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Telephone: +61 3 8344 5187

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HENRIETTA MONDRY

BLOOD RITUALS AND ETHNICITY IN ALEXANDER PROKHANOV'S FICTION

‘The power of the Golden calf will be destroyed by pure blood.  
Blood unites while faith separates.’<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction**

Commentators of popular contemporary culture in the West have noted the revival and exploitation of myths pertaining to the special power of blood in numerous new productions and in the recycling of old ‘classics’, Dracula and Jack the Ripper being the archetypal examples of this discourse. Indeed, the fascination with – and (dis)belief in – the special mystical nature of blood, including its ability to inspire specific attitudes towards it, has proven to be one of the most stable discursive formations.<sup>2</sup> But has blood mythology entered popular discourse in contemporary Russia? If so, what are the culture-specific myths and characters that Russian culture has revived and recycled in its post-Soviet period?<sup>3</sup> And does it offer positive or negative representations and evaluations of this theme? Does it make the theme politically and ideologically relevant to this society – a tendency which would be in line with its

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<sup>1</sup> A. Ivanov-Sukharevskii, ‘Moia vera rusizm’, *Era Rossii*, 1, 1997, 3-10.

<sup>2</sup> The most programmatic essay is by Franco Moretti who gives a Marxist and psychoanalytic reading of the reception of Dracula the vampire in modern societies. See Franco Moretti, ‘The Dialectic of Fear’, *New Left Review*, 136/1, 1982, 67-85.

<sup>3</sup> On derivation and imitation in post-Soviet discourse see Eliot Borenstein, ‘Survival of the Catchiest: Memes and Postmodern Russia’, *Slavic and East European Journal*, 48/3, 2004, 462-483.

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defining tradition? With post-Soviet culture losing its ideological homogeneity, which political group has made most use of the mythology of blood to pursue its agendas, and which new political agendas employ the blood theme in the form of cultural production?

In its neutral form the mythology of the special power of blood relates to a broad category of occult or esotericism which, in application to Russian culture, has been described as a synthesis of mystical knowledge taken from the Kabala, astrology, alchemy, and various arcane sciences.<sup>4</sup> In a recent study of the occult revival in Russia today Birgit Menzel notes that the occult has always been used for different ends, for purposes ranging from the benignly spiritual to the totalitarian or fascist.<sup>5</sup> Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, interest in the occult and esotericism has become one of the defining features of post-Soviet culture. In the 1990s about 39 percent of all non-fiction publications in the humanities dealt with occult-esoteric topics. Menzel's study shows that the prevalence of occult themes in contemporary Russia is not limited to popular culture, but occupies a strong place in scientific and political discourse. Moreover, it is often the nationalist political groups and scientific alliances which promote the themes of the occult and which use them as ideologies. Menzel isolates three such components: neo-paganism, cosmism and traditionalism. She demonstrates that the revival of the occult is especially typical of the politically influential right-wing New Eurasianist ideology, which propagates the idea of the natural ethnic complementarity of some nations and the antagonism between others.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Russian eth-

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<sup>4</sup> Maria Carlson, *No Religion Higher Than Truth: A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Birgit Menzel, 'The Occult Revival in Russia Today and its Impact on Literature', *The Harriman Review*, 16/4, 2007, 64-77.

<sup>6</sup> On New Eurasianism see Dmitry Shlapentokh, 'Dugin Eurasianism: a Window on the Minds of the Russian Elite or an Intellectual Ploy?', *Studies in East European Thought*, 59, 2007, 215-236.

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nos is viewed as complementary to Turkic people but antagonistic to Jews and Americans. According to Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal's study of the political implications of the occult revival in post-Soviet Russia, 'although occult doctrines per se are apolitical, aspects of them can be politicised and serve as activist ideologies whose formulations wish to transform humanity and change the world'.<sup>7</sup> She also notes that the occult discourse in Russia today typically fosters contempt for democratic processes and, because of the rise of Russian self-assertiveness and nationalism, the occult discourse is often intrinsically linked with the themes of ethnicity and race.<sup>8</sup> Scholars explain the upsurge of interest in these topics as a reaction against seven decades of suppression of any metaphysical thought, and as part of the process of building a new post-Soviet Russian national identity which defines itself against the former atheist and internationalist ideology.<sup>9</sup> Post-Soviet literature is one of the important forms of formulation and dissemination of various occult ideas, including those which inform the ideologies of nationalism, antisemitism and xenophobia.<sup>10</sup> Of special relevance for my discussion is the fact that 'lust for blood' and 'conspiracy' have recently been identified as the two most stable components of the discursive formation of European antisemitism. They inform the stereotypes of the Other and, in spite of 'the phantasmago-

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<sup>7</sup> Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, 'Political Implications of the Early Twentieth-Century Occult Revival', in: *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997, pp. 379-418 (see p. 379).

<sup>8</sup> See Holly DeNio Stephens, 'The Occult in Russia Today', in: Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997, pp. 357-378.

<sup>9</sup> See Mikhail Epshtein, *Na granitsakh kul'tur. Rossiiskoe – Amerikanskoe – Sovetskoe*, New York, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> See Eliot Borenstein, 'Suspending Disbelief: "Cults" and Postmodernism in Post-Soviet Russia', in: Barker, Adele (ed.), *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society after Gorbachev*, Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999, pp. 437-462.

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rical representations of the other',<sup>11</sup> help to identify the enemy and divide society into camps.

In this paper I explore the (re)emergence of the theme of the special power of blood in the context of race, ethnicity and the Other in the writing of an important writer and political personality: Alexander Prokhanov (b. 1938). Prokhanov is also one of the most popular representatives of New Eurasianism today – his 2002 novel *Mr. Hexogen* (*Gospodin Geksogen*) won that year's National Best Seller competition in Moscow.<sup>12</sup> He also won the prestigious literary Bunin Prize in 2009, the aim of which is 'to revive the best traditions of Russian national literature'. These awards illustrate Prokhanov's popularity across the broad social spectra of Russian society: from the culture-consuming laymen whose votes secured *Mr. Hexogen*'s bestseller title to the cultural élites (the jury of the Bunin Prize consisted of high-ranking functionaries in the tertiary education system).<sup>13</sup> I will analyze his two novels, *Mr. Hexogen* (*Gospodin Geksogen*, 2004) and *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'* (*Teplokhod*

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<sup>11</sup> See Robert Fine, 'Fighting with Phantoms: a Contribution to the Debate on anti-Semitism in Europe', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 43/5, 2009, 459-479 (see p. 478).

<sup>12</sup> I prefer to give Prokhanov's novels the generic term pulp fiction (see Eliot Borenstein, 'Survival of the Catchiest: Memes and Postmodern Russia', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 48/3, 2004, 462-483.) This does not exclude the fact that his work is a hybrid genre with serious intentions. Thus, Alexander Etkind in application to post-Soviet literature has noted that these types of novels do not fit the description of popular culture because they earn literary awards and get published by serious publishers. See Alexander Etkind, 'Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied: Magical Historicism in Contemporary Russian Fiction', *Slavic Review*, 68/3, 2009, 631-658.

<sup>13</sup> Members of the jury included the Vice-Chancellors of the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute, the Alexander Pushkin Russian Language Institute and the Moscow Pedagogical University. See 'Obladatelem Buninskoi premii stal Aleksandr Prokhanov', *Kommersant*, 23.10.2009, p. 12.

