applauds, lights down, end scene.



Moscow River

Joey Vergara

Dusk

Greta Starrett

Vladimir Ivanovich Sirotkin thought about fishing as he sat next to his father-in-law. The two men reclined on the faded blue couch fronting the stone fireplace, leafing through various photo albums that lay on the coffee table. There were several photographs of his wife as a child that he had never seen before, of her fishing, which he had never expected and could see that she was embarrassed about now.

"I was hoping he would never show you those." Vera Sergeyevna smiled tightly as she appeared in the doorway of the living room, delicately holding a cup of black tea.

"Vera." Her father pursed his papery lips.

The warmth and light from the crackling fire bathed the left side of Sirotkin's face and neck and he could feel it trickle into his pores. Craning his head a bit, he glanced up at the oil painting of the vast Russian landscape that hung above the fireplace. Brass candleholders flanked each side of the mantle and in the center was a rustic wooden clock with fake yellow flowers surrounding it. He scanned the wall to the left of the fireplace, stopping at the pine end table resting beneath a large, western-facing window. On the table stood an array of framed family photographs and a bouquet of red roses in an antique silver pitcher.

Sirotkin stood and took a couple relaxed steps toward the back door.

Setting her cup of tea down carefully on a corked coaster on the coffee table, Vera heaved a somewhat noisy sigh and approached him.

"I think I am going to see how dinner is cooking!" Her father popped up, wobbling a bit as he did it, and then strolled out of the room.

Grinning, Vera quickly raised her arm and cupped her hand over her mouth to prevent the chuckle from sliding out, but it came anyway and sparked something in Sirotkin's chest.

"My father is probably standing on the other side of the door, listening."

"I don't care." Sirotkin took her fine, manicured hand and pulled her close to him.

Vera touched his cheek tenderly with her smooth, lanky fingers and pressed her lips against his.

Suddenly, his cell phone began to ring.

Raising her hands, Vera stepped away. "I was done anyway. I am going to see if my parents need any help."

Sirotkin had already turned away from her, the cell phone tight against his ear. "Yes?"

"Vladimir Ivanovich?"

"Alexei Illyich," Sirotkin noted, staring out the window, eyeing the small lake where his father-in-law spent countless hours fishing. The loose expression that had been riding his face slid off and

he could feel every muscle in his body constrict as his eyebrows slightly furrowed.

"We need to talk."

His eyes darted in the direction of the kitchen where he could hear his wife laughing at something her parents must have told her. Then, he wrapped his palm around the knob of the back door and thrust it open.

"Okay."

"We found pictures," Alexei Illyich said.

He felt as if a hand clamped down on his stomach at the same time a fist jutted up his esophagus. "I understand."

Earlier in the afternoon there had been several patches of pale blue sky, but now, as the day yawned, fighting the coming dusk, a listless gray had settled in. The air was still and heavy with the scent of approaching snow. Shivering, Sirotkin took a step forward on the chipping white deck, away from the occasional spikes of warm, punctuated laughter that permeated through the cracked window behind him.

Each property in the area seemed to be enveloped by the dense, skeletal forest, the roots of the trees almost tickling the foundations. This particular property was small and unassuming. It would be lost in a sea of trees from a satellite image of the region. The only real access to the small lake was a narrow, man-made beach only a few yards wide with weeds threatening to overtake it, and just to the left was an aging blue dock, an old overturned rowboat resting on the opposite side.

Sirotkin stepped off the deck and headed in the direction of the dock, twigs crunching beneath his feet.

"Photographs?" He stopped at the mouth and crouched down on his haunches, spotting the names carved in the wood. "What do the photographs contain?"

"A man who is not dead."

Closing his eyes, he could see the gush of cold rain, the black of the forest pressed tightly against the mountain road. A man's scratched and bloodied hands tore on the crumbling pavement, his broken ankle still weighted down in the muddy ditch. However, the man's face was nothing but a smudge, a blur that should have meant nothing.

There was one name carved on the dock that consumed him and he traced it carefully, following the grooves with his index finger. It was the name of his youngest daughter, Nastya.

After what had happened to her, Sirotkin should never have been able to forget the man's face. He should have been a scar, a permanent fixture whenever Sirotkin closed his eyes.

"You of all people," Alexei Illyich began.

"I know," Sirotkin interjected, rising up and slowly twisting around, watching as a flake of snow hit the bridge of his nose.

The sound of Nastya's laughter rose in his chest but quickly died again as the cawing of a crow pierced through the heavy winter quiet.

As he hung up the phone, he heard the back door open.

When he looked back at the house, it seemed smaller than usual, muted, almost fading away, and he wondered if he blinked, whether it would disappear altogether.

Vera stepped halfway out onto the deck, rolling her head, scanning the surroundings until her eyes fell upon him. “Volodya!”

Sirotkin looked at her but made no effort to move.

“Volodya!” Vera waved her hand, gesturing for him to come inside.

Still, Sirotkin did not move, his feet were rooted to the ground.

Vera dropped her hand and pursed her lips. “Vladimir?”

“I will be there in a moment,” Sirotkin responded, his voice tight, barely able to bury his anger.

Tilting her head, Vera asked, “Is something wrong?”

The corners of his lips flickered into a barely perceptible frown as he dug his hands into the pockets of his jeans and slowly walked up to the base of the stairs to the deck. He stopped.

“Vladimir?” Vera’s tone was changing, worry and concern pouring into it. “What is it?”

“I have to go.”

Shaking her head and dropping her shoulders, she took a deep breath. “Go? Now?”

Sirotkin nodded.

Vera narrowed her eyes and raised her hand to catch some of the flurries, then brushed her slender palm against her shirt and folded her arms again. “This is about Nastya, isn’t it?”

A warm, inviting glow burning from the living room window suddenly caught his eye, and it was starkly out of place in the gray gloom surrounding it. The teal house seemed pallid, the pagan carvings around the windows that were supposed to protect the home were struggling to keep the cold gray out.

“Yes.”

The nearest bus stop was just about a kilometer down the road, so Sirotkin decided to walk, zipping up his charcoal jacket until it scraped the bottom of his chin. The tips of his ears were already red from the cold. He trudged along the road alone, his feet already beginning to feel heavy and his fingers numb.

He drew his hands up into his sleeves and balled his fingers together.

There were other homes that dotted the forest and he could see white smoke billowing out from their stone chimneys. As he pounded forward, the bus stop barely in sight, a single breath of wind curled through the limbs of the naked birch trees.

By the time he reached the bus stop, the snow was no longer falling in a whisper; it came hammering down, raging and intense.

Sirotkin noticed a large, plump woman in a matted black fur coat sitting on the bench next to a man so gaunt and thin that Sirotkin was having trouble seeing him completely.

They had both been sitting there for a while, staring absently, the condensation snapping into the air in front of them with each breath they made. The mottled gray earmuffs the woman was

wearing matched the color of the man's wool knit hat and his tattered jacket blended in with the sodden wood upon which they sat. Snow had been accumulating on them, the dismal cold swallowing them both.

When the bus finally arrived, the two of them stepped on silently, neither one seeming to notice Sirotkin as they sat near the back.

Sirotkin plopped down in the middle and stared out the window.

Every tree, building and person that he passed seemed to have something missing.

The light barely seemed to permeate beyond the windows; it was as if the warmth was boxed in, holding its breath. Color seemed to be drained from the trees and they did not offer much contrast to the wet, slate sky. All the people he saw were in a rush. Everybody seemed to have their hands buried in their pockets, their heads bowed slightly and their shoulders tightly hunched.

Sirotkin's eyes darted downwards and his hands trembled slightly as the bus rolled to a stop.

By the time Sirotkin reached the entrance to the aged Soviet bunker, the tips of his fingers were frozen. He peered into the swirling darkness and clumped his wet toes together, feeling the tingling of his feet radiate to his ankles.

The properties were more fanned out on this side of town. There was nothing but dense forest to engulf him, the white blanket glazing the entire landscape.

A tuft of snow slid from the limb of a tree and scattered across his already disappearing tracks.

The graying hair and sharp, aristocratic face of Alexei Illyich emerged from the bunker. "He is down there."

Sirotkin scanned the trees facing him and squinted, trying to see beyond the wall of snow enshrouding them from all angles. Then, his gaze fell softly on Alexei Illyich and his rough hands. The skin sat in folds on the back of them and canyons of wrinkles snaked down from his lanky fingers. It seemed as if his nails would never grow any longer, perhaps from being bitten or perhaps from the abuses of his life. His cuticles were cracked and dry, just like the rest of his callused palms.

"The man killed your daughter." Alexei Illyich arched his eyebrows and extracted a pistol from the front pocket of his pewter jacket.

The metal felt cold in Sirotkin's palm. Slowly, he gripped his hand around the handle and curled his numb index finger around the trigger.

"You did, too," Sirotkin said.

Grimacing, he could not feel the tickle of the trigger against his finger as he squeezed.

Outside the Frame

Hannah Miranda Miller

Beyond the lattice edges of a murky Polaroid, Anya clutches the camera while her daughters tear through shopping bags of stale sourdough crusts. The toddler in the faded stripes and mustard-stained collar of a hand-me-down learns from her sister as she uncurls her fingers and seeds the wave-dimpled waters with bait.

Too close to the edge, and Anya scoops her up. Her little one clumsily reaches to unpin her mother's dark curls, and a ringlet falls into Anya's eyes. She jumps from her mother's arms.

Always daddy's girl, thinks Anya. Always preferring to be enveloped in the crook of a tweedy arm and the scent of tongue depressors and eucalyptus drops, clues to where he spent his days before they crossed the ocean.

The New Country meant hunching over a Ziploc of briny pickles and a thermos of *chai* steeped through the night during the lunch break he took with the row of mops and shelves of Clorox. The graveyard shift—with a mop in hand, no more stethoscope.

Anya wonders when his affections for her will fade. Her ample hips, an asset in Bobruisk, are shameful here—these girls in their magazines are like the poorest of farm daughters, pale flesh stretched over thin ribs. But these plump, freckled arms have kneaded a knotted shoulder, a strudel crust.

Will he remember her as she was? Or when wrinkles ripple her forehead, will he lament his choice? His mother's words will echo in his head—don't you see the way the neighbor girl looks at you? He could have had the neighbor girl, but *they'd* have got the whole village by now and it wouldn't matter how many sons she could give him.

Her eldest dips a toe where the water laps at the reeds. Anya never learned to swim, though her mother plunged into the frozen lake at the first sound of their horses and held her breath. A mile away they had kicked down the front door and pushed aside her father, rubbing the crust of sleep from his eyes. Windows shattered; they dragged him out the door, blind without his spectacles. The body skidding through marsh, collecting tattered leaves and mossy pebble stone, flesh scraping the street.

Anya puts down the camera and looks away from the water, she turns her head and looks back, watching it unfold all over again for the hundredth time. Anya watches the little body plummet into the mossy hollow of the well, the water devouring her firstborn.

He would have been an older brother for her four girls, a protector. If she could, she'd tell her daughters to stay away from the edge, to warn them about what only she knows: water swallows its prey whole.



