

## ABSTRACTS

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### **Queer Space, Pride, and Shame in Moscow**

FRANCESCA STELLA

In this article, Francesca Stella examines the notion of Moscow as a global city through the prism of cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism by exploring articulations of queer space in the Russian capital. Two types of queer space are explored: the “scene,” understood as a loose cluster of commercial venues and community organizations catering to an LGBT clientele, and Moscow Pride, a temporary but also highly visible and politicized appropriation of urban space by the LGBT community. The analysis of Moscow Pride as a putative cosmopolitan object is framed within a broader sociopolitical context characterized by the rise of authoritarian, sexually conservative, and anti-western nationalist discourses. Stella provides insights into the contextual ability of political strategies based on visibility, recognition, and the support of transnational solidarity networks to pursue cosmopolitan values of openness and respect toward sexual diversity, highlighting a crucial tension between global/local and universal/particular in current debates on cosmopolitanism.

### **Moscow after the Apocalypse**

MARK GRIFFITHS

This article focuses on the apocalyptic images of Moscow that not only proliferated in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union but that have also persisted during the 2000s. Mark Griffiths analyzes Tat'iana Tolstaia's *Kys'* (2000) and Dmitrii Glukhovskii's *Metro 2033* (2005), comparing and contrasting the roles of Muscovite space in these narratives. Riddled with misinterpreted ideas and mutated remainders, turned upside down by ideological volte-face, and haunted by uncanny vestiges of preapocalyptic life, these postapocalyptic worlds are not tabulae rasae but pastiches that reflect post-Soviet transformations. In *Kys'*, Moscow's concentric circles are connected to temporal cyclicity, disrupting narratives of progress. In *Metro 2033*, the fragmentation of Moscow's metro system allows Glukhovskii to thematize the splintering of the post-Soviet city. Both novels evoke the long-standing opposition between Moscow's center and periphery but unveil the darkness of the hollow core, raising questions about the city's past, present, and future.

### **In Search of the Fourth Rome: Visions of a New Russian Capital City**

VADIM ROSSMAN

Over the last twenty years Russia has experienced significant fluctuations in sentiments regarding the prospects and urgency of relocating the Russian capital city. In this article, Vadim Rossman examines the public debates on this topic, which have involved important Russian politicians, intellectuals, and members of various expert communities. In these debates,

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one can recognize several distinct new visions of society that emerged in the post-Soviet period. This article provides an overview and a critique of these debates and suggests that they should be viewed in the context of nation building, the slow emergence of the nation that was historically suppressed under the weight of the imperial ambitions of Russian statehood. In the background of these debates, the concept of self-identity looms large. National capitals can serve as catalysts for nation building and an instrument of the nation as it constitutes and constructs itself.

### **Decembrists, Rebels, and Martyrs in Siberian Exile: The “Zerentui Conspiracy” of 1828 and the Fashioning of a Revolutionary Genealogy**

DANIEL BEER

In May 1828 the authorities in eastern Siberia uncovered plans, hatched by the Decembrist Ivan Sukhinov, to stage an armed rebellion among the penal laborers of the Nerchinsk mines. Sukhinov was planning to march on Chita in order to liberate his fellow Decembrists from captivity. Found guilty of the charges, the ringleaders were executed and Sukhinov committed suicide. Yet the conspiracy was a fantasy, conjured into being by the chaotic conditions of penal labor and official fears of exiled revolutionaries directing insurgencies in Siberia. The state's destruction of Sukhinov and his alleged co-conspirators created the fictional memory of a revolutionary hero and a noble, if doomed, rebellion. In their memoirs published in the postreform era, the Decembrists offered contemporaries an inspiring tale of insurgency and martyrdom in Siberia. The “Zerentui conspiracy” articulated new possibilities of revolutionary protest in exile.

### **From Violence to Silence: Vicissitudes of Reading (in) *The Idiot***

ALEXANDER SPEKTOR

How the narrative dynamics of *The Idiot* shape and inform its ethics is the focus of this article by Alexander Spektor. *The Idiot* is one of the most radical of Fedor Dostoevskii's novelistic experiments inasmuch as it questions the integrity of the self created through the process of narrative representation and interpretation. Dostoevskii achieves this effect by contrasting the idea of the inherent distance between sign and meaning with Myshkin's initial belief in the possibility of the transcendental signifier. The reader is gradually forced to accept that any form of participation in the big dialogue of the novel is bound to cause intense rivalry for the control of its meaning, which ultimately leads to physical violence either against the self (Ippolit and Nastasia Filippovna) or against others (Rogozhin). Dostoevskii undermines the integrity of any narrative formation of the self, including the self of the reader, by framing it within nonverbal acts of violence and compassion. Hence, *The Idiot* can be read as a *Bildungsroman*, in which the protagonist, Prince Myshkin, traverses the distance between the novel's *is*—an attempt to secure positive ethical meaning (within an established) narrative—and the novel's *ought*, the silent and nonsensical acts of

compassion that, ultimately, defy signification. To make sense of *The Idiot* requires the reader to participate in an ethically compromised endeavor. Forced to do justice to the text, the reader also has to bear responsibility for the violence inherent in any narrative construction of the self.

### **Shostakovich's Turn to the String Quartet and the Debates about Socialist Realism in Music**

KATERINA CLARK

As Katerina Clark argues here, Dmitrii Shostakovich's turn to the quartet form in 1938 and his account of his First Quartet should be seen in the context of ongoing debates from that time about how the mandate for socialist realism might apply in music, a problematical question since music is the least representational of the arts. In making this point, Clark does not analyze the quartets themselves, but instead probes Shostakovich's statements about them, moving out from that narrow focus to place his remarks in the context of overall developments and controversies in Soviet culture of that decade—more specifically in the context of efforts aimed at liberalizing socialist realist practice.