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*Iosif Brodskii*', 2006), both of which contain disturbing scenes of blood-related rituals in which the themes of ethnicity and race play an important part.<sup>14</sup>

Commentators have studied Prokhanov's fiction as an example of post-Soviet esotericism or new political literature.<sup>15</sup> Being an important political and media personality he uses his novels as a platform to disseminate his brand of politics based on nationalist agendas. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that these two novels by Prokhanov actively construct the cults of blood aimed at privileging Russian ethnicity and degrading Jews, thus dividing the society into dichotomous camps. While the blood rituals among the Russian protagonists in his novels create a neo-paganist and traditionalist symbiosis, the attitude of the Jewish protagonists to blood evokes the antisemitic discursive construct of the blood libel.<sup>16</sup> This paper shows that Prokhanov's aim is the privileging of Russian ethnicity and the perpetuation of antisemitic myths based on the claim that Jews have a special, pathological attitude towards blood. Although Prokhanov uses his novels as a platform to promote political agendas, his construction of Russian ethnicity forms a typology which reveals certain psychological under-currents. He selects small groups of Russian males who have major po-

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<sup>14</sup> Prokhanov, Aleksandr, *Gospodin Geksogen*, Moscow: Ad Marginem, 2004; Prokhanov, Aleksandr, *Teplokhod 'Iosif Brodskii'*, Ekaterinburg: Ul'tra Kul'tura, 2006. (In this article these two books will be referred to as *Mr Hexogen* and *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'* respectively. All translations into English are my own [H.M.]

<sup>15</sup> See Edmund Griffiths, *Alexander Prokhanov and Post-Soviet Esotericism*, unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2007. Rosalind Marsh describes *Mr. Hexogen* as a 'new political novel': see Rosalind Marsh, *Literature, History and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia, 1991-2006*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, p. 335. See also Marina Aptekman, 'Kabbalah, Judeo-Masonic Myth, and Post-Soviet Literary Discourse: From Political Tool to Virtual Parody', *The Russian Review*, 64/4, 2006, 657-681. Aptekman maintains that Prokhanov's novel paradoxically subverts the intended nationalistic pathos due to its postmodernist qualities.

<sup>16</sup> On the history of blood libel see *The Blood Libel Legend: A Case Book in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, Alan Dundes (ed.), Madison: Madison UP, 1991.

litical agendas to essentialise and represent Russian ethnicity. As such, this expression of ethnicity exhibits features indicative of the concept of ethnicity in the minimal group theory, which maintains that an ethnicity's utility is derived from the self-esteem people gain through the denigration of members of other groups.<sup>17</sup> This 'small group' theory of ethnicity takes psychological motivations into account. It is therefore feasible to consider the psychological underpinnings of Prokhanov's occult rituals in examining the larger racialist meanings of these blood-related rites. The fact that Prokhanov is an important writer and political personality emphasises the role which this mode of discourse plays in reflecting, forming and disseminating political agendas.<sup>18</sup>

## I

There is an underlying phylogenetic subtext in European (popular) culture's two archetypal creations linked to the mythology of a special attitude towards blood: Dracula the vampire and Jack the Ripper. Although Dracula is a literary invention while the Ripper was a real-life person, both have been turned into discursive constructs by western culture. Moreover, it is the suggested ethnic identities of both of these characters that the western culture has mythologised. Both supposedly originated in Eastern Europe: Count Dracula comes from Transylvania and Jack the Ripper was alleged to be an East European immigrant in London. In his programmatic essay on the vampire myth and the dialectic of fear in modern societies, Franco Moretti notes that it is not in vain that the Count in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is not English. Moretti asserts that, in this novel, Stoker promotes English nationalism and

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<sup>17</sup> See Henry Tejfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.

<sup>18</sup> Prokhanov is editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Zavtra*.

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guards the ethnic purity of the English nation.<sup>19</sup> Other commentators have also noted the link between blood mythology and racialism, with special (pathological) impulses towards blood being frequently cited as specific to certain ethnic groups.

The prominence of the implication of Jews in the mythology of blood in relation to these two archetypal characters, Dracula and the Ripper, is striking. Sander Gilman, in his research on turn-of-the-century antisemitism, notes that Jack the Ripper was perceived as a Jew due to a link made at the time between the kosher slaughter of animals and the killings of human (female) victims.<sup>20</sup> This idea continues to resurface in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Contributors to numerous websites and documentaries on the identity of Jack the Ripper often declare their belief that the serial killer was an East European Jewish immigrant who worked in one of the kosher butcher shops in the area of Whitechapel in London, where many newly arrived East European Jews lived in the 1880s and where the killings took place in 1888.<sup>21</sup> In

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<sup>19</sup> See Franco Moretti, 'The Dialectic of Fear', *New Left Review*, 136/1, 1982, 67-85: 'Nationalism – the defense to the death of British civilisation – has a central role in *Dracula*.' (p. 74)

<sup>20</sup> Sander L. Gilman, *The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity At The Fin De Siecle*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> See Scott Nelson. The Butcher's Row Suspect – Was he Jack the Ripper? [www.http://casebook.org/dissertations/rip-butcher.row.html](http://casebook.org/dissertations/rip-butcher.row.html), accessed on 1 January 2010. I was the 1,000,000th visitor to have accessed this site on this date. This article gives an account of numerous Jewish families who lived in the area and had butcheries in Whitechapel. On the other hand, in the BBC documentary 'Jack the Ripper – the First Serial Killer' (2006) directed by Dan Oliver, a forensic psychologist from New Scotland Yard, Laura Richards, dispels the myth that Jack the Ripper had knowledge of animal or human anatomy and argues that he could not have been a butcher or medic, as has been previously believed. On the role of the media in the promulgation of racial stereotypes in the case of Jack the Ripper see John Gabriel, *Whitewash: Racial Politics and Media*, Routledge, 1998. On the speculations about the ethnic origins of Jack the Ripper, see Philip Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, Robinson, 2002.

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terms of Stoker's creation, Daniel Boyarin notes that Dracula was a crypto-Jew.<sup>22</sup> The fact that the Count came from Transylvania (part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire with a large Jewish population), combined with his lascivious desire for blood as a magic elixir, supports this profile of an archetypal crypto-Jew. As the cult musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* demonstrates, albeit in a pastiche-like mode, British (popular) culture still identifies 'foreign' Transylvania as the birthplace of people with abnormal psyches and non-normative sexualities. It must be remembered that the lust for blood and bodily mutilations have been interpreted as manifestations of pathological ways to achieve sexual gratification.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of Prokhanov's pulp fiction,<sup>24</sup> the discursive formation of the special power of blood has a number of phylogenetic components. One relates to the theme of the alleged special attitude towards blood by Jews and can be viewed as rooted in the culture-specific formation of Russian antisemitic mythology. (This does not exclude the fact that this formation also exploits the popular mythology nurtured by Western popular culture in the era of globalisation.) Another component relates to the theme of the special unity of and by blood among members of the Russian ethnos. This theme is linked to the creation of a new cult born out of a sense of brotherhood among Russian males based on the affinity of physical blood and political ideology. In what follows I will demonstrate the makings of each of these formations of the blood theme in Prokhanov's fiction.

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<sup>22</sup> Boyarin stresses the irony that 'the scientists' invoked by Stoker to confirm Dracula's criminality, namely Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau, were themselves Jews. See Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley: California UP, 1997.