Walruses
St. Petersburg, Russia
E.B. Bartels

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An Awl in the Throat

Samizdat and Samogon as Modes of Subversion in Venedikt Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line*

Matthew Thrasher

Intoxicants—whether in the form of beer, vodka, or shoe polish—goad the protagonist of Venedikt Erofeev's 1973 novel *Moscow to the End of the Line* on to a journey from the subterranean, hellish interior of Moscow's Kursk station to the supposed "end of the line" in Petushki. However, as Venya's readers realize—far before he does—the end, embodied in the mythic Petushki, is none other than the beginning. Petushki, the Edenic locale "where the birds never cease singing, […] where the jasmine never cease blooming," is reached only in his mind.[1]

Although he attempts a linear path from Moscow to Petushki, from hell to paradise, Venya circulates. In so doing, he unveils the emptiness behind totalizing narratives. Meta-narratives of Soviet progress, socialist utopia, and, unfortunately for Venya, even his own personal return to an Edenic paradise, all fall short of their projected goals. As Edith Clowes argues, all that is solid in Venya's world melts into air, whether it is the insidious ideology of the oppressive Soviet regime or its supposed antithesis, Venya's defiant dream for a pre-Soviet paradise.[2] Yet, not all meta-narratives are created equal, and there is a marked difference in their failures. While Venya's mockery undermines the Soviet dream for the future, state violence maims Venya's anti-Soviet utopian hopes. Venya laughs at the state, but the state stabs back, piercing him in the throat with an awl.[3]

However, this is not the end of Venya: his voice outlives his awl-stabbed throat long enough to reflect upon the incident, telling his readers that he has not since "regained consciousness" and that he "never will" in the future.[4] Venya ends his journey, as other scholars have noted, in the exact spot from which he started, but he does not end up in the same body with which he started.[5] Leaving, turning, and returning uni-directionally (toward Moscow) under the guise of multi-directionality (away from Moscow), Venya's circular journey from Moscow to Moscow is coded in his body. Moscow is the same Moscow, but Venya is not the same Venya. His throat, ailing at the novel's beginning, is now mutilated, pierced by the "four classical figures" of the state.

More than just a piece of the narrator's anatomy, Venya's throat stands in for dissident literature during the Soviet Union. The destruction of his throat not only challenges Venya's ability to speak, but also conjures up images of the violent suppression of illegal literature during the Soviet era.

However, like Venya's voice, anti-Soviet literature survived its attempted eradication at the hands of Soviet censors via the publication and circulation of illegal texts through the samizdat system. Reading Venya's narrative not only as a piece of samizdat literature, but also as an emblem of the samizdat system (the novel was self-published and -distributed) allows us

to read the novel's final scene as the completion of a subversive agenda. Venya's journey from Moscow to Moscow mirrors the journey of the samizdat text: his circulation is a process of physical degeneration that ends with the awl in the throat; samizdat's circulation is a process of physical degeneration that ends with its evaporation in the hands of its readers. Both occur because of and in defiance of state authority.

Moscow to the End of the Line is not just a *product* of samizdat, widespread during the years of state censorship, but also a commentary on samizdat's subversive mode of *production*. Samizdat, unlike its official Soviet counterpart, moved via an undifferentiated system of production and distribution. Gordon Johnston shows how the term applied to a realm beyond the written word. It referred to "the complete cycle of the production, distribution, and reading of illicit material."[6] Producers, distributers, and readers were all equally involved in the creation of the samizdat text: they all had the ability to alter the text's meaning by significantly altering its physical body—omitting words, rewriting passages, and even misprinting entire chapters. Ann Komaromi extols the "virtues of underground typists and typewriters" who "tended to multiply mistakes" and produced multiple versions of a single work which "diffused" and "complicated the notion of a 'true' message and an individual author."[7] Samizdat's mode of production contrasted with the reified division of labor within the state-sponsored publishing house by allowing distributors and readers to play the role of producers (i.e. authors) while forcing producers (authors who had to hand-copy their own works) to play the role of distributors (many literally handed out copies of their works).

As Komaromi continues, samizdat was not subversive because of what it said, but how it said it. The myth of the "one true word" that would shine forth amidst the darkness of state oppression downplays samizdat's deviant mode of production and material life.[8] As samizdat traveled, it not only was typographically altered, but it also physically deteriorated. Passed from hand to hand, the samizdat text dissolved into an illegible mass of frayed edges, faded ink, and jaundiced sheets. These texts were fleeting phenomena that were built for self-destruction. They were like Venya's throat.

Lev Losev's 1984 essay, "*Samizdat i Samogon*," sutures the art of self-publishing, samizdat, with the art of self-brewing, samogon. He compares the self-writing, -editing, -typesetting, -distributing, and -consuming of unofficial literature with the self-brewing, -concocting, -mixing, and -consuming of unofficial liquids. By nature of their parallel prefixes, these two neologisms formed the crux of the late 1980s dissidents' program: Freedom of thought must go hand in hand with freedom of intoxication; the state must allow the publication of dissident material as well as the sale of vodka.[9] But Losev focuses only on the similarity between the roots of these two terms. His emphasis on *izdat* and *ogon* subsumes any sense of *sam*.

Not just a product of samizdat, *Moscow to the End of the Line* is also a product of samogon, fueled by Venya's homespun libations. Like samizdat, these drinks are more than just products. They encapsulate a series of subversive exchanges, productions, combinations, and consumptions of otherwise mundane products. There is nothing defiant about refined furniture polish, athlete's foot remedy, alcohol varnish, lavender toilet water, Sadko shampoo, or small bug killer; but when traded, combined, and consumed in the guts of Venichka, they become his foul samogon creations.[10] Through his samogon system of combination and consumption, they become subversive products.

The same applies to his parody of the Bolshevik revolution. It is not the words he chooses which are in themselves problematic, but rather the way they are combined and distributed. Complete with plenums (four in total), delegates, senators, prime ministers, "brilliant theoreticians," "White Polish forces," and dialectics which "merge into a kiss," Venya's revolution does not just isolate terms of Soviet ideology for ridicule.[11] Instead, much like his samogon cre-

ations, he mishmashes the buzzwords of Soviet history into an adulterated synthesis that is at odds with the official party line.

Like the physical repulsion inspired by Venya's samogon, state disapprobation of Venya's revolution-parody does not just concentrate on the individual components of the mishmashed concoction. Rather, the idea of the combination that produced it and its consumption is equally problematic.

Because of this, Venya's revolution-parody operates as a samizdat creation. What is repulsive is not the individual pieces of the parody, or the disgusting mixing of ideological terms. It is the subversive means of distribution that underlies this parody. For example, Semonych the train inspector must already be in a position that defies Soviet authority in order to receive Venya's samogon. Semonych cannot receive Venya's parody without being drunk on the job and "ready to race into the future."[12] The transfer of the subversive object (cobbled together from components of state discourse and obscenely repulsive jokes) requires the recipient, as well as the giver (Venya, as always, is also quite drunk), to be in subversive positions even before the object is exchanged. Semonych accepts bribes in the form of alcohol and is intoxicated while on the job; Venya not only drinks on the job, but, after his promotion to the position of foreman, drinking becomes his job and requires complex planning and organization.[13]

While Venya's parody of the revolution may be enough to catch the attention of state censors, it is the relationship between the positions of the producer and the consumer of the parody that, by likening it to the samizdat network of dissident intellectual material, gives Venya's narrative its defiant nature. Venya, the novel's producer of samogon and samizdat, is himself a type of samogon/samizdat, having consumed his samogon creations and produced his samizdat parodies. Venya's monologue as an artifact of the Soviet samizdat system provides an alternative to stasis: his story does not end in the punishment of non-utilitarian drunkenness by the state, but rather in the realization of the temporal, fleeting nature of samizdat.

Although stuck within the discourse of the state and unable to escape the confines of Moscow and the "four classical figures," Venya's subversive dream of Petushki is not silenced completely; rather, it is like his characterization of the "quiet" and "boisterous" drunkard. The drunkard does not sober up; he drinks until he only appears sober "on the surface."[14]

The circle that Venichka describes encapsulates his experience on the line from Moscow to Petushki: ostensibly condemned to Moscow, he has, on the surface, ended up where he has started; he appears to have returned to sobriety. Yet, something beneath the surface has changed. Pushing through the journey, Venya has circulated between his destinations, and, in the end, he receives an awl in the throat. Venya's samizdat-subversion of Soviet authority rests beneath the exterior of silence that coats the novel's final scene. As an article of samogon and samizdat, Venya continues to move, and in so doing is destroyed—a final act of defiance, not submission, to Soviet authorities.

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Changing Masculinities in Russian Folklore

Brittney Lenard

Introduction

The October Revolution of 1917 brought significant political change to Russia. This upheaval was accompanied by cultural changes, including a reshaping of the understanding of masculinity in folklore and children's literature. When contrasting the masculinity portrayed in traditional Russian folklore and Soviet fairy tales, one can see how a hyper-masculine male hero replaced the traditional Russian image of the infantilized male protagonist.

The infantilized male in traditional folklore

In traditional Russian folklore, infantile male heroes are incapable of accomplishing anything without the help of others, especially women.[1] In illustrated folktales, males are often passive youths lying on the stove or sitting "in the ashes or in a pile of millet without britches on as though to suggest infancy and utter subordination to maternal demands."[2] Such a representation of male heroes corresponds with the matriarchal tradition of Russian culture. Furthermore, the image of the male peasant as a child was eventually appropriated by the Russian state in a conscious attempt to subordinate peasants.[3] Classic Russian folktales reflect not only matriarchal culture, but also a conscious political effort to control peasants.

Extreme masculinity in Soviet fairy tales

Initially, the Bolsheviks rejected fairy tales as a genre that expressed the ideology of the ruling classes. However, this attitude was left behind when the father of socialist realism, Maxim Gorky, took up the case of the fairy tale. Gorky insisted that folklore was a true creation of the working class, and he persuaded Soviet functionaries that it had great potential for the advancement of communism.[4] Because of Gorky's efforts, the fairy tale "returned to the arsenal of Soviet literary genres, but not as a free agent. [...] Fairy tales became 'builders of communism.'"[5] In many ways, these new Soviet tales were an appropriation of the traditional Russian warrior epic, or *bylina*. The new Soviet genre, known as the *novina*, "transposed the gallery of the old heroes and villains with their typical characteristics into Soviet reality."[6] Because folklore could be appropriated to promote communism, and because "many Bolsheviks saw art as the path from ideology to internal thought,"[7] fairy tales became an important medium for imparting socialist ideals.

One of the significant changes to folklore implemented by Soviet writers was the masculinization of folklore: the depiction of a dominant, heroic male protagonist. This was important for several reasons. First, despite the Soviet movement toward gender equality, "gender was always a key organizing principle of the Soviet system."[8] Duties were often allocated based on gender; men "were to serve as leaders, managers, soldiers, workers—in effect, they were to manage and build the communist system."[9] For this reason, it was important to define male duties through popular culture, especially fairy tales. Second, party leaders wanted to establish a new form of masculinity "based on work rather than on private patriarchal power."[10] Thus, the masculinization of folklore was a direct result of political efforts to redefine masculinity and the duties associated with it.

