

ABSTRACTS

To Chicago and Back: Aleko Konstantinov, Rose Oil, and the Smell of Modernity

MARY NEUBURGER

In 1893 Aleko Konstantinov undertook a momentous journey to the Chicago World's Fair. Mary Neuburger explores the broader implications of this journey and its consequences for the Bulgarian encounter with the west and modernity, drawing special attention to the issue of smell. As chronicled in *To Chicago and Back*, written after his return, Konstantinov discovers both the New World and the quintessence of his own nation on the famous Midway Plaisance, where he meets the prototype for Bulgaria's greatest literary anti-hero—the indomitable Baï Gano. In *Baï Gano*—a fictional travelogue about a Bulgarian in Europe—as in *To Chicago and Back*, Konstantinov explores the theme of Bulgarian backwardness vis-à-vis a more developed (albeit imperfect) Europe and United States. As Baï Gano, a bumbling and stinky rose oil merchant, travels throughout “civilized” Europe, olfactory contrasts and ironies emerge, highlighting the role of smell in evolving Bulgarian (and European) notions of modernity and “otherness.”

The Rise and Fall of Archbishop Kohn: Czechs, Germans and Jews in Turn-of-the-Century Moravia

MICHAEL L. MILLER

This article uses the career of Theodor Kohn (1845–1915), archbishop of Olmütz/Olomouc between 1892 and 1904, to examine various trends in the last decades of the Habsburg empire: the burgeoning Czech-German conflict, the brewing social crisis within the Catholic Church, the rising tide of anti-Semitism, and the countervailing force of Jewish national pride. Drawing on a wide range of literary, publicist, and archival sources, Michael L. Miller shows how Archbishop Kohn's Jewish ancestry served as a lightning rod for various disenfranchised, disillusioned, and disheartened groups in the Bohemian Lands of the Habsburg empire. Even Jews latched onto this “Jewish archbishop,” first as a symbol of “racial aptitude,” then as a cautionary tale about the futility of assimilation. Kohn himself endowed his quintessentially “Jewish” name with Christian significance, viewing it as the source of his suffering—albeit a suffering that he cherished as the cross he had to bear.

Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians in Kiev: Intergroup Relations in Late Imperial Associational Life

NATAN M. MEIR

This article explores the associational life of late imperial Kiev to gauge the extent of Jewish participation in the city's civil society and the nature of interethnic relations in the voluntary sphere. Natan Meir demonstrates

that, despite political and societal circumstances that often discouraged positive interactions between Jews and their Russian and Ukrainian neighbors, the voluntary association made possible opportunities for constructive interethnic encounters. These opportunities included a range of experiences from full Jewish integration to a segregation of Jewish interests within the sphere of activity of a particular association. While taking into account the central role of intergroup tensions and hostility in Kiev, Meir notes that the frequency of contacts between Jews and non-Jews was higher than most scholars have assumed. By placing the case of Kiev against the larger framework of the Russian empire as well as other European states, Meir contributes to our understanding of the development of late imperial civil society and of the modern Jewish experience in the late Russian empire and across urban Europe.

Febris Erotica: Aleksandr Herzen's Post-Romantic Physiology

VALERIA SOBOL

This article explores Aleksandr Herzen's use of the lovesickness topos in his novel *Kto vinovat?* (1847) in the context of the long literary and medical traditions of lovesickness and the specifically Russian situation of the 1840s. Valeria Sobol argues that Herzen was among the first Russian writers to exploit the semiotics and diagnostics of lovesickness in order to address the questions of human spirituality and the status of scientific knowledge. Given Herzen's frequently proclaimed antispiritualist and antidualist position and the novel's apparent anti-Romantic pathos, one would expect him to reject the essentially dualist notion of lovesickness as a "malady of the soul," but the novel presents a far more complex picture. Herzen's struggle to reconcile the new scientific spirit of his age with the Romantic heritage reflects the transitional nature of the decade in which the novel was written.

Where Bobok Is Buried: The Theosophical Roots of Dostoevskii's "Fantastic Realism"

ILYA VINITSKY

In addition to examining the ideological and artistic origins of Fedor Dostoevskii's portrayal of the underworld in his short "cemetery story" "Bobok" (1873), Ilya Vinitsky probes the theosophical context of Dostoevskii's "fantastic realism." Vinitsky considers this story a programmatic "theosophical menippea" that artistically "voices" and "tests" Emanuel Swedenborg's doctrine of posthumous self-exposure of the wicked souls who are no longer restrained by "fear of the law, of the loss of reputation, of honor, and of life" and laugh shamelessly "at honesty and justice." Vinitsky argues that Dostoevskii was interested in Swedenborg's spiritual psychologism as an epistemological method and contends that Swedenborg's interpretation of devils as former humans, with their "earthly" consciousness, inner sufferings, and memories, perfectly corresponded to Dostoevskii's symbolic anthropology. Vinitsky also proposes that the

comic narrator of “Bobok” can be seen as a literary mask of Dostoevskii himself, who employs philosophical irony as a means of conveying a metaphysical message in the age of positivism and disbelief.

Eugenics, Rejuvenation, and Bulgakov’s Journey into the Heart of Dogness

YVONNE HOWELL

This new reading of Mikhail Bulgakov’s *Heart of a Dog* challenges the two lines of thought that dominate existing interpretations. Cold War-inspired critics saw in the banned novella an anti-Soviet political allegory and ignored its astute treatment of Soviet debates on biosocial issues. Most other critics have cast Preobrazhenskii as a mad scientist in the Frankenstein tradition, unleashing forces he himself cannot control. Putting aside false antitheses, Bulgakov’s novella emerges as a fictional exploration of ideas in eugenics, hormone replacement therapy, and the nature-nurture debate that had real urgency for early Soviet geneticists struggling for ideological support, and for Bolshevik policymakers trying to create a “New Soviet Man.” In this article, Yvonne Howell describes the competing scientific paradigms that provide a backdrop to Bulgakov’s work and shows how attitudes from across the “nature-nurture” spectrum appear and interact in *Heart of a Dog* through the voices of its principal characters.