<sup>23</sup> See Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*, New York: Dover Publications, 1993.

<sup>24</sup> In Eliot Borenstein's characterisation of his literature (see Eliot Borenstein, 'Survival of the Catchiest: Memes and Postmodern Russia', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 48/3, 2004, 462-483).

II

There is an infamous quasi-analogue of Jack the Ripper in Russian culture – a Kiev Jew by the name of Menahem Mendel Beilis. Framed, tried and acquitted for the ‘ritual murder’ of a Christian teenage boy, Andrei Iushchenskii, in 1911-1913, Beilis has become the symbol of the anti-Jewish myth of Jews feeding on the blood of Christians. As has been poignantly demonstrated by Laura Engelstein, the Beilis Affair showed that Beilis’s ‘crime’ was perceived not only in relation to Judaism as a religion but as a sadistic act explained in terms of the racial peculiarities of Jews.<sup>25</sup> The rhetoric against Beilis was saturated with quasi-medical and quasi-scientific terminology; he was portrayed as a sadistic and pathological Jew and, as such, a typical representative of the Jewish race. Among the works which both typified this perception and made an indelible contribution to its formation is Vasily Rozanov’s (1856-1919) infamous book *The Olfactory and Tactile Attitude of the Jews to Blood* which was published in 1914.<sup>26</sup> Rozanov claimed that, if one drew lines between the various stab wounds on the head of the victim, one would reveal the shape of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This reading was meant as additional proof of the ritualistic nature of the killing. In addition to the interpretation of the murder as an act of magical significance, Rozanov also expressed typical turn-of-the-century views of Jews as a racially different people whose instincts are based on their atavistic and rudimentary nature. In his book he described the ‘atavistic brain cells’ in the Jew Beilis that could

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<sup>25</sup> Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.

<sup>26</sup> V.V. Rozanov, *Oboniatel'noe i osiazatel'noe otnoshenie evreev k krovi. Sakharna*, A. Nikoliukin (ed.), Moscow: Respublika, 1998, pp. 276-413.

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be responsible for his act, i.e. to restore unconsciously the behaviour of ancient Hebrews before the prohibition on human sacrifice.<sup>27</sup>

In this book, written as a commentary on the case of Jewish blood libel, the medicalisation of racial ‘pathology’, characteristic of European turn-of-the-century racialism, achieves its Russian apogee.<sup>28</sup> The Beilis Affair and Rozanov’s book function as a meta-narrative and meta-text in any discourse on blood rituals in Russia in general.<sup>29</sup> They also function as a source of this stable antisemitic construct. Rozanov’s book was not published during the Soviet era in the USSR, although various editions of it were published in Europe and were used by the émigré community as a source of ‘knowledge’. It was republished in post-Soviet Russia in 1998 as part of the complete edition of Rozanov’s work, and parts of it have been included in various forms in a range of publications, including one by the Black Hundred, ‘Chernaia sotnia’ in 1995.<sup>30</sup> The booklet’s author, Dr. Petr Lanin, claims that ritual murder exists among Jews, as was ‘proven’ by Vasily Rozanov in his book written during the Beilis Affair. The great irony in the role that Rozanov’s book has been playing in the history of blood libel in Russia is that, before his death, he ordered this book to be burned and asked the Jewish community for forgiveness, claiming that, during the time of the Beilis Affair, he propagated his views by mistake.

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>28</sup> See Efim Kurganov and Genrietta Mondri, *Rozanov i evrei*, St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> See Henrietta Mondry, *Exemplary Bodies: Constructing the Jew in Russian Culture since the 1880s*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Petr Lanin, ‘Aleksandr Men’ i delo Beilisa’, *Chernaia sotnia*, Nos. 9-10-11, 1995.

**On the special attitude to blood by Russian Jewish personalities in Prokhanov's novels**

In his bestselling novel, *Mr. Hexogen*, Prokhanov uses this cultural formation as a referent, choosing to depict his Jewish protagonists as having a very special 'attitude towards blood'. In this novel Prokhanov creates caricatures of two famous Jewish 'oligarchs' who were prominent in Russian politics in the 1990s: Vladimir Gusinsky in the figure of media magnate Astros and Boris Berezovsky in the image of Zaretsky. Both men are depicted as conducting a racial war against the Russian people – Astros/Gusinsky pays for scientific experiments aimed at disempowering the Russian people by making Russian men impotent and Russian women sterile, while Zaretsky/Berezovsky is engaged in conspiracies aimed at weakening and subordinating the Russian people. In order to explain the behaviour of his Jewish protagonist Zaretsky, Prokhanov introduces the theme of the eternally blood-thirsty Jew whose acts are motivated by primordial instincts:

You [Zaretsky] did it out of pure sadism! You pervert, tormentor! You like our peoples' sufferings! You like Sheptun's head which had been cut off!<sup>31</sup>

It is with good reason that the red-browns [communists and fascists] make drawings which depict you with an axe covered with blood!<sup>32</sup>

Prokhanov frames Zaretsky's involvement in the assassination of one of the military personalities not as a political terrorist activity but as a typically Jewish act of

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<sup>31</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p. 217.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 218

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anti-Christian violence. This image is constructed through allusions to a number of inter-texts, such as Herod's pleasure in seeing the severed head of John the Baptist, an allusion which creates a genealogical lineage between Old Testament characters and contemporary Jews. The reference to a visual caricature, drawings depicting a Jew holding an axe from which drips Russian blood, is a double metaphor for the sadistic Beilis. This complicated image alludes first of all to the prototype: the Jew Beilis who allegedly drained the Christian boy's body of blood by inflicting stab wounds. In its portrayal of a bloody weapon in the hands of a Jew, the image is also a visual allusion to the White Army's propaganda posters depicting Leon Trotsky as a blood-thirsty monster with blood dripping from his hands/paws – an image which could work during the post-revolutionary Civil War (1918-1921) because of the mythology which culminated in the then recent Beilis Affair. While the use of an axe as the weapon of murder implicates the Jew as a sadistic mass murderer, it paradoxically reveals the mechanism of projection on behalf of Prokhanov. The most famous murderer of Russian literature, Raskolnikov from Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment*, used the axe as a murder weapon to kill the pawnbroker. It can be argued that the pawnbroker herself functioned in Dostoevsky's novel as a crypto-Jew: in the original text she is described as charging 'Jewish interest' on the pawned merchandise. While she has a Russian name and patronymic, her repulsive physique, described as 'louse-like', serves as a subtext to her crypto-Jewishness: Jews in the famous Russian folk saying are described as 'parkhatye' as in 'zhid parkhatyi' – 'Jidd covered by lice' – and through her profession she can be interpreted as a crypto-Jew in line with other Jewish characters in Dostoevsky's fiction.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Raskolnikov kills the crypto-Jewish pawnbroker with an axe makes the axe an archetypal 'Russian' weapon and indeed,

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<sup>33</sup> On the image of Jews in Dostoevsky see Elena M. Katz, *Neither With Them, Nor Without Them: The Russian Writer and the Jew in the Age of Realism*, Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2008.