In trying to establish a new brand of mas-

culinity, Soviet fairy tales placed a strong emphasis on the ideals associated with extreme strength. In order to do this, tales of the Stalinist period "exaggerated the capabilities of the New Soviet Man so as to construct a mythic hypermasculinity."[11] The male protagonist of Soviet fairy tales was usually a dedicated warrior who "did not waver and always earned the loyalty of his troops."[12] Likewise, Soviet heroes were "simple but goodhearted Russian boys willing to defend the country they loved like a mother, without superfluous reflection."[13]

These qualities of Soviet heroes are demonstrated clearly in Arkady Gaidar's Soviet story "Tale of the Military Secret, Malchish-Kibalchish and His Solemn Word," first published in the children's newspaper *Pionerskaia Pravda* (*Pioneer's Truth*) in 1933. The story glorifies Soviet hyper-masculine traits, given how "Malchish's leadership qualities and organizational skills, as well as his dedication to the true cause, are what guarantee victory of the children's army."[14] Indeed, Malchish's strength "seems to increase hyperbolically because he chooses the right cause for his struggle—support of the Red Army."[15] Thus, Malchish exemplifies the warrior ethos and manliness advocated by the Soviet movement.

Soviet masculinity disregards women. This contrasts heavily with traditional Russian folklore, which promoted the long-established matriarchal culture. In the Soviet Union, the movement toward gender equality created a backlash against which men reasserted their masculinity.[16] Because of male insecurity surrounding matriarchal power, Soviet tales often drew attention to men who did not need to rely on women. This phenomenon manifests in Gaidar's tale, in which Malchish's family lives without a mother.[17] The author demonstrates that heroes do not need women in their lives to be successful. This, too, represents a political effort to establish the independence, even the superiority, of Soviet men.

Reshaping boys into men

By placing the emphasis of many tales on the transformation of boys into men, Soviets focused on the promise of the next generation. Orphans, in particular, "became the first targets of the Soviet project that sought to make the 'new man.'"[18] This transformation of orphans into men is evident in Nikolai Ekk's film *Putevka v zhizn'* (*The Path to Life*).[19] *Putevka v zhizn'*, which tells the story of a group of delinquent youths, underlines "the boys' transformation into men through physical discipline."[20] This film, among other Soviet tales, provides an example of "the metamorphosis of the adolescent into the New Man."[21] Malchish's speech to his friends underscores this ideology:

> Are we boys just to go on playing with wooden swords and skipping rope? Our fathers have gone, our brothers have gone. Are we boys just going to sit around waiting for the bourgeouins to come and carry us off to their cursed bourgeouinland?[22]

Malchish contrasts childhood and manhood by juxtaposing the toys, especially wooden swords, with the imminent battle toward which the boys are heading. The boys become men as they realize the importance of the cause and leave behind childhood—in the form of toys—for the battlefield. Gaidar points out the importance of the boys once again when Malchish's enemy, the head bourgeoin, remarks, "What an inexplicable country, where even boys like this know the Military Secret and keep their solemn word so faithfully."[23] This comment underscores the Soviet glorification of boys who behave like a proper New Soviet Man—boys who fight bravely, remain loyal, and are willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the country. By emphasizing the loyalty of young boys, Soviet writers hoped to instill values of responsibility and leadership in the children reading their stories.

The Stalin Paradox

While Soviet fairy tales endorsed a strong, independent New Soviet Man, this view was modified by the paternal representation of Sta-

lin. Soviet leaders faced having to lead men to be strong and masculine, but also to defer to the greater power—Stalin. Thus, Stalin was represented as the epitome of the masculine ethos: "The unrivaled personification of masculine omnipotence and omnipresence, Stalin institutionalized a militaristic machismo."[24] Consequently, men could aspire to be like Stalin and be powerful in the realm of ordinary people, but they could never attain the level of masculinity occupied by Stalin.

The view of Stalin as "an older, wiser man"[25] to lead society appears in Galin's tale "Valery Chkalov." The protagonist, Chkalov, himself a celebrated Soviet pilot and heroic man, views Stalin as a father figure. Chkalov feels a sense of obligation toward Stalin: "It seemed to Chkalov that he still had not done enough for the country, for the Party, and for Stalin, who had raised him, and whom he [...] owed everything."[26] However, in his own realm, Chkalov remains a fatherly figure. His dream is "to have a pile of kids," and he "loves children with all his heart."[27] Thus, Chkalov represents the typical Soviet hero. He is a father in his own realm, but in turn views Stalin as a father figure. So, while Soviet tales portray men as ultra-masculine heroes, it must also be remembered that these heroes were modeled after the ultimate fatherly man.

Conclusion

The reshaping of masculinity in Russian folklore reflects changing political goals. Whereas Russian folklore portrayed the man as a lazy, unintelligent child, Soviet literature emphasized hyper-masculinity and the transformation of boys into men through self-discipline. These changes reflect not only new goals, but also the power that rulers, both pre-Soviet and Soviet, had over popular literature in Russia. The speed at which popular culture was manipulated following the October Revolution indicates the importance party leaders placed on indoctrination. A renaissance of the Russian fairy tale resulted, reflecting a new political reality.

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Admiralty
St. Petersburg, Russia

Marina Irgon

The Golem's March

A Jewish Folktale as an Archetype for Olesha's *Envy* and Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog*

John Malcolm

"And the Lord God formed man
of the dust of the ground,
And breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life;
And man became a living soul."
Genesis 2:7

Many stories stretch back so far in our history and folklore that we have forgotten their origins. The details of those stories become lost to obscurity, but their basic themes endure. We mold them into new forms to suit our own times and concerns, perhaps not even realizing that we are reworking old patterns. One such archetype is that of the golem, a being artificially created by man in a promethean act of conceit.

Golem stories became particularly prominent around the turn of the 20th century. Yuri Olesha's *Envy* and Mikhail Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog* both retell this old story. While the basic themes made their way to the authors in different ways, specific details of these novels vividly converge with the original folktale. One can follow the golem story's evolution from its Jewish origin to the authors' primary influences.

An element of Jewish folklore, the golem presents a story of man's reverse engineering of his own creation. As man was created in God's image, so man creates a being in his own image. The Hebrew word, *gelem*, is variously translated as "raw material,"[1] "unformed," or "imperfect."[2] Talmudic texts refer to Adam before receiving the breath of God as *gelem*, translated there as "body without a soul."[3] The golem is molded from soil, clay, or some other earthly material, and ritually animated. Since it was given life by man rather than by God, it does not have a divine soul, if indeed it has one at all. Motivations for creating such a creature are myriad—protection of the community, advancement of mankind in general, or sometimes just for physical labor—but, inevitably, the creature cannot be controlled and turns on those it was meant to serve. The creator, too late recognizing the error of his hubris, must desperately attempt to destroy his creation.

Sources trace the creation of golems as far back as the prophet Jeremiah,[4] but most folklore originates later, with the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. The definitive golem story mixes history and fantasy from the 16th century in the story of Rabbi Leow and the Golem of Prague. There are a few different accounts, but essentially, Rabbi Leow creates the golem to protect Prague's Jewish sector from the threats of blood libel. For a while, it serves its purpose admirably. Eventually, however, the golem cannot be controlled; it rampages the city and threatens innocent lives. Rabbi Leow, realizing that he should not have played God, makes a heroic effort to halt his terrible creation. Versions differ as to whether he succeeds.[5] Either way, the golem has become fundamental to Prague's identity. A colossal statue of the golem today stands watch at the entrance to the city's Jewish sector. Three hundred years after Rabbi Leow, at the turn of the 20th century, Karel Čapek would emerge from Prague and his new take on the golem story would forever change popular

culture, driving the myth forward through to the present day. Čapek then handed off the story to Yuri Olesha.

Karel Čapek was a Czech science fiction writer who found early success with the novel *War with the Salamanders*, which Olesha described as "a novel about fascism, a political system that turns people into machines […] with its 'stifling of genius,' its attempt to render the human spirit uniform, its requirement that man in fact become a soulless machine," adding that, "it would not hurt Soviet readers to reread his books."[6] In *Envy*, these sentiments inspire golem-creator Ivan's "conspiracy of emotions," as he calls it. Čapek's true legacy and indelible influence on his genre is his play about modern golems, *R.U.R.* (*Rossum's Universal Robots*), in which the modern term "robot" was coined. No sooner did Čapek envision robots than he envisioned robots rebelling against their creators and masters. Here, Olesha found inspiration for his own golem-robot, Ophelia, who likewise rebells against her creator, Ivan.

Čapek was not the first to restyle the golem myth; it was by a different route that the golem story reached Mikhail Bulgakov. *Heart of a Dog* is often called a Frankenstein story; however, while Bulgakov may have been familiar with Mary Shelley's seminal work (also a golem story), he was more directly influenced by H. G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*—itself a retelling of *Frankenstein*. In the 1920s, Wells was the second most popular foreign author in Russia (behind Jules Verne)[7] and a major influence on Bulgakov. Critics point to connections between *Fatal Eggs* and Wells' *The Food of the Gods*, and between *Master and Margarita* and Wells' *The Undying Fire*.[8] In *Heart of a Dog* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, both Preobrazhensky and Moreau create a human from an animal, only to lose control of their creations. Both doctors play God by meddling in creation and pay the price for their hubris.

Parallels between *Envy*'s Ophelia and *Heart of a Dog*'s Sharikov suggest that the authors were familiar with the original golem folktale. This is probable, as both authors hailed from Ukraine, where in 1926 the Jewish community made up 27 percent of Kiev and 36 percent of Odessa.[9] Possibly, though, their starting themes led them back to these details independently in a case of convergent evolution. Such details occur both in the symbolic golems and in their creators.

The creators, Ivan Babichev and Professor Preobrazhensky, mimic the rabbis who first crafted golems. They are incapable of creating true life; they are sterile. They must circumvent the natural order by resorting to unnatural means. In *Envy*, most characters fail in their attempts at creation. One critic points out: "*Envy* is dominated by a theme of castration and sterility, a sterility extending to all areas of life, including those of career and creativity."[10] While Ivan glories in his self-identity as an architect and engineer, there are serious doubts as to whether he created anything at all. After chronicling Ivan's feats, the narrator throws out a question that hangs in the ether for the remainder of the novel: "But was he ever really an engineer?"[11] Ivan and Preobrazhensky's creations were inversions of nature, non-entities, fundamentally flawed and incomplete.

Ophelia and Sharikov both fit the moniker *gelem*. They are "raw material," "unformed," "imperfect," or "body without a soul." Ophelia is crafted from metal. Sharikov, the dog, is the raw material in Preobrazhensky's experiment. Ophelia literally does not have a soul. Sharikov, despite his human metamorphosis, does not have a human soul. He is incomplete in human form due to his lack of a human heart. Sharikov is also incomplete in a special Soviet sense. Whereas a golem is not a person because it has no soul, Sharikov is not a person because he has no documents—an axiom which Bulgakov would later immortalize in *Master and Margarita*: "*Net dokumenta—net cheloveka*." The incompleteness (bodily, spiritually, and bureaucratically) is the reason that each is fated to fall short of expecta-

tions from the moment of activation.

In Jewish folklore, the activation of a golem involved writing the Hebrew word *emet* (truth) on the creature's forehead. To deactivate the golem, the first letter was rubbed out, forming the word *met* (death). This is paralleled in the naming of Sharikov and Ophelia. Sharikov chooses Polygraph Polygraphovich for his name. True to that name, he illustrates the truth that *Canis lupis* cannot be transmuted into Homo sapiens any more than *Homo sapiens* can be transmuted into *Homo sovieticus*. In *Envy*, Ivan names his golem in the spirit of his "conspiracy of emotions" (the truth of the human condition): "I gave her the name of a girl who went out of her mind from love and despair—Ophelia… the most human and touching name of all."[12]

Ivan was not merely trying to create a human out of a machine; he was trying to create a woman, the embodiment of emotion. Ivan "sought a kind of creature who combined all the feminine qualities."[13] Just as the rabbis could not create a true living being because they were not God, Ivan is impotent to engineer a woman due to his masculine perspective. The nature of Ophelia's humanity and gender is riddled with paradoxes. In one interpretation, Ophelia is actually Ivan's manipulations of Kavalerov, a crude male character, so it is certainly not a woman. Ophelia's inversion of nature is further illustrated by her only physical feature ever depicted. "Out of what might be called the thing's head a gleaming needle was slowly poking through."[14] Ophelia, the embodiment of human femininity, has a phallus. When the needle skewers Ivan, it echoes the golem's deactivation word, "death," written upon its forehead. Such paradoxes are a result of the creature's unnatural origins.

Sharikov, too, is a creature of unnatural origin, and not simply because he is a human derived from a dog. When trying to prepare Sharikov's documentation, Preobrazhensky, frustrated with the entry for "place of birth," bemoans that Sharikov was not truly born. Furthermore, Preobrazhensky states that this unnatural origin invalidates any success of his experiment. His assistant conjectures that they should have used the brain of a greater man, such as Spinoza. Preobrazhensky retorts, "Why is it necessary to manufacture Spinozas when any peasant woman can produce them at any time?[15] The assistant then agrees that no matter how intelligent Sharikov may become, he will be no more than "an exceptional scoundrel"—just as a golem, lacking a divine soul, is no more than an animated mound of dirt.

Bulgakov and Olesha adapted the golem to critique the Soviet system and the futility of fighting that system. Sharikov mocks the absurdity of attempting to transform overnight the humble proletariat into the New Soviet Man. The endeavor is doomed to failure from its inception; no matter the form one may mold from base materials, the essence remains unchanged. Ivan could not bring his "conspiracy of emotions" to fruition because, like the rabbis, Ivan had no power nor right to create life—especially not one built upon feminine ideals, yet functionally contradictory to those ideals. Another critic clarified: "The machine is dead [and] opposed to life as a counterfeit of it […] woman and life are not with him in his 'conspiracy of emotions.'"[16] Ophelia cannot be an agent of life and of death simultaneously. As Preobrazhensky says, quoting the Bible, "You cannot serve two masters." That dual nature proves the golems' inevitable downfall.

Golems are mockeries of life—unpredictable abominations summoned from lifeless earth and fueled by promethean fire. Olesha and Bulgakov crafted their golems to live as lessons and warnings. Through them, the golem lives on as myth, an immortal archetype to be passed on for new authors to explore. The golem will loom over our culture indefinitely; this too is part of the original folktale. In the attic of Prague's Old New Synagogue, there is a room that Rabbi Leow forbade anyone to enter. Some say he could not put the golem to rest, that it remains in slumber, awaiting resurrection.



Baronchik on the Moscow River by the *Dom na Naberezhnoi*

T. Marlow Davis

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Humbert Humbert
the Em*bed*ded Reader in *Lolita*

Hannah Gould

Nabokov addresses the ground rules of good literary behavior in his lecture "Good Readers and Good Writers," which serves almost as a travel pamphlet, guiding a typical mortal through the foreign world of fiction. The lecture's directions for readers and writers seem to explain the motivations, actions, and mistakes of the characters of Nabokov's novel *Lolita*. In the novel's afterword, "On a Book Entitled Lolita," Nabokov insists that "despite John Ray's assertion, *Lolita* has no moral in tow."[1] But perhaps this statement is as false as Ray's statement in the foreword that the point of the novel is to "make all of us […] apply ourselves with still greater vigilance and vision to the task of bringing up a better generation in a safer world."[2] Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle of a didactic text preaching about the dangers facing American children and the horrors of pedophilia, and a meaningless work of fiction that exists only to give Nabokov "aesthetic bliss."[3] Perhaps this text carries a message and a moral, but one that is far removed from the explicit subject matter. *Lolita* is about good reading and good writing and the dangers of carrying literary techniques too far from the page and into the real world.

According to Nabokov, "literature was born on the day when a boy came crying wolf, wolf and there was no wolf behind him. […] Between the wolf in the tall grass and the wolf in the tall story there is a shimmering go-between. That go-between, that prism, is the art of literature."[4] Humbert Humbert, in the solipsism scene in Part One of *Lolita*, creates that "shimmering go-between." He has had his unconsummated childhood affair with Annabelle Leigh, and so Humbert the artist already has passionate memories of "excessive desire for that child," which help fuel the artistic process.[5] In the New England house where he becomes a boarder, his first enraptured glimpses of Dolores Haze provide a muse for his memories; and from that passion-filled combination, art is born. The moment of creation takes place on the Haze's striped sofa, where Humbert stealthily manipulates the friction of Lolita's squirming legs on his lap to bring himself to orgasm. According to Humbert, "absolutely no harm [was] done," for he had created something beautiful and pleasurable for himself without harming or affecting the original form, the inspiration of his pleasure.[6] He believes: "What I had madly possessed was not she, but my own creation, another, fanciful Lolita—perhaps more real than Lolita; overlapping, encasing her; floating between me and her, and having no will, no consciousness—indeed no life of her own."[7]

According to Nabokov, a writer is entirely in control of the environment, the world, the universe he creates:

> The material of this world may be real enough (as far as reality goes) but does not exist at all as an accepted entirety: it is chaos, and to this chaos the author says "go!" allowing the world to flicker and to fuse. It is now recombined in its very atoms, not merely in its visible and superficial parts. The writer is the first man to map it and to name the natural objects it contains.[8]

If we assume that Humbert has, in fact, created Lolita as a work of art, he is entirely in charge of the social and ethical laws that govern her existence. He has no obligation to follow the norms or expectations of society around him—he is free, "living in a brand new, mad new dream world, where everything is permissible."[9] An author's created world can be free of God, gravity, death, love, whatever the author chooses, as long as he sets up the rules in the text. The "author has no given values at his disposal: he must create them himself"—and Humbert Humbert does.[10] At the very beginning of the text he sets himself up as the innocent and harmless victim to Lolita's "nymphic" and "demoniac" sex appeal, only trying to survive in a cruel and unsympathetic world, and from that point on, a good reader of Humbert's Lolita (the girl) has no choice but to accept this skewed scenario.[11]

For it is only an inexperienced reader, a poor reader, a stupid reader who brings pre-conceived notions to the text. In his lecture, Nabokov gives a good reader's four necessary possessions: imagination, memory, a dictionary, and some artistic sense.[12] But along with these four things, a good reader must also approach a text with some objectivity and a blank slate. "If one begins with a ready-made generalization, one begins at the wrong end and travels away from the book before one has started to understand it."[13] Nabokov identifies two types of imagination: the creative and informed variety (good), and the personal variety (bad) that functions only to relate plots, settings, and characters to one's own life. Zadie Smith argues that Nabokov kills the reader "with his bold assertion of authorial privilege."[14] Nabokov's readers—and Humbert's—have no rights. According to Nabokov, it is dangerous and wrong to use what Smith refers to as a liberated, personal imagination to reinscribe "dusty, old novels into our own interests and concerns."[15] Nabokov warns: "We should always remember that the work of art is invariably the creation of a new world, so that the first thing we should do is to study that new world as closely as possible, approaching it as something brand new, having no obvious connection with the worlds we already know."[16] A good reader of Humbert's Lolita (the girl) would accept his world of nymphets and innocent middle-aged victims because that is the world the executive, authorial Humbert has chosen to create. It would be our duty as readers to humbly enter this world and lovingly decipher its cues and clues.

This brings us to the question of reading in *Lolita*, for we are not the only ones who read Lolita; Humbert Humbert also reads her. It seems that after Humbert writes his character, Lolita, on the couch, he becomes her perfect reader. Nabokov instructs that a reader must have a combination of scientific and artistic temperament. "[If] a would-be reader is utterly devoid of passion and patience—of an artist's passion and a scientist's patience—he will hardly enjoy great literature."[17] In order to become engaged with a text, to become attached to it, to fall in love with it, one needs an artistic sensibility, which Humbert Humbert, an expert on French and Romantic literature, possesses. The scientific side is necessary to prevent the reader from becoming too subjective. Humbert Humbert is no scientist, but he is an educated man knowledgeable about psychiatric sciences, and his years of watching unattainable nymphets taught him "super-human" self-restraint, which gives him the patience necessary to fully enjoy Lolita.[18] He does not pounce as soon as he sees her, but rather bides his time, marries her mother, and plots until he can have her all to himself.

Nabokov teaches that "in reading, one should notice and fondle details."[19] Humbert surely notices, and he fondles. However, Nabokov is not overly explicit in his descriptions of Humbert's desires and actions: Humbert and Lolita's first act of full sexual intercourse at The

Enchanted Hunters Inn is not even described by Humbert Humbert, who "shall not bore learned readers with a detailed account."[20] But there are ample descriptions of Humbert Humbert fondling Lolita's body. He is not like a mediocre reader, skimming difficult passages to get to the most exciting parts; Humbert attentively studies every detail of his lover's body—he bemoans, "My only grudge against nature was that I could not turn my Lolita inside out and apply voracious lips to her young matrix, her unknown heart, her nacreous liver, the sea-grapes of her lungs, her comely twin kidneys."[21] Humbert can never get enough; he studies every part of her again and again. According to Nabokov, "a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a rereader."[22] Nabokov understands that as first-time readers, we are too distracted by "the process of laboriously moving our eyes from left to right, line after line, page after page" to fully appreciate a text.[23] The same is true for a first-time lover distracted by maneuvering a foreign body.

Most importantly, Nabokov tells us that, as readers, "we ought to remain a little aloof and take pleasure in this aloofness while at the same time we keenly enjoy—passionately enjoy, enjoy with tears and shivers—the inner weave of a given masterpiece."[24] Humbert does not at first appear to be aloof from the subject of his passion, but he does possess an almost objective perspective on his situation. Humbert is wildly, madly, passionately in love with Lolita's body, but he harbors an amused disdain for her personality. He refers to her as a "disgustingly conventional little girl" and as "the ideal consumer, the subject and object of every foul poster."[25]As an enlightened, intellectual European, there is little that Humbert holds in more disdain than banal American consumerism. Anika Susan Quayle argues against many critics who believe that "Humbert is unable to see the 'real' Lolita because the child is eclipsed by his poetic vision."[26] She argues that Humbert is obsessed with Lolita's body, but he is still fully aware of her banal and unattractive personality, that "even where Humbert does present Lolita's character in a distorted manner, there is no reason to read this as suggesting that he is in any sense blind to her true nature."[27] This suggests that Humbert-the-reader is aware that Lolita is an artistic creation. Just as a reader of a good novel is aware that the very lively characters exist on paper pages inside of a cardboard cover, Humbert is aware that his enigmatic, exquisite Lolita exists within the dull cardboard frame of Dolores Haze. He lights the fire of his passion with Lolita's magical little nymphet body, but like a good reader, he cools his head with Dolly's crude remarks and unladylike behavior, which he at times finds cute but not particularly interesting.

Humbert is an excellent reader and writer of Lolita. There is only one major problem: she is not his to write or to read. Humbert-the-writer constructs a world in which nymphets are otherworldly creatures who seduce unwitting men. However, this world is not sustained throughout the text; it exists within a world created by Nabokov—our true author—and that world adheres much more closely to the moral and ethical standards of the world in which we—the true readers—live. This conflict between worlds is exposed through the contradiction in Humbert's reading. While being attentive to Lolita's details, he has approached her with his own preconceived generalization: that she is a nymphet who exists to give him pleasure. Nabokov exposes this contradiction himself when, prior to introducing Humbert Humbert, he establishes an obstacle to Humbert's "mad new dream world" in the form of the fictitious John Ray, Jr., who provides a moral context in which to frame "Humbert's" story. Nabokov cleverly and symmetrically arranges the novel so that both the aesthetic and the moral can win; but even so, Humbert ultimately loses.