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the title of the popular history book on Russia by James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, makes good use of this association. It was 'To the axe' ('K toporu') that the revolutionary poet Nikolai Nekrasov summoned the Russian people in his poetic address to peasants, as he encouraged them to mobilise in their struggle against their class oppressors. Scholars have demonstrated that the stereotype of the Jewish oppressor of Russian peasants was rife in the discourse with which Nekrasov was familiar.<sup>34</sup>

By putting the axe into the hands of a Jew, Prokhanov introduces a powerful image incorporating a symbol of aggressive and murderous behaviour – a symbol that reveals as much as it hides. Levi-Strauss has taught us that the duality of a symbol manifests itself in the desire to reveal and conceal that which the culture tries to forget.<sup>35</sup> As a signifier the axe is a marker of a 'Russian' form of violence which Prokhanov tries to conceal by substituting it with Jewish violence. The axe thus becomes the signifier of a new meaning, one that is psychologically motivated. Mechanisms of projection and transference work here in such a way that the weapon of destruction stereotyped as iconically Russian (and typified in the expression 'zarubit' toporom') is transferred into the hands of a Jew. This is not the only occasion in which Prokhanov uses the mechanism of transference and/or appropriation of an enemy's weapon, both real and metaphorical. In this instance he assigns a Jew with a 'Russian' weapon, in others he will employ the enemy's *modus operandi* in order to achieve victory over this enemy.

Further evidence of this belief in the special attitude of Jews to blood is found in Prokhanov's novel *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*. This novel features a thinly

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<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, Berkeley: California UP, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth: A Symposium*, Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1965.

veiled caricature of the celebrated contemporary designer Slava Zaitsev. His novelistic name is Slovozaitsev – Prokhanov does not make any effort to conceal the real life personality which he caricatures. As a couturier Zaitsev is seen as representative of the shallowness and commercialisation of post-Soviet society. The fact that he is patronised by the wives of the powerful élites makes him a politically influential figure. In the novel Slovozaitsev is depicted as a crypto-Jew whose real name is Saul Zaisman. He is Trotsky's great-grandson born in America, a biological scientist who came to Russia on a special conspiratorial mission. This mission is to achieve the physical resurrection of Trotsky's body which has been secretly buried in Russia by the Trotskyites.<sup>36</sup> In this novel Stalin had ordered Trotsky's assassination because he knew that Trotsky possessed the scientific secret of the genome which can change the genetic code of a nation. Stalin's struggle against Trotsky was thus the struggle against the Trotskyite/Jewish conspiracy to change the genetic nature of the Russian people. Trotsky's literal resurrection has now become possible as a result of Slovozaitsev's scientific discoveries; it is the mission of the Russian patriots to prevent him from doing this.

Slovozaitsev is portrayed as an archetypal blood-thirsty pathological Jew who combines his scientific knowledge as a geneticist with his sadistic drives. There is a macabre scene in which he uses human blood for purposes of self-rejuvenation. This episode evokes the notion of the special power of blood, his act of rejuvenation revealing an uncanny resemblance to ritual murder:

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<sup>36</sup> The motif of the return of historical personalities of the Stalin era as monsters in post-Soviet fiction has been identified by Alexander Etkind as a genre of 'magic historicism'. See Alexander Etkind, 'Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied: Magical Historicism in Contemporary Russian Fiction', *Slavic Review*, 68/3, 2009, 631-658.

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He took out a small scalpel. He forcefully inserted it into the woman's chest. Blood burst out, but he skilfully pressed the artery and the blood stopped. He pressed the scalpel and pulled it out. The tissue opened and in the long cutting there became visible tenderly-pink, breathing lungs, a big and dark heart, bluish stomach, and smooth, raspberry-colored liver. He slit a cut open in the golden colored pubic area and there a red-colored womb became visible. He performed this operation skilfully and quickly like a specialist pathologist, but he also became very tired.

[...] He pulled the bubbling bag of lungs, which was tender-pink in color like mother-of-pearls [...] He took out the pulsating heart with its arteries. He put it into the plastic bag which he then hung on the string [...] Thus, in a few minutes there were liver, kidneys, spleen, gall bladder and pancreas hanging on the string. All the woman's organs hung in various plastic bags.<sup>37</sup>

Having performed this disembowelment, Slovozaitsev packs all the organs neatly away. He then inserts his own body into the body of the young woman, now empty of intestines but full of 'black blood',<sup>38</sup> and rubs his genitals against the womb – the only inner organ that he has left inside. He stays in this position for half an hour. This act has a rejuvenating effect on his body: he receives life 'impulses' from 'the molecules' and the blood of the woman's body.<sup>39</sup> He is also sexually aroused by his contact with the blood-filled womb against which he rubs his 'underdeveloped testi-

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<sup>37</sup> *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*, pp. 420-421.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 421.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

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cles' ('semenniki') and 'embryonic' ('zachatochnyi') penis.<sup>40</sup> He then washes off the woman's blood in a shower, and replaces the dissected organs back into her body. After this he uses an electronic tool to heal the cut wounds and the woman wakes up, unaware of the procedure that has been performed on her.

This ritual is an invocation of the Jack the Ripper myth albeit reworked in the stylistics of contemporary pop culture. If Jack the Ripper was alleged to be a kosher butcher whose method of disembowelment of women's bodies reflected his professional occupation, then Slovozaitsev's sadistic act bears the signature of his profession as a scientist. A contemporary version of Jack the Ripper, he has the scientifically advanced equipment which enables him to conceal his crime. If Jack the Ripper cut out women's organs and received sexual gratification from this ritual, then Slovozaitsev derives the same pleasure out of his ritual. The implication is that having achieved integration into his society, today's Jack the Ripper no longer looks for his victims in the dark streets of the poor suburbs infested by immigrants, but finds them in the elite circles to which he belongs. Nevertheless, it is the same basic sadistic instincts that drove the Ripper (in his psychoanalytic study Otto Rank classifies Jack the Ripper as a prime example of a sadistic personality on the basis of his wallowing in the blood and bowels of his victims) that unmistakably continue to manifest themselves in Slovozaitsev's act.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that Prokhanov describes the dissected woman's body with what appears to be voyeuristic pleasure shows his skilful manipulation of the power of text. He stimulates the reader's involvement in this voyeuristic process by describing or-

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Rank describes Jack the Ripper's sadism in the context of theorising the trauma of birth and the desire to return to the womb. See Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*, New York: Dover Publications, 1993.

gans in a seductive way: tender-pink, mother-of-pearl, raspberry colour – all these epithets are often given to food items and, as such, stimulate the ‘appetite’. If Jack the Ripper receives sexual gratification from his act, then Prokhanov invites his readers to take part in a similar orgy. As the author, Prokhanov exploits both the voyeuristic instincts of his readers and the resulting feeling of guilt which leads to the need to project their fantasies on to the alien Other.