Ideally, the relationship between the good author and the good reader should be, according to Nabokov, one of intense fulfillment and eternal bliss. Humbert tries to create this eternal, loving relationship between himself and Lolita. The final lines of the novel reflect this desire: "And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita."[28] There is a kind of immortality fused between Humbert and Lolita through the novel, but it is not the joyful and productive immortality created between happy author and reader. It is a guilty, trauma-ridden, stagnant reality that takes the form of a confession. All there is left to do is to mourn the loss of their former relationship—a relationship that was never dynamic and never productive.

Humbert's failure lies in the fact that Lolita is not a book or a work of art, but a girl. "The mind, the brain, the top of the tingling spine, is, or should be, the only instrument used upon a book."[29]While Humbert's love for Lolita is cerebral and intellectually expressed, the consummation of his love is entirely physical. Lolita is not just a "photographic image rippling upon a screen"; she is a living girl with a personality, feelings, and a life of her own.[30] And Humbert destroys all of those things. Even he admits this in the final pages of the novel when he feels "the absence of her voice" from a children's chorus.[31] By turning Lolita into his artistic creation and masterpiece, Humbert steals her childhood, has broken her life.[32] This is the danger Nabokov warns his readers about.

Nabokov has disdain for equating life with art—"to call a story a true story is an insult to both art and truth."[33]Moreover, the (false) equation between life and art is not reversible. The person who reads a novel and attempts to identify himself with the main character will miss the full meaning of the artistic work. But the person who tries to manipulate human beings as if they were his own artistic creations will very likely ruin lives. Humbert often thinks that life is created from art. Because of such a dangerous assumption, he aggressively asserts his poetic freedom over the human rights of other individuals. In his lecture, Nabokov warns the writer against modeling art too closely after life and the reader against searching for life in art; and in *Lolita*, he shows the careful reader what disastrous consequences ensue from manipulating life as if it were art.

Notes

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2. Nabokov, *Lolita,* 6.
3. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 315.
4. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 5.
5. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 13.
6. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 62.
7. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 62.
8. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 2.
9. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 133.
10. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 2.
11. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 16.
12. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 3.
13. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 1.
14. Zadie Smith, "Rereading Bathes and Nabokov," *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2009) 44.
15. Smith 51.
16. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 1.
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18. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 27.
19. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 1.
20. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 133.
21. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 165.
22. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 3.
23. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 3.
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25. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 148.
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27. Quayle 16.
28. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 309.
29. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 4.
30. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 62.
31. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 308.
32. Nabokov, *Lolita*, 279.
33. Nabokov, "Good Readers and Good Writers," 5.

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Perceptions and Political Realities

An Evaluation of the Impacts of Ukraine's Orange Revolution

Jillian Dunning

In light of the recent developments in Ukrainian politics, there is a strong impetus to examine the transition of political institutions there and to determine whether the Orange Revolution was a reaction to the international contagion of peaceful democratic movements in Serbia and Georgia, or if these events resulted from elements of political tension preexistent in the state. Ukraine's experience is considered by some as an exemplary anomaly that is limited to success within the context of the Ukrainian political system; but the Orange Revolution may provide insight into future actions by states attempting to consolidate democratic political institutions.

The present discourse regarding democratization and state-building is augmented through an analysis of the social and political factors that ultimately lead to this type of radical reform, and whether similar strategies are possible in other states. It is important to define what makes a revolution successful before embarking on an explanation of why certain factors were essential to that success. The Orange Revolution can be categorized as a success only by its ability to reform existing political authority in a legally binding manner. The additional social benefit of nonviolence throughout the regime transition does not define the success of the movement, nor does the presence of public mobilization on a mass scale. To qualify events of the Orange Revolution as a success would require not only consideration of the initial mobilization itself, but also an evaluation of the effectiveness of constitutional reform in Ukraine.

If peaceful and democratic revolutions systematically affect long-term political reform, then it is in the interest of democratic policymakers to recreate similar conditions elsewhere. When considering the factors leading up to the Orange Revolution, there is a clear distinction between political scholars who consider Ukraine as another manifestation of the transnational movement of color revolutions that took place in the post-Soviet space, and those who categorize the Orange Revolution as particular, more democratic, and accompanied by the prospect of a permanent stability and tangible political reform. The eradication of political apathy was necessary to achieve the level of voter turnout able to manifest the discontent with the existing structure, but the isolated fact that voters did mobilize to express their intolerance does not account for the success of the revolution. Though an active civil society does not define the Orange Revolution as a successful revolution, it is one of the internal factors which are vital to an understanding of how the revolution arose and its future sustainability.

The strengthening of civil society had a great impact on the foundation and duration of the Orange Revolution, and it has also drastically transformed the Ukrainian culture of power politics. Prior to 2004, analysts had not judged

Ukrainian civil society to be particularly strong, but the demonstrations in response to election fraud mobilized a staggering percentage of the population, allowing the Ukrainian public to realize the full force of its influence against acts of electoral fraud. The ability to motivate an apathetic population to protest in the streets in response to political corruption was a result of efforts by active civil organizations. The Ukrainian executive branch of the government controls three key resources used to leverage political influence: law enforcement, control over large sectors of the economy, and the patronage system of government jobs.[1] Though politics in Ukraine continue to be plagued by mass corruption, a weak respect for the rule of law, and a torpid confidence in the effectiveness of political institutions, the mass mobilization of the Orange Revolution proved the existence of a threshold of public tolerance. Though Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine's president from 1994, had previously altered the election results, presidential elections were still conducted to preserve an image of legitimacy within the executive office. As it became clear that the failing incumbent could not secure an electoral victory, Kuchma attempted to combine formal democratic practices with informal control of all political institutions.[2] These attempts, including assaults on journalists and opposition candidates, might have succeeded if Kuchma had managed to achieve higher public approval ratings; however, these events served to define Kuchma's political party as an illegitimate venture at managed democracy.

The perception of political candidates played a compelling role among the public leading up to the 2004 elections. The perceived illegitimacy of the Kuchma-backed candidate, Viktor Yanukovych, contributed not only to the successful mobilization of the Ukrainian population on a mass scale, but also to a strong desire for an alternative to a managed democracy model marked by Russian support. Surveys conducted among the voting population concluded that "the managed democracy model was at odds with Ukrainian voters, as 59 percent did not believe that Ukraine was a democracy, with a total of only 16 percent agreeing to this proposition."[3] Considerations as elementary as estimates of political candidates' intelligence contributed to support for the campaign of Victor Yushchenko, while Yanukovych's public image as uncultured and immoral often included references to his criminal record and ties to corruption. These associations qualified the 2004 presidential election in the minds of voters as not only a political choice but also an ideological and moral choice. This tendency to associate a candidate with a specific ideological adherence is common in all political campaigns, but this strategy has even greater implications within the Ukrainian system, where political parties are not defined as much by ideological platforms as by the individual candidates they produce. In the context of this particular variety of presidential race, it is important to consider the role of public opinion within the greater frame of an authoritarian regime. A distinctly authoritarian regime, as opposed to a competitive authoritarian regime, concerned about its public perception of legitimacy, reveals the extent to which the regime's authority over the Ukrainian population had deteriorated, and it is this concern for public opinion which demonstrates the first indication that an opportunity to successfully overthrow the regime was present.

Public support proved to be the decisive factor in mobilization, and ties to a European identity were instrumental in influencing the public's choice for a presidential candidate. The dual Ukrainian identity of having a somewhat European culture within the post-Soviet space manifested itself within the political campaigns of the presidential elections. Many observers have characterized the population of Ukraine as being in a struggle between the eastern Slavic idea and a more Ukrainian nationalist one. Though many scholars recognize the social impact of a "Back to Europe!" sort of civic identity, there is an underappreciated

influence that developed with the association of the Yushchenko campaign with progressive European ideals. The simple association between Yanukovych and the Donetsk, a region that is particularly discriminatory against Ukrainian nationalists,[4] as well as his pledged support for the advancement of the Russian language and dual citizenship, transformed the endorsement of a particular political candidate into an ideological prescription for the Ukrainian identity. Presenting the 2004 presidential elections as a struggle between national ideological choices provides an additional incentive to civil society toward mass mobilization, ensuring the success of the popular movement that demanded constitutional reform. The ideological quality of the election expressed the internal divides among the Ukrainian population in addition to the limitations of each faction, notably that though "east Slavic views were quite popular at the mass level, they have proved difficult to use as a rallying point. Ukrainians with a more pro-European national identity have been easier to mobilize than those with an eastern Slavic identity. Yanukovych clearly overestimated the impact that language issues would carry in the election, and in associating himself with a Russophone electorate in hopes of recreating the success of Kuchma in garnering support from language issues in 1994,"[5] Yanukovych undermined support for his campaign in an election where issues of language and identity proved to be less of a concern to voters than economic recovery. The youth movement in Ukraine during the period leading up to the Orange Revolution played a decisive role in political mobilization, and many young voters, unable to connect with issues of the past and unaffected by Yanukovych's attempts to recreate former campaigns to draw votes, were drawn to a different interpretation of the significance of a Ukrainian nationality. In this way, it is evident that pro-European forces gained an advantage within the Ukrainian political structure simply because they mobilized in support of the advancement of their perception of the national identity.

Just as it was essential for the existing government to maintain a semblance of stability to preserve its image of political legitimacy, the anti-Kuchma democratic opposition was equally obliged to present an image of unification and stability in a way that would resonate with the Ukrainian public. One of the definitive practical successes of the Orange Revolution was its ability to bring together politicians with many different party allegiances against a fraudulent authoritarian regime. Though the unification of Yushchenko, Yulia Tymoshenko, and Oleksandr Moroz was a political necessity rather than a unity of ideals, this coalition proved to be the manifestation of popular discontent with the Kuchma regime. The consolidated electoral support that emerged from the unified coalition allowed for a more competitive electoral support base when faced with a strong and legitimate socialist party and a candidate supported as a successor by Kuchma. In his sudden dismissal of Yushchenko from the office of prime minister in a no-confidence vote, and the surprise imprisonment of Tymoshenko in 2001, it was Kuchma himself who ensured that the opposition bloc had a strong and public anti-authoritarian sentiment spearheaded by figures who directly challenged the Kuchma regime. The anti-Kuchma coalition most importantly created a sense of legitimacy for the opposition, as a coalition that overcame party divides could not be reasonably characterized as an isolated, protesting minority. Though the unification of political individuals with drastically diverse political objectives is one aspect of the Orange Revolution that separates it from similar post-communist protest movements and perhaps accounts for its successful constitutional reforms, the discord between political actors within the party posed difficulties for politicians to connect with a newly mobilized public in the future.[6] In the months leading up to the Orange Revo-

lution, Ukraine exemplified an authoritarian regime that created the conditions for the success of its political opponents, and the promotion of political compromise as necessary for a successful regime change required transcending party divides. This political unification strategy was a distinctly Ukrainian response to the events of 2004 and illustrates how politicians have taken international precedents of nonviolent revolution and altered them to fit a particular national context.