### **Blood-related rituals of Russian males**

While Prokhanov's Jewish protagonists satisfy their pathological needs through human bodies, his Russian men engage in hunting and animal-eating rites. And, while the behaviour of the Jewish protagonists is shown to be linked to Judaism as religion, albeit through an understanding of popular antisemitic mythology, the Russian characters are engaged in quasi-pagan animistic rites. This structure creates a hierarchy which privileges primitivism and neo-paganism over Judaic religiosity. In *Mr. Hexogen*, in order to show the FSB conspirators' bonding ritual, Prokhanov uses a hunting scene comprising the butchering of a killed animal followed by a feast. The episode's components serve as signifiers of its special, symbolic nature. An elk is killed by a single shot, thus revealing the dexterity of the FSB man and emphasising the humanity of this act which does not make the animal suffer. It is only after the animal is dead that one of the protagonists cuts its throat open with one swift cut of a knife. One of the protagonists experiences a pleasurable olfactory sensation from the smell of fresh animal blood. This episode functions as an allusion to the main meta-text of the special attitude towards blood: Rozanov's book on the olfactory response of Jews to blood. The fact that the Russian protagonist experiences an olfactory sensation from the blood of an animal, rather than the blood of a human, serves as a boundary demarcating the Jewish reaction to blood from the Russian reaction. While the

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first is shown as pathological, the second is described as natural, as the response of a man who is driven by a healthy appetite. This establishes a hierarchy privileging the healthy primitivism of the Russian man above the pathological archaicism of Jews. A further episode depicts yet another ‘healthy’ reaction by a Russian towards blood: when animal blood flows out of the body and drips on to the boots of the main protagonist, he quickly jumps away and shakes it off. This behaviour marks the spontaneous sense of disgust towards being covered by blood and presumably towards blood itself. These acts signify a certain attitude towards blood – they reveal an understanding that blood can be viewed as a fetish, and that it can be either accepted as such or rejected.

The depiction of the hunting scene is given the connotations of an authentic Russian hunt. It takes place in an unmistakably Russian landscape while the typically Russian method of preparing the animal gives this scene added ethnic meaning. Read against the blood-dripped axe in the hands of the Jewish oligarch, it serves as an antithesis to the Jews’ unhealthy attitude to blood. Russian men do not take in animal blood; rather, they rinse their hands of any ‘sukrov’ i sliz’ (‘ichor and mucus’)<sup>42</sup> after finishing their work on the body of the animal. This detail functions as a binary opposition to the powerful symbol of Jews’ hands eternally covered in Christian blood, as epitomised by the image of Zaretsky/Berezovsky’s hands covered by the blood of Russian people. The fact that it is animal and not human blood separates this imagery from the ritual performed by the Jewish Slovozaitsev. While in one novel Slovozaitsev acts out his pathological impulses on a woman’s body, in another novel the Russian protagonists sublimate their sexual desires and touch the inner organs of the hunted animal, the she-elk. The two scenes in the two novels create a parallelism and function as intertexts which delineate a polemical dimension to the theme of blood.

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<sup>42</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p. 146.

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The scene in which the animal's body is cut open is framed as a manifestation of biologically driven behaviour, when supposedly male instincts exhibit themselves in all their authenticity. But, while the Russian FSB men become excited when the animal is cut open, they do not do anything that might be viewed as pathological. They contain their natural excitement, and thus are shown as being in control of their instincts:

They started to cut open the animal. They inserted the knife into the lung of the animal. They opened the abdomen, huge bags of intestines started moving, they were strung together by the net of veins. They opened the thorax, and there, among the pale pink lungs, was the blackened heart.

'Let me touch it!' [...]

'It is slimy!' [...]

Intestines moved like a rubber boat. Blue liver dived among them like a small seal. Their eager hands grabbed and tore apart the intestines; pooled them like the parts of a huge parachute.<sup>43</sup>

This scene descends not into an orgy but into a feast. It serves as a bonding rite between the Russian men, members of the FSB, who use this event in order to recruit Prokhanov's autobiographical protagonist. The aim of the conspiracy is to put a new Russian president into the seat of power. The feast is given the importance of a rite of passage during which Russian males eat the fried liver of the she-elk and drink vodka. The very components of the meal are given a symbolic meaning, with vodka signifying the Russian brand of masculinity and the animal liver the seat of life. In his comparative anthropological study Otto Rank has gathered and interpreted data which

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<sup>43</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p. 145.

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shows that across cultures the liver is viewed as the seat of life. The fact that the liver is the vessel of blood is the reason why, in various belief systems related to ‘magic anatomy’, it is given primary importance.<sup>44</sup> Rank shows that anthropologists have noted that the divination of the liver of the sacrificial animal is linked to the microcosm/macrocosm relationship; it is an example of ‘heaven transferred to the slaughterhouse’.<sup>45</sup> Rank views this belief and practice as ‘a case of the reciprocal play of earthly (human) and heavenly (cosmic) processes’.<sup>46</sup> The eating of the liver in the above episode thus reinforces the symbolic meaning of the feast as ritual. If read in the context of the ritual performed by Slovozaitsev, it functions as a counter-ritual because it defines itself against the ‘Jewish’ ritual. The narrator stresses that the liver is ‘deeply’ cooked, meaning that the blood in it is also cooked. In Levi-Straussian terminology, the cooking of blood signifies ‘culture’ and civilisation, while ‘raw’ (blood) is the signifier of ‘nature’ and the primitive. The irony of this image is that, according to kosher laws, the eating or drinking of animal blood (both raw and cooked) is prohibited; from the Judaic point of view, therefore, by eating the liver of an animal which was not slaughtered in a kosher way, the Russian men do, in fact, consume blood. While showing the acts of Slavozaitsev to be abject in Russian eyes because they are ‘Jewish’, the Russian protagonists are abominable to Jews because they transgress the prohibition in Leviticus on blood. By exposing a polemical impulse towards Judaic prohibitions, Prokhanov, in this description of the shooting, slaughtering, butchering and cooking of an animal, gives blood a symbolic signification.

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<sup>44</sup> Otto Rank, *Art and Artist: Creative Urge and Personality Development*, translated by Charles Atkinson, New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989 (see p. 117).

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

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In addition to defining itself as the Other of the Jewish enemy/Other construct, this episode also shows an appropriation of the *modus operandi* of the 'enemies'. Prokhanov's protagonists of the FSB group in *Mr. Hexogen* claim that, having studied the way in which Jews function by reading the Old Testament and analysing their political behaviour, they are now in control of Zaretsky and Astros because they know how they operate and, moreover, because they have adopted their methods. Here the dual nature of the relationship with the Other manifests itself powerfully through the processes of projection and appropriation. What is being appropriated, however, is in fact the returned projection, the return of the phantom fantasised by the subject himself. There is lexical evidence which substantiates this point: in the scene of the butchery of the animal's body Prokhanov uses the word 'sukrov''<sup>47</sup> for 'ichor'. The correct Russian word for 'ichor' is 'sukrovitsta',<sup>48</sup> but the incorrect word 'sukrov'' delineates a relationship with the word 'krov'', meaning blood, in a more transparent way than the more cryptic 'sukrovitsa'. 'Su-' functions here as quasi-blood, a substitute for blood, as in the phonetically cognate 'su-rrogat' – 'surrogate'. 'Sukrovista' in folk etymology can be perceived as a surrogate for blood and not real blood. By using the incorrect word 'sukrov'', Prokhanov both exposes the connection of the fluid to blood and at the same time conceals the connection; he paradoxically wants to amplify the semantics of blood and at the same time show that this blood is not real. The implication here is that it is Jews who have a special attitude to blood and not Russians; this is why the Russians' hands are covered not by real blood but by ichor, something that is not quite blood. This suggests that it is indeed the fetishistic aspect of blood that

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<sup>47</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p.146.

<sup>48</sup> See the entry 'sukrovitsa' in *Russian-English Dictionary*, Olga Akhmanova (ed.), Moscow: Russkii iazyk, 1975, p. 618.

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attracts Jews phylogenetically to this fluid, and it is Jews like Slovozaitsev who use blood ritualistically. Russians, like the FSB men, wash *it* off their hands, even when it is not real blood but its 'surrogate', ichor. The implication is that Russians do not have the same instinctual drive because they are racially different. However, they can pretend that they do in order to frighten their enemy. They can scare off this enemy by showing him that they understand how he operates. By doing this, however, they paradoxically reveal their fear of the enemy, a fear based on the 'special power' which that enemy possesses. The desire to cross the boundary which separates the Self from the Other is strong, but the fear of the Other and 'becoming the Other' is even stronger.

There is a further development of the symbolic signification of hunting, food and blood in *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*. In this novel the patriotic group of conspirators from the FSB are plotting to appoint a new Russian President, one who will look like Putin but who will be artificially engineered in order to serve the political agenda of this group. The brotherhood which they establish is signified by a common meal and, as in *Mr. Hexogen*, this meal is depicted as a rite of passage. In this novel, however, the theme of blood is presented even more aggressively, and the agreement amongst the conspirators is sealed twice: first by the ritual of eating, then by the cutting of each others' fingers followed by the exchange of blood flowing from their wounds.

As in *Mr. Hexogen*, a group of Russian males hunt down an animal – this time a wild boar. The pleasure of the hunt is presented yet again as a healthy way to express masculine instincts while the consumption of the wild boar is an overt enactment of a pagan rite. This glorification of a pagan ritual is of particular significance in the context of blood libel accusations against Jews which surfaced during the Beilis affair. In his article 'K prekrashcheniiu ritual'nogo uboia skota' ('Towards a cessation

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of the ritual slaughter of farm animals'), which became part of *The Olfactory and Tactile Attitude of the Jews to Blood*, Rozanov pleaded with Jews to put an end to the kosher slaughter of farm animals. He maintained that this practice contributed to simple peoples' belief in the ritual murder of people by Jews. Simple people, he argued, believe that the kosher slaughter of animals makes them suffer, while the Russian practice of making animals unconscious before killing them is humane. It is thus the affliction of suffering to animals that serves as the reason for the assumption that Jews derive special pleasure from the procedure of draining blood from animals and, by analogy, human bodies. Rozanov ends his article by declaring kosher slaughter to be a remnant of paganism which needs to be stopped: 'Russia is not obliged to have a law which accepts the crudest remnants of paganism (blood fetishism, 'blood – is a fetish'). It is her enlightened right to say *volo* and *veto*.'<sup>49</sup>

In Prokhanov's novel the resurrection of this idea of the ritualistic attitude towards blood functions as a way to save Russia and signifies a neo-paganist and traditionalist revival. The patriots secure their political victory by taking part in a quasi-pagan ritual, while the war which they fight is directed against Jews. The plot operates on the idea that a conspiracy is needed in order to get rid of 'Other' conspirators, and because those 'Other' conspirators are seen as having particular rituals, the Russians invent their own rites. Because, in the novel, 'pagan' is equated with 'Russian', the intake of blood now becomes an acceptable part of the ritual. The feast is presented as a bonding rite among the physically and mentally healthy Russian males. The Jewish way to deal with blood in this novel is epitomised by the pathological and sadistic acts of Slovozaitsev. Slovozaitsev, with his non-normative sexuality, performs a quasi-sexual act in his macabre ritual, while the Russian males are presented as exemplary

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<sup>49</sup> *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*, p. 309.

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men. Their feast is a combination of spiritual rites and a healthy meal. Fittingly, vodka adds the ethnic definition to the ritual:

The attendant put on to his plate the boar's navel – a stringy vessel filled with sizzling juice. In this muscular cord hid secret power. The umbilical cord linked the animal with the clan's elements, with the frightful energy of hairy creatures, with the fury of animal fights. To eat the boar's navel meant to link oneself with the eternal life of the earth, with pagan primordial times, with the sagacity of the primaeval soul.<sup>50</sup>

The meal [*trapeza*] on the wooden table, wooden boards covered by fat and blood, bones which had been put on to the porcelain plate – all this resembled a devouring of a sacrificial animal, a pagan feast under a sacred oak, and in this oak lived the pagan god, Perun. To him the sacrifice was offered, in his name animal blood was spilled.<sup>51</sup>

The boar's navel is offered to the main protagonist by the conspirators during the feast, which they have arranged in order to convince him to join the group. It is while eating the boar's navel that he experiences a connection with the magic powers of the universe. The animal's body in this episode functions as a microcosm, while the Russian conspirators act as primitive people whose belief system is based on the parallelism between the microcosm and the universe. What is achieved by this link to the primordial is a new form of energy which will help the conspirators in their political

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<sup>50</sup> *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*, p. 49.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 50.

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act. This act is the attainment of total control over Russia and the revival of the Great Russian empire.

The link between the boar's navel and the hub of the universe functions as esoteric knowledge, and the eating of the boar's navel is analogous to the acquisition of power and political domination. Otto Rank notes that these myths operate on the principle of inversion. The psychological mechanism of projection is the underlying principal of this inversion. What is being projected and inverted here? Is fear of the enemy the motivating factor? If the desired aim of the ritual is to acquire the strength of a *primaeval* people, then against whom is the fight? Who is the enemy? And who are the Other *primaeval* people apart for the Perun-worshipping Old Slavs? The enemy in Prokhanov's novels is epitomised by the Jews; they are presented as the archetypal *primaeval* people whose 'atavistic cells' have survived until the present. They are synonymous with antiquity, typically described in Russian language as 'vetkhii Adam' where 'vetkhii' means 'antiquated', but also alludes to the Old Testament ('Vetkhii Zavet').<sup>52</sup> Using the Levi-Straussian notion of the dual structure of the myth, with the dynamics of concealing and revealing, what is being concealed here is the desire to imitate the enemy. Russian protagonists use a sacrificial animal and they understand that animal blood has sacred value. Although they establish moral superiority over the 'Judaic' use of human blood for ritual purposes and over the 'sadistic' kosher slaughter of animals, they nevertheless create their own ritual in response to this 'Judaic' attitude to blood.

The fact that the sacrificial animal is a wild boar reveals this duality. As an animal prohibited in the book of Leviticus, its meat functions as the most typical and widely known example of the kosher laws. By choosing this animal's meat for ritual purposes, Prokhanov draws attention to the taboo aspect of this prohibition in Judaism.

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<sup>52</sup> In *Mr. Hexogen* the 'ancient' is synonymous with 'Old Testamental' (*Mr Hexogen*, p. 425).

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In her interpretation of the categories and prohibitions in Leviticus, cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas stresses that the Biblical prohibition of pork is linked to the desire to preserve and save this animal.<sup>53</sup> Instead of being a manifestation of disgust, Douglas suggests that this prohibition expresses reverence towards the animal. This in turn suggests that pig could have been a totem or taboo at a certain time in the history of Ancient Hebrews. The choice by Prokhanov's heroes of a wild boar as a ritual animal betrays the author's preoccupation with Jews and Judaism. What appears as a mockery of kosher laws could at the same time be a manifestation of a desire to appropriate Judaic beliefs and incorporate them into Russian/pagan rites. While on the surface the rite exposes the resurrection of Old Slav pagan cults, beneath this surface it also conceals a desire to understand the secrets of Judaism. The logic which operates here is as follows: if Jews guard pigs by not eating them, there must be a secret and sacral power in this possibly sacred animal. If this is the case, Russians can do what the Jews do to their own advantage: they can reinvent the sacral meaning of the forbidden animal and, by partaking of the sacral meat, they can acquire the mysterious qualities which Jews keep as a guarded secret.