Within discussions of the political implications of the Orange Revolution, one of the most underemphasized insights into the Ukrainian political system is that its characteristic individualism ultimately leads to a political instability which poses numerous obstacles for the development of greater democratic institutions. Because the personalities behind the revolution in 2004 were extremely charismatic, it becomes easy for the public to reduce the social and structural implications of political parties to their individual figureheads. Though this tendency served as an advantage for the opposition coalition in terms of its political success and popular mandate for constitutional reform, the fact that the Orange Revolution can be explained as an individualistic manifestation of anti-Kuchma and anti-Yanukovych sentiments contributes to the ultimate disadvantage of the fractured political parties that continue to plague the political system. This characteristic has implications for the historical legacy of the Orange Revolution, which continues to develop as Ukrainian politicians struggle to balance traditional sources of power with continued reform.

The individualistic nature of the protests meant that the opposition party succeeded by combining polarizing individuals with incredible influence, such as Yushchenko, Tymoshenko, and Moroz against Kuchma and Yanukovych. Though this anti-Kuchma coalition did succeed in passing constitutional reforms altering the structure of the executive, the lack of an ideologically established party policy does not ensure continued stability in the progression of Ukrainian politics toward democracy. This tendency within the Ukrainian context is perhaps the reason that the Orange Revolution is inextricable from the color revolutions in the area. Paul D'Anieri argues that the lack of any established political parties poses significant obstacles for the future of Ukrainian politics. It is disturbing to consider that the political party with the largest popular base is the communist party, illustrating that a politically retrograde party is unique in its established party platform that stands out from its political figureheads.[7] If political parties are not popularly viewed as a reliable means of advancing social interests, any long-term support for political parties is impossible to achieve. D'Anieri emphasizes that it is impossible to sustain political parties which are inextricably linked to specific candidates. The problem of political succession is greatly aggravated with a limited sense of party loyalty on the part of the electorate. The ease with which voters associate themselves with a particular individual over an ideology manifested in a specific political party reveals the traces of patronism that linger in political culture. The transition from political individualism to a reliable party structure that is able to command adherence at the local level requires reform within the Ukrainian political tradition, and the ability to reform the party structure in a practical and effective way will determine the long-term success of the Orange Revolution. The Revolution must be examined with both retroactive evaluations of political decisions and with prescriptions for future reform.

The technical constitutional reforms that were possible due to the level of mass mobilization have profound consequences for the Orange Revolution's legacy within Ukraine. The shift from hyper-presidentialism to a more parliamentary presidential system requires a strong civil support to accomplish. The constitutional

reform that occurred in 2004 required a mandate that would have been impossible to achieve without a popular anti-authoritarian movement as active as it was. Radical democratization creates a dangerous instability. Any stable reforms to a constitution cannot emerge without both the political will to implement reform and the popular mandate to support it over time. Though elements of patronism and corruption still exist, the Orange Revolution has shown that there are limits to what the public will tolerate from its political leaders. The greatest success of the nonviolent protest movement in Ukraine has been to achieve a constitutional witness to the limitations of public tolerance for governmental fraud. The argument that the Orange Revolution was more of an evolution than a revolution inherently assumes that true revolution necessitates drastic social instability. It is clear that Ukraine has many legacies from post-communism that it must overcome to continue reforms from the Orange Revolution, and serious challenges face Ukrainian leaders in "designing effective institutions, managing the post-Orange Revolution coalition, removing entrenched corruption and weak respect for the rule of law, and coping with a less hospitable external environment."[8] In spite of all these obstacles, the presence of a strong civil society that is both willing and able to mobilize against an intolerable establishment has successfully moved political institutions in the direction of reform, and the codification of that public initiative marks the Orange Revolution as revolutionary.

It would be premature to make assumptions about the long-term sustainability of any democratic institutional reforms, but there is a consensus that the re-emergence of an executive with the powers of Kuchma is unlikely to occur in Ukraine. The executive has been divided between the offices of the president and prime minister, and this separation makes strong authoritarianism inconceivable in the near future. A common factor in many colored revolutions was the unlikely alliances of diverse political figures in order to depose the executive in response to massive election fraud. As Ukraine has witnessed the re-election of Yanukovych in 2010, the political climate in which he assumes a presidency is no longer one accustomed to the levels of election fraud in the post-Soviet era. Though short-term factors, such as diffusion, a unified leadership strategy, and popular methods of protest, were influential in the genesis of the Orange Revolution, the long-term variables of party capacity and issue linkage to the international community encourage continued reform even up to the present. This is the fundamental essence of revolution—that it transforms an environment of political stagnation into one of deliberate progression. Though progress may be slow or may not always be in the direction of greater democracy, the true revolution recognizes that political adaptation to the interests of the public is not only an unavoidable force, but also a desirable one.

Notes

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3. Taras Kuzio, "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution," *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2006) 61.
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Crimea, Ukraine

Iryna Dzyubynska



Resistance Ideology of the UAOC and Ukrainian Identity

Niels Lee

On December 1, 1991, Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union, enabling it to become an internationally recognized nation for the first time in history. The vote for independence was impressive, with an 84.2-percent voter turnout, 90.3 percent of which agreed to an autonomous republic.[1] However, the enthusiastic support for secession was driven not by political or religious causes, but rather by economic grievances which resulted from the meltdown in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, as 78 percent of Ukrainians believed independence would bring the country out of an economic collapse. Nevertheless, the notion of Ukrainian nationality was preserved through many institutions throughout centuries of foreign occupation, one of which was the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), a splinter group of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC). Indirectly, the founding of the UAOC in 1921 and its two resurrections enabled it to fulfill its role as the maintainer of Ukrainian social and religious thought through a resistance ideology, cultivated over four centuries of foreign invasions. By invoking Cossack traditions and adapting their ideologies according to the dominating political infrastructures, the Church was able to retain its religious convictions while identifying itself with a distinct Ukrainian identity.

The Slavic middle age was a turbulent period, as Muscovy, Ottoman, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth competed for the remains of Kievan Rus', with the Commonwealth having absorbed the Galicia-Volhynia region, which represents the majority of modern Ukraine. Along the borderlands of these three power states, a tribal merger of various exiled factions, such as Ukrainian Orthodox, Jews, peasants, and serfs, resulted in the creation of the Cossacks, the ideological founding fathers of modern Ukrainian identity. The Cossacks, however, were more than a mere alliance of rejected ideals and lifestyles, for they promoted democracy, freedom of religion, and political autonomy, all of which coincided with Ukrainian Orthodoxy. After the Union of Brest in 1595, which created a concord between the Catholic Commonwealth and a portion of Galicia-Volhynia residents who practiced Orthodoxy, Orthodox purists fled to the borderlands and created a military alliance with the Cossacks to counter the newly assimilated theology.[2] The unification was mutually beneficial: the Cossacks were able to enter into the Ruthenian social elite which had been actively struggling to preserve the traditional Orthodox Church, and the purists were able to continue their customary religious practices without political persecution.[3]

Nevertheless, the Cossacks were not defined as uniquely Orthodox until several major military victories during the 17th century, which confronted the Cossack head of state, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, with a dilemma. The successful campaigns against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth may have gained him substantial land and resources, but this forced the Hetman to act less as a military leader and more as a politician. This weakened his argument of the

"right of occupation" which was used to legitimatize his role as the commander.[4] Therefore, in order to maintain stability, he began to fully endorse Orthodoxy by providing the Church with political privileges, increasing ecclesiastical institutions and supporting Orthodox electoral procedures.[5] This prompted some churchmen such as Patriarch Paisios and Paul of Aleppo to declare him as a sovereign Orthodox prince,[6] allowing Khmelnytsky to declare the medieval notion of "divine right."[7] Therefore, the semi-secular Cossacks became defenders of Orthodoxy, creating a unity of church and state within the Ukraine. With this radical transformation, the Church's opposition to the Catholic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth assimilated with the Cossack uprising, constructing a deep notion of resistance. This outlook would be reflected by the Muscovite envoy Grigorii Unkovsky in his conversations with Ukrainians, stating that "every rank in the Ukraine central said: 'The Lord God has now given us a defender of the Christian faith and liberator from the accursed religion [Catholicism], Hetman Bohdan Khmelnystky.'"[8]

Despite the Cossacks' rebellious nature and their conversion to Orthodoxy, they were ultimately subjugated by Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Nevertheless, Orthodoxy continued to flourish among those who considered themselves to be the descendents of the Cossacks for over three centuries prior to the rise of the Soviet Union in the early 20th century. Lenin's religious policy relentlessly imposed the separation of church and state and of school and church as the means of abolishing religious institutions within the Soviet domain. Also, in order to regulate the various church denominations, the communist government began to control the affairs of the Ukraine Orthodox Church (UOC) through the patriarchal power of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Russification, a Russian assimilation policy spearheaded by the last two tsars, was continued under the umbrella of Leninism, which involved forcing the Russian language into Ukraine's social and religious societies. As the UOC became the forefront for advocating Soviet policies, this antagonized Orthodox purists, who consequently established a new church—which in their view was a resurrection of the original resistance Kievan religiosity—the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC).

Established in 1921, the primary agenda of the UAOC's founding members was to create a cultural difference between Russia and Ukraine in order to maintain a unique identity within their religious system. The movement was supported by the democratic elements of the Ukrainian liberation movement, which later established the Ukrainian National Republic.[9] The UAOC advocated a strict separation of church and state, a decentralized but democratized conciliar system based on autocephaly, and the promotion of Ukrainianization of church practices through the use of rite and folk music.[10] Their specific reliance on the Kiev Metropolitanate, which was independent from the Muscovy church, also reflected their anti-Russification agenda. During its first phases of organization, its secession from the mainstream ecclesiastical hierarchy was considered to be illegitimate, but as the liberal clergy witnessed the interference of the state and the authoritarian policies of bishops coinciding with the Soviet administration, their support for church autocephaly and the implementation of Ukrainian culture increased.[11] The Kremlin temporarily tolerated the organization, primarily as an attempt to undermine the Moscow Patriarchate. However, as the UAOC gained a popular following during the early 1920s, the Soviet government imposed heavy taxes on its parishes and even exiled the Church's head, Vasyl Lypkivsky, from office, leading to its self-liquidation in 1930.[12] Nevertheless, the radical formulation of a modern religious establishment, which championed Ukrainian individualism over traditional theology,

reaffirmed the resistance ideology embedded within the Ukrainian consciousness that sought religiously to counter aggressive authorities.

The UAOC experienced a rebirth in 1942, when German forces briefly occupied Ukraine during WWII. Until the Soviet reoccupation, the Church presented a less radical canon by consecrating its hierarchy in the traditional manner and developing a more conservative theology that partially mimicked the UOC.[13] This transformation was in part due to the constant harassment of Nazi occupation authorities.[14] Also, unlike its predecessor, the revived Church primarily focused on establishing foreign Orthodox connections. During the short two years of its existence, the UAOC began to rapidly consecrate bishops and ministers with the legitimacy given by the Polish Orthodox Church, reviving Ukrainian nationalism in foreign territories. Metropolitan Mstyslav, a bishop who was elected in Kiev in 1942 by the UAOC, advocated nationalism and religious rights through his linkage with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church located in the United States, allowing nationalistic ideals to flourish without regional restrictions.[15] Such resistance efforts were also possible because the Church encompassed an aura of martyrdom that originated from its first liquidation, allowing foreign and domestic Ukrainians to recollect the memories of an institution that based itself on the hybrid of nationalism and religiosity.

Nevertheless, the domestic resistance of the UAOC was limited after the 1940s because it was banned and openly persecuted even during the anti-Stalinist Khrushchev administration. The influence of unofficial UAOC movements was deterred by the changes in social conditions and public policy. The 1950s marked a sudden influx of ethnic Russians into Ukrainian society, bolstering social support for Russification, while government authorities removed the Ukrainian language as a compulsory college entrance requirement, categorizing it as a secondary vernacular.[16] In the 1960s and '70s, rapid industrialization and urbanization took place under Brezhnev. By 1966, Ukraine's city dwellers outnumbered villagers for the first time in its history.[17] Such Russification caused the UOAC to lose its influence.

The Third Resurrection of the Church began in the relatively anti-communist region of western Ukraine in 1989. This was during a period of religious revival, as a number of Russian Orthodox priests sympathetic to the Ukrainian cause began to defect to the UOAC, while the banned Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) also rose from its underground existence.[18] The phenomenon was instigated by a new policy of transparency that marked the Glasnost period. This provided the Autocephalous Church with the means to revive their institution. With the western region's ties with democratic ideals and Catholicism, the newly developed UAOC was able to conjure an anti-Soviet stance based on Ukrainian traditions and practices. Within two years, Galicia became the Church's stronghold, with an estimated 1000 parishes.[19]

Also, during the final years of Soviet era, Ukrainians were able to access information through newspapers reporting on Stalin's linguistic assimilation, his role in the 1932 Holodomor, and the rigorous banning of the UAOC. The UAOC in particular was given its own personal platform, as reporters retraced history to reveal illegitimate accusations against the organization and uncensored details of how the government undermined the authority of church officials.[20] The uninterrupted flow of communication and material recreated not only anti-Soviet antagonisms, but also substantial support for the UAOC. However, unlike the religious sects Moscow had proclaimed to be legitimate, the Autocephalous Church had to establish its structure from the beginning, due to the absence of a governmental body for over five decades. With Gorbachev's policy of allowing church rivalry rather than suppression,[21] the UAOC began to return to its radical roots by associating itself with

renowned resistance leaders. The most popular was Father Vasyl Romaniuk, a former prisoner of the Soviet gulag for his involvement in the struggle for religious rights, who immediately pledged his allegiance to the Church.[22] Many clergy who wished to continue their Orthodox congregations without the influence of Moscow or Rome also joined the newly revived Church. With social and religious support, the UAOC eventually broke away from Moscow in 1989 and created an independent Kiev Patriarchate in 1990.

Unlike the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (as a Soviet ideological outpost) and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (which had minimal ties with the Cossack tradition), the UAOC preserved Ukrainian nationalism through its consistent institutional resurrections. The manifestation of a culturally originated church within Ukraine is not a surprising phenomenon, considering that the Cossack tradition is based upon resistance against foreign influence and co-dependently fused with Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Recognizing the threatening growth of the Autocephalous Church during the final years of Soviet Communism, Russians began to attack the very basis of their establishments. Writing for the Russian atheist journal *Liudyna i svit*, a Soviet author claimed that Ukrainian Autocephalists were simply "a synthesis of clericalism and Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism."[23] However, this opinion was invalidated, and the Soviet Union's Ukrainian policy backfired, as the Kremlin was not aware of the social consequences intolerance would have on a nation that had an extensive history of social and religious subjugation. The creation and resurrection of the UAOC is the product of such constraints, a testimony of how their resistance ideology funneled the core concepts of Ukrainian identity.

Notes

1. Serhy Yekelchyk, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 191.
2. The Union of Brest was enabled to establish an allegiance between some followers of Orthodoxy and Catholics. While the Orthodox recognized the Catholic pope, they were allowed to continue their practices.
3. Serhii Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 111.
4. Plokhy 208.
5. Frank E. Sysyn, *Religion and Nation in Modern Ukraine* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003) 30.
6. Sysyn 29.
7. Plokhy 208.
8. Plokhy 221.
9. Vasyl Markus, *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet Ukraine after 1945* (Cambridge: Ukrainian Studies Fund, Harvard University, 1985) 61.
10. Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 139.
11. Sysyn 33.
12. Yekelchyk 99.
13. Stephen K. Batalden, ed., *Seeking God* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993) 196.
14. Sysyn 77.
15. Sysyn 97.
16. Yekelchyk 173.
17. Yekelchyk 170.
18. Yekelchyk 182.
19. Batalden 199.
20. Batalden 196.
21. Sysyn 172.
22. Batalden 192.
23. Markus 74.

Slovenian Identity and Architecture in Interwar Ljubljana

Anna Kats

Jože Plečnik was poised at a critical juncture in Slovenian history when he articulated a national dilemma of the Slovenian state in the interwar period, saying, "We Slovenes have to choose between Vienna and Rome, or perhaps Belgrade."[1] Plečnik took to answering this question of national orientation through the medium of architecture, creating a vast body of work in Ljubljana when "the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire […] triggered off popular demand for a national architecture" in the new Slovene state.[2] Today, Plečnik's legacy renders him the most historically significant Slovenian architect of the 20th century. His sense of Slovenian national identity is imbued in the buildings he erected in Ljubljana during the interwar period, among them the National Library of the University of Ljubljana.

Constructed in 1936-41, the National Library is a masterwork of Slovenian architecture, given the "symbolic ideas embodied in the library and the quality of its execution."[3] In the historical context of interwar Slovenia's inclusion in Yugoslavia, the National Library can be understood as Plečnik's effort to construct both a national identity for the new Slovene state and a repository worthy of the language and culture of the Slovenian nation.

Jože Plečnik was born in Ljubljana in 1872 into a Catholic family. He received early training as a carpenter's apprentice and went on to study at the School of Applied Arts in Graz, receiving a "regional scholarship" to attend the school in 1892.[4] His teacher in Graz encouraged him to enroll with Otto Wagner at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, which he did in the autumn of 1895. His thesis project under Wagner won Plečnik a trip to study the architecture of Italy and France in 1898.[5] In Italy, Plečnik first came into contact with Renaissance architecture, developing an interest in its distinct contrast to the modernism that was so popular in Vienna at the time. In traveling to Italy, Plečnik became better acquainted with his own hometown, the Slovenian capital Ljubljana. Plečnik's fascination with his Slovenian identity is rooted in this trip, which gave him the opportunity to gather a variety of architectural ideas:

> After so many years spent studying and working in an Austrian environment, with its Germanic taste for mysticism and fantasy, Italy seemed to awaken him to other possibilities and another, mediterranean aspect of his own nature. He began to see Ljubljana as a place where both worlds came together. […] This was when he first understood Ljubljana as his true homeland, and began to dream of celebrating and embellishing it through his architecture.[6]

After interludes in Paris and Ljubljana, Plečnik returned to Vienna in 1899 to set up his own architectural practice, remaining there until his move to Prague in 1911. After World War I, Plečnik returned to Ljubljana to become Head of Architecture at the newly established University Technical School, traveling often to Prague throughout the 1920s to supervise the reconstruction of Prague Castle into the presidential palace and also constructing a church in the Czech capital during this time.[7]

Upon returning permanently to Ljubljana in 1928, Plečnik "became increasingly influential on the development of Ljubljana as the capital

of the new Slovenia, proposing and supervising major projects in urban planning, and producing much of his greatest work."[8] The National Library was one such project, the plans for which were first published in 1932. Construction began in 1936 and the building was officially opened to the public in 1941.[9]

The National Library was constructed during an exceptional moment in Slovenian history that influenced the form and meaning of the edifice. In 1918, Slovenes united with Serbs and Croats to create the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in which Slovenia was recognized as a constituent nation, a political equal of the other two. In practice, the Serbs "secured predominant influence" in the politics of the new state; this domination from Belgrade, coupled with official recognition of the existence of a Slovenian nation, pushed the "Slovenian question" of national identity to the forefront of political life in 1920s Slovenia.[10] "Plečnik attempted to awaken the national consciousness with beauty and grandeur," writes art historian Damjan Prelovšek, who explains that Plečnik added to the political debate on Slovenian identity taking place at this time by designing the National Library.[11]

Economic and cultural conditions prevailing in Slovenia during the 1920s and 1930s also influenced Plečnik in his design of the National Library. "The Slovenian economy […] experienced one of its greatest booms during the 1920s and 1930s," writes historian Oto Luthar; this provided the capital necessary to fund Plečnik's comprehensive redesign of Ljubljana during the interwar period, which included the construction of the National Library.[12] Luthar further explains that "there was an astonishing development of Slovenian culture [and] higher education" during the interwar period, in which Plečnik, as both a teacher and the nation's most prolific contemporary architect, was a central figure.[13] Thus, "to understand Plečnik one must consider the national component of his architecture," given that the political, economic, and cultural processes of national self-identification were the predominant features of the historical context in which Plečnik constructed the National Library in Ljubljana.[14]

Plečnik's desire to establish a national Slovenian identity and culture through his architectural practice led him to choose the site of the National and University Library on the ground of the former Prince's Mansion, an early baroque palazzo erected in 1660 and destroyed in an 1895 earthquake.[15] Architectural historian Mel Gooding writes that Plečnik's decision to build on top of a destroyed cultural monument legitimized the national identity being established during the interwar period by incorporating a monument of the past into a modern national identity.[16] The palazzo is significant because Plečnik chose to resurrect its form for the National Library, which resembles an Italian Renaissance palazzo. In choosing an Italian aesthetic with historical roots in Ljubljana, Plečnik attempted to orient Slovenian national identity toward a Mediterranean and Western sense of self. This was a turn away from Belgrade and the domination of Serbian identity in defining the interwar Yugoslav state.

Plečnik's desire to define and glorify Slovene identity on the exterior of the National Library originates in his understanding of the building as "a power house as well as a storehouse; a bastion of the Slovene language, an uncompromising monument to a nation's literary and cultural history."[17] The Western and Mediterranean factors of Slovene identity are emphasized again in the exterior decoration of the library, where "Plečnik fancifully identified the Slovenes with the Etruscans: the 'Etruscan' jars [that form a decorative balustrade above the front porch of the Turjaška Street entrance] allude to a Mediterranean people overwhelmed and ultimately extinguished by a powerful imperium."[18] These jars suggest the Slovenian fate under Austro-Hungarian domination and warn against the establishment of a similar situation in the Serb-dominated context of the Yugoslav Kingdom. Catholicism, too, is emphasized as

a seminal force of Slovenian national identity through the placement of Lojze Dolinar's sculpture of Moses above the Gospoka Street entrance to the Library; Gooding explains that "given Plečnik's intense identification of the cultural with the spiritual, there seems no doubt as to its meaning. Moses was angry when the Israelites denied God and began to worship the golden calf: Plečnik uses Dolinar's minatory Moses as a reminder to the Slovenes of their spiritual and cultural inheritance as represented by the National Library."[19] The most noticeable feature of the exterior, however, is the cladding of the facades. Plečnik used local stone alongside fragments of the Prince's Mansion and Roman and medieval stonework from the site to create the distinct appearance of the facades, uniting the varied elements from various cultures that define the site's history into a decidedly Slovenian whole.