The desire here is to become animal, but the animal is *a contrario* proof of the powers of the enemy, and by becoming animal the Russian protagonists become like the enemy. To conquer the Other, one has to become as powerful as the Other, or to become the Other by transference. In Freudian psychoanalysis this act represents a creation of the taboo animal, in which the animal is a substitution for the powerful and feared authority. Here the dual mechanism of fear and repression of hidden desire mo-

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<sup>53</sup> Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

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tivates the creation of the taboo.<sup>54</sup> It is not in vain that it is in connection with a discussion of taboo objects in his essay 'Taboo and emotional ambivalence' that Freud demonstrates the presence of 'emotional ambivalence towards the enemy'.<sup>55</sup> He writes about the 'admiration for the enemy' which primitive people exhibit in taboo usages, stating that 'the impulses which they exhibit towards the enemy are not solely hostile ones'.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps Prokhanov's protagonists who imitate the hunting acts of primitive people want at the same time to be 'primitive' like the Jews and like their imaginary Slavonic forefathers.

There is an episode during the slaughter scene in *Mr. Hexogen* when the main protagonist experiences disgust at the 'dead blood'<sup>57</sup> of the elk and pushes away the carcass with his feet. This act lays bare this underlying desire to imitate the enemy. Why would the carcass evoke disgust in Prokhanov's protagonists? After all, they were all described as deriving much pleasure from tearing apart the animal's intestines. The answer may lie in the fact that, once the animal has become a corpse, it became abject. In his essay Freud discusses the aspect of 'touching' a taboo object, noting that touching of an animal corpse is certainly a taboo in so-called primitive societies.<sup>58</sup> But touching a dead animal is also an abomination in the laws of Leviticus (ch. 11, v. 24-40). In touching the animal's intestines while they are still warm, the Russian protagonists undertake a 'tactile' engagement with the animal. It must be remembered that, as the main metatext on the ritualistic meaning of blood, Rozanov's book

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<sup>54</sup> See: Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, translated and edited by James Strachey, vol. 13, London: The Hogarth Press, 2001, pp. 1-165.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> See: Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, translated and edited by James Strachey, vol. 13, London: The Hogarth Press, 2001, pp. 1-165 (see. p. 27).

developed the idea of both ‘olfactory’ and ‘tactile’ attitudes towards blood. It is in this context that we can interpret the Russian protagonists’ impulse to inhale the smell of and to touch, albeit not human, but animal flesh. If Rozanov saw in the Judaic attitude towards blood the survival of paganism in Judaism, then Prokhanov creates a taxonomy between the Judaic and paganism.<sup>59</sup> In eating the meat of the boar and the elk, the protagonists act in reaction to the laws of Leviticus and, in refusing to touch the animal once it is a corpse, they act in accordance not only with the taboo prohibitions of primitive societies but also with the prohibitions of Leviticus. This episode makes apparent the anxiety around Judaic prohibitions, thus confirming the symbolic signification of the feasts in these novels. In her book *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* Julia Kristeva notes in application to the semiotics of Biblical abomination ‘worshipping corpses on one hand and eating objectionable meat on the other: those are the two abominations that bring about divine malediction and thus point to the two ends of the chain of prohibitions that bind the biblical text and entails a whole range of sexual and moral prohibitions’.<sup>60</sup> Prokhanov’s texts demonstrate the symbolic signification of both the sexual and the moral sphere. His Russian protagonists are shown to have moral and political superiority over the abject enemy, whose ‘abjection’ is played out in the sphere of pathological sexuality.

This reading of quasi-esoteric rituals can be substantiated by another cryptic rite which the conspirators perform in *The Cruise Liner ‘Joseph Brodsky’*. Before staging a subversive political event, the members of the group swear their allegiance by mixing each other’s blood. The group leader makes an incision in the index finger

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<sup>59</sup> V. V. Rozanov, *Oboniatel’noe i osiazatel’noe otnoshenie evreev k krovi*. Sakharna, A. Nikoliukin (ed.), Moscow: Respublika, 1998, pp. 276-413 (see p. 309).

<sup>60</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Leon S. Roudiez (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1982 (see p. 110).

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of each member of the group; they then all mix their blood by touching each other's wounds before dousing their wounds with antiseptic fluid. The ritual of mixing Russian blood by members of a patriotic group both reveals and conceals its meaning. The scene can be interpreted as an invocation of a quasi-animistic rite of bonding between members of a clan who 'swear by blood'.<sup>61</sup> As such it overtly shows itself as a quasi-pagan ritual and part of the new esotericism. The ethnocentric subtext of this ritual is abundantly clear: what takes place is the mixing of the blood of people who belong to the same ethnicity/race and who, therefore, cannot contaminate each other. Some representatives of contemporary racist discourse in Russia debate the biological differences of blood types between various races and ethnicities.<sup>62</sup>

But there is yet another symbolic meaning in this ritual. If the index finger is metonymic of the penis, this rite, which is performed on each finger/penis, becomes a metaphor for circumcision. With the small amount of blood coming out of the incision made by the knife, the performance is evocative of the ritual of circumcision. Fittingly, it is performed by the oldest member of the group. Furthermore, taken in the context of this novel, which is structured around the juxtaposition of the Russian and the Jewish, the ritual can be viewed as a trope of Judaic circumcision. Interpreted in this way, the act is not only a pagan rite, but also the metaphoric circumcision and thus a quasi-Jewish ritual. This ritual establishes a covenant of blood among the Russian men, analogous to the popular perception of the meaning of the ritual of Judaic circumcision.<sup>63</sup> The logic which operates here is: if Jews have become God's chosen people, and if they form a tightly knit ethnic group as the result of this ritual, then this ritual is

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<sup>61</sup> *The Cruise Liner 'Joseph Brodsky'*, p. 445.

<sup>62</sup> On the notion of different blood types in Jews and Russians in contemporary antisemitic and nationalist discourse see Vadim Rossman, *Russian Intellectual Antisemitism in the Post-Communist Era*, Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 2002.

<sup>63</sup> See the notorious text: Trofim Kychko, *Judaizm bez prikras*, Kiev: Ukrainian Academy of Science, 1963.

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worth imitating. And if, in antisemitic mythology, Jews form a worldwide conspiracy as ‘a race apart’, having become such a race as a result of ‘bonding’ by circumcision, then the political subtext of the Russian quasi-circumcision rite becomes clear. Russian patriotic conspirators are anointed and thus become a chosen people whose mission it is to save Russia. The quasi-circumcision expresses a set of paradoxical emotions, beliefs and impulses: it shows the need to separate ancient pagan rite from Judaic ritual, but it also demonstrates the desire to imitate the ritual of circumcision while at the same time expressing a disgust and prejudice towards it. Hence the substitution of the abject (the penis) by the index finger.

The accent in all these rituals is on masculinity. In the animal sacrificial rite the sacrifice is made to the phallic god of thunder, Perun. It is in his name that drops of blood are spilled and absorbed by the soil. The protagonists eat boar’s testicles (‘semennik’)<sup>64</sup> to empower them not only sexually but also politically. The rites function in parallel and in opposition to the abject ritual performed by the eternal Jew Slavozaitsev. With his ‘underdeveloped testicles’ and ‘embryonic penis’ he epitomises transgressive sexuality with features of male/female hermaphroditic hybridity.<sup>65</sup> All the blood-related rituals in Prokhanov’s novels (related to food, animal and human flesh, sexuality and pollution) establish a symbolic system of purity, defilement, separation and the erection of boundaries. They create binarisms, dualities and hierarchies which privilege Russian male protagonists over the Jewish ones. At the same time they exhibit signs of anxiety around the object, the Jewish Other.