The interior of the National Library, too, displays Plečnik's efforts to define and glorify Slovenian national culture. The library entrance leads to a very dimly lit central staircase, the darkness of which is intensified by the black marble of the stairwell walls. Gooding's description of the ascent into the library's reading room suggests the religious connotations of the interior:

> From the foot of the Library staircase the scholar, admitted now to what is clearly a temple dedicated to the things of the mind and of the spirit […] ascends, as in a ritual passage, from darkness to light, guided by a bright square, which is soon revealed as a window above the door into the Reading Room.[20]

This ascent from darkness to light is the passage from the commonplace ignorance of the street to the knowledge of Slovenian identity and culture contained within the books of the reading room. The interior becomes a sacred space, Plečnik's assertion that spirituality is a tenet of Slovenian identity and culture, which are worthy of being contained within sacrosanct environs.

Jože Plečnik believed that "there was clearly a role for architecture in fashioning the national image,"[21] which he endeavored to do with the construction of the National and University Library in interwar Ljubljana. The final result produced a "building of the highest symbolic significance," which asserted the Catholic spirituality and Mediterranean influence that Plečnik recognized as central tenets of Slovenian national identity, while also providing a space worthy of the storage and study of Slovenian nationality.[22] Though the interwar period saw Slovenia look to Belgrade politically, Plečnik's National Library asserted that culturally, the new state belonged to the West.

Notes

1. Quoted in Andrew Herscher, "Plečnik avec Laibach," *Assemblage* 33 (August 1997): 68.
2. Ian Bentley, "Design for a Common Cause," *Jože Plečnik 1872-1957: Architecture and the City* (Oxford: Urban Design, Oxford Polytechnic, 1983) 44.
3. Petar Krečić, *Plečnik: The Complete Works* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1993) 128.
4. Krečić 14.
5. Krečić 17.
6. Krečić 18-19.
7. Mel Gooding, *National and University Library Ljubljana—Jože Plečnik* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997) 4.
8. Gooding 4.
9. Gooding 4.
10. Oto Luthar et al. *The Land Between: A History of Slovenia.* Ed. Oto Luthar. Trans. Manca Gasperic and Olga Vukovic. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2008) 385, 389.
11. Damjan Prelovšek, *Jože Plečnik, 1872-1957: Architectura Perennis*. Trans. Patricia Crampton and Eileen Martin. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997) 71.
12. Luthar 395.
13. Luthar 397.
14. Prelovšek 36.
15. Gooding 5.
16. Gooding 10.
17. Gooding 11.
18. Gooding 12.
19. Gooding 12.
20. Gooding 18.
21. Bentley 51.
22. Bentley 51.

Islam and the Russian Empire

Jaclyn Tran

Russia has long existed in close proximity to Muslim states, and the empire itself played host to a significant Muslim population. Despite clearly defining itself as an Orthodox Christian empire and having no qualms about strictly repressing other ethnic minorities, such as the Jews, the Russian Empire pursued a relatively tolerant policy when managing Russian Muslims. This tolerance did not stem from pro-Islamic sentiments, but rather from practical concerns. Facing the threat posed by neighboring Islamic powers, such as the Ottoman Empire, and the difficulty of controlling a sizeable minority, Russia strategically employed religious toleration and took advantage of aspects of local culture in order to administer its Muslim minorities effectively.

Russia's common borders with Islamic states brought the Russian Empire into extensive contact with their peoples, most significantly with the Ottoman Empire. Imperial expansion created tension between the two empires as the Russians and the Ottomans both struggled to seize territory. Even from the 1600s, Russia often found itself embroiled in violent conflicts with the Ottomans, such as the Russo-Turkish Wars or the Crimean Wars.[1] Meanwhile, expansion on another front locked Russia in a brutal struggle with Muslims in the Caucasus.[2] This imperial expansion created a significant problem, because even as the violence of expansion exacerbated tensions between Russia and its Islamic neighbors, the expansion itself increased the number of Muslims within the Russian empire's borders.

The formidable strength of the Muslim community within and without Russia's borders meant that the regime faced multiple threats to its stability. The prospect of Russian-Muslim discontent developing into rebellion was an immediate concern. However, the regime could not only focus on domestic problems, but also had to consider the influence of the Ottoman Empire over Russian Muslims. Russia saw the Ottoman Empire as almost synonymous with Islam, often using "Turkish" or "Muhammadan" indiscriminately to describe Ottoman institutions.[3] Given its central position in the Islamic world, Russia feared the Ottoman Empire would influence Russian Muslims against the tsarist state. Adolf Berzhe, for instance, asserted that Turkey manipulated populations in the Caucasus by delivering proclamations about the superiority of Turkish life.[4] The presence of the Ottoman Empire also limited Russia's ability to use harsh reprisals to control its Muslim minority. Muhammed Efendi's comment on British imperialism applied here: "Wherever Muslims are maltreated, they and their brethren throughout the world will be displeased because all Muslims belong to a single religious community."[5] Islamic internationalism thus put Russia in a unique position with regards to its Muslim minority.

The regime had to develop a strategy for managing Muslim citizens which would successfully discourage revolt while also avoiding the possibility of Ottoman retaliation. Beginning with the reign of Catherine the Great, the state settled on a domestic policy characterized by toleration and attempts to integrate local customs

into administration as the most effective way to placate the Muslim minority and minimize the influence of the Ottoman Empire. Catherine herself pursued policies that made the imperial state, in Robert Crews's words, a "patron of Islam."[6] In her 1767 Instruction to the Legislative Commission, Catherine explicitly affirmed the principle of religious toleration. Then, most significantly, in 1788 she established the Ecclesiastical Assembly of the Muhammadan Creed. As described in the decree, the Assembly was meant to manage the "mullahs and other cleric ranks of the Muhammadan faith." The Assembly represented the regime's attempt to incorporate Islam into the bureaucracy to aid administration. Initially, the effort faced some difficulties because of the lack of pre-existing bureaucratic structures, but officials solved this problem by simply applying the model of Orthodox institutions to Islam. Thus, the state enacted measures such as treating mosque communities like Orthodox parishes and creating an official Muslim clergy, restricting clerical duties to men who earned Assembly-approved licenses. Once the state integrated Islam in this way, it could effectively use Assembly regulation of the religion as a tool for administration. To this end, the Assembly took on responsibilities such as approving mullahs and other ecclesiastical ranks, serving as a place for appeal for Muslim laity, and "hearing and deciding cases belonging to the religious part of the Muhammadan law."[7] The Assembly also worked to shore up the state's power. The Orenburg muftis, for instance, emphasized teachings against sin that correlated with Orthodox doctrines and which support imperial law, and Mufti Gabdrakhimov exhorted Muslims to "be obedient to the Sovereign Emperor Nicholas Pavlovich."[8]

Russia's military policy in the Caucasus, however, contrasted sharply with the policy of religious toleration elsewhere in the empire. Here, Russian forces faced significant opposition from Muslim resistance movements, such as Shamil's revolt, which were based on Sufi orders encouraging holy war.[9] Given the effort required to pacify the region, the state initially adopted more repressive measures, condemning parts of the native population to exile. However, such measures, implemented in response to a perceived immediate threat, were not typical. In fact, afterwards, once the immediate danger of rebellion had passed, officials in the Caucasus moved closer to a policy of toleration. A military committee concluded that relying solely on a Russian judicial system would provoke "first discontent and then straightforward rebellion." To prevent such unrest, the state used customary law courts instead, based on the traditions of the native peoples. The state oversaw the whole system, presiding over elections of deputies and Muslim judges and codifying the Muslim law. The Russian Empire thereby followed the policy of incorporating local customs as a tool for administration and successfully pacified an active rebellious movement.[10]

The lack of support for and limited success of conversion efforts also spoke to the general commitment to the policy of toleration.[11] Local officials feared provoking Muslim retaliation more than they supported religious proselytizing.[12] While missionaries existed, the reluctance of the state to sponsor active campaigns to convert Muslims demonstrated the general trend toward toleration. Furthermore, even the missionary movement itself took advantage of the strategy of incorporating native culture into their institutions. The missionary educational system encouraged the use of the pupils' native languages, ideally in colloquial form, and advocated the use of native teachers, who would elicit "more trust and sympathy on the part of the people."[13] Even though the missionaries' ultimate goal was conversion, they preferred incorporating Mus-

lim people's traditions, not repressing them, in order to achieve this.

Overall, by pursuing a policy of toleration, the Russian state was able to effectively exploit Islam as a tool to manage the Muslim minority. By treating its Muslims relatively well, the state gave them positive incentives not to rebel or turn to the Ottoman Empire for help. The life and career of Ismail Gaspirali demonstrate the success of this policy of toleration. Gaspirali was a respected reformer in the Muslim community who founded the Jadid schools to further education reform and tried to unite the diverse Turkic languages.[14] Saifi Ibrahimov dubbed him "the genius and conscience of our modern language, our heart, our literature […] the entire being of us."[15] A Russian Muslim, Gaspirali developed a very favorable view of Muslim life in the empire and strongly advocated cooperation between Russians and Muslims. In his view, "Nowhere do the sons of the East live more easily than in Russia."[16] The regime's treatment of Gaspirali showed that these positive sentiments were not unfounded. Although another regime might have perceived his dedicated effort to develop the culture and nationalist sentiment of one of its large ethnic minorities as threatening, the Russian regime did not harshly suppress Gaspirali's public activity. They still allowed him to publish, albeit through a censor, and did not shut down Jadid schools.[17] As Gaspirali's example shows, the Russian policy of religious toleration had been a success, creating Muslim citizens who pursued their own national goals, but without aspirations of secession or hostility toward the Russian state.

Russia's experience with its Muslim population spoke to its ability to govern a multiethnic empire. While Russia undoubtedly aspired to imperial greatness, its leaders were prudent enough to recognize the limits of their power. While they felt confident in their ability to impose discriminatory legislation on isolated minorities, such as Russia's Jewish population, without fear of serious retaliation, the Russian state recognized that it was vulnerable to attack from its Muslim neighbors. Thus, the policy of toleration was rooted in practical national security concerns and an awareness of the empire's weaknesses. Ultimately, this strategy allowed the imperial state to effectively manage its Muslim population. Religious toleration provided Muslims with an incentive not to revolt and minimized the likelihood that the Ottoman Empire would be able to exploit their discontent. Incorporating local customs into the administration of Muslim populations minimized the backlash that could have resulted from simply imposing Russian practices by force and eased the difficulty of managing this minority.

Notes

1. Robert Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006) 36.
2. Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) 14.
3. Crews 37.
4. Jersild 26.
5. Ismail Gasprinskii, *Russo-Oriental Relations: Thoughts, Notes, and Desires* (Bakhchisaray: Tipo-Litografia Gazety "Perevodchika," 1896) 214-215.
6. Crews 32.
7. Crews 39-54.
8. Crews 76-77.
9. Jersild 19-20.
10. Jersild 92-95.
11. Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) 67.
12. Geraci 111.
13. Geraci 58-61.
14. Edward Lazzerini, *Central Asian Monuments*. Ed. H. B. Paksoy. (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1992) 12.
15. Alan W. Fisher, "A Model Leader for Asia, Ismail Gaspirali," *The Tatars of Crima: Return to the Homeland*. Ed. Edward A. Allworth. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998) 2-3.
16. Gasprinskii 207.
17. Fisher 14.



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online content

Unfortunately, we were not able to include all the excellent papers we received in the print version of *The Birch*. However, we will be including bonus essays on our Web site, www.thebirchonline.org. Check it out for a paper on Soviet and Russian mountaineering by Casey Ann O'Malley, a senior at Columbia University majoring in English and Russian language and culture.