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<sup>64</sup> *The Cruise Liner ‘Joseph Brodsky’*, p. 49.

<sup>65</sup> On the feminisation of the Jewish male linked to fantasies of the circumcised penis, see Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, London: Routledge, 2001.

III

In his seminal study on the blood libel legend, Alan Dundes identifies the mechanism of 'projective inversion' as the operative dynamics of this antisemitic myth.<sup>66</sup> To appropriate the powers which have been projected on to the enemy is one of the desires of this two-sided construct. Prokhanov's novels are saturated with expressions of xenophobia and Russian nationalism. The whole of Russia's history is presented as struggle against Jews and masons, thus propagating one of the turn-of-the-century antisemitic formations which made its comeback in post-Soviet Russia. But this very struggle with the enemy is the other side of the desire to become as powerful as the enemy. In the esotericism of Prokhanov's fiction this means acquiring the secret knowledge and magic power. His protagonists in *Mr. Hexogen* talk about the aim to turn Moscow into a 'new Jerusalem'.<sup>67</sup> Significantly, they stress that it is not the doctrine of 'Moscow the third Rome' which they propagate; rather, they want a more ambitious future for the capital city and for Russia. One member argues against this plan, conflating Judaism and blood in the process of doing so: 'You intend to create a new world order with the help of blood, but it is precisely the blood which will make this world hopelessly ancient, Old Testamental and decrepit.'<sup>68</sup> The new world order that the conspirators want to create would be a united humankind with Moscow at its centre. Significantly for the argument put forward in this paper, this new united humankind will emerge after the Apocalypse. To achieve their aim the conspirators plan to blow up parts of Moscow through the use of the gas hexogen

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<sup>66</sup> Alan Dundes, 'The Ritual Murder or Blood Libel: Legend in Anti-Semitic Victimisation through Projective Inversio', in: *The Blood Libel Legend: A Case Book in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, Madison: Madison UP, 1991, pp. 336-385 (see p. 336).

<sup>67</sup> *Mr Hexogen*, p. 424.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p. 425.

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(hence the title of the novel). This quasi-apocalyptic blast will allow them to create political confusion and so achieve their aim. By putting into power a new president – fittingly called Izbrannik, ‘the chosen one’ – the conspirators believe they will create a new world order. This new humankind will live eternally, as it will stop fighting against one another and put their efforts and resources to scientifically achieved immortality. Science will also allow the literal and physical resurrection of all people from the past. Prokhanov is writing here about the Russian and Soviet occult which manifested itself through the teachings of various contributors to this discourse of scientifically achievable resurrection and immortality. Nikolai Fedorov’s philosophy of the common task aimed at the resurrection of all the generations of the dead and the achievement of immortality for present and future mankind is clearly the foundation for Prokhanov’s esotericism. The teachings of Soviet cosmism also form part of this discourse.<sup>69</sup>

Central to this symbiotic formation, however, is the desire to see Moscow as the ‘New Jerusalem’. At the core of this concept is the (historic) rivalry against Jews as the chosen people. The Russian conspirators do not want to see Moscow as the third Rome – the centre of the Christian world. The domination which they want to achieve is of a broader nature. It is all encompassing, extending beyond national borders and cultural divides and, as such, modeled on the conspiracy theory related to international Jewry. Achieving its apogee in the infamous fabrication *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,<sup>70</sup> this idea of an international Jewish conspiracy has a dual function in Prokhanov’s fiction. It is something against which his Russian conspirators fight,

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<sup>69</sup> See Edmund Griffiths, *Alexander Prokhanov and post-Soviet Esotericism*, unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2007.

<sup>70</sup> See Steven Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003.

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while, at the same time, it is a notion which they appropriate as their strategy and tactics in their fight for power. This duality both exposes and conceals the mechanism of the reception of the Other: to demonise but also to mimic and imitate. Mimicry is nature's evolutionary device, the aim of which is to survive by pretending to be something or somebody else. Lacan notes that mimicry is 'exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare'.<sup>71</sup> In Prokhanov's fiction his authorial persona and his characters clearly demonstrate that their strategy in the fight against the archetypal Other, the Jew, is based on the appropriation of the enemy's methods, yet this overt device only proves the extent of their fear of the Other. The bragging of the (male) protagonists, that they 'outdid' their enemy, is psychological proof of this fear. Rozanov's death-bed wish to burn his book, *The Olfactory and Tactile Attitude of the Jews Towards Blood*, is a powerful manifestation of the dynamic of fear. As a religious person he confessed that he was afraid of being punished by the Jewish God 'Jahveh', and his decision to burn his anti-Jewish book was the result of his concern for his personal salvation in the afterlife.<sup>72</sup> Prokhanov and his fictional political allies perpetuate the myth of the special attitude of Jews to blood. They also construct an occult discourse with its promise to create heaven on earth. Perhaps it is because they are concerned not with the heavenly Jerusalem but with the earthly one that they continue to recycle the mythology of blood. Moretti's influential interpretation of the dialectic of fear and the vampire myth delineates the fact that both Dracula and Frankenstein were 'born' at the turn(s) of the century which gave rise to capitalism. It is this fear of imminent change and the sense of inability to survive in a society governed by new economic relations that made the two writers produce their 'monsters': one the

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<sup>71</sup>Jacques Lacan, 'Of the Gaze As Objet Petit', in: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Jacques-Alain Miller (ed.), NY: W.W. Norton, 1978, pp. 87-202 (see p. 99).

<sup>72</sup>V. V. Rozanov, *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni*, Moscow: Respublika, 2000 (see p. 185).

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capitalist (Dracula) and the other the proletariat (Frankenstein). Both monsters were depicted as a race apart from their creators.<sup>73</sup> In the case of Prokhanov we have the exploitation of these economic fears at the turn of the new century, fears held by the kind of readership that buys his novels and, by so doing, propels them into bestsellers; the kind of readership that buys into the myth of Jews-as-vampires based on the contemporary discourse that has revived the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century image of the Jew as the blood-sucking capitalist. There is little doubt that Prokhanov uses the Jewish vampire myth not only as ‘reality’, but also as a metaphor. As a metaphor this image represents a Jewish blood-sucking capitalist who exploits the Russian working classes – it is not accidental that his writing was characterised as ‘a mixture of the pre-Revolutionary Black Hundred rhetoric and *Pravda* periodicals’.<sup>74</sup> Like any other ‘Red-Brown’, Prokhanov studied Karl Marx; he is aware of the dual dynamic of the relationship between the capitalist and the proletariat, and applies it with remarkable success in the new Russia. As a creator of new post-Soviet vampires he certainly knows how to drain the gullible Russian readers of their last... penny.

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<sup>73</sup> Moretti notes that Mary Shelley described Frankenstein as racially different, using such markers as yellow skin and black lips. See Franco Moretti, ‘The Dialectic of Fear’, *New Left Review*, 136/1, 1982, 67-85.

<sup>74</sup> See: ‘Krutoi imperets’, *Kommersant*, No. 199, 24.10.2009, p. 15.

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**GAEV'S ASPERGER'S SYNDROME IN CHEKHOV'S *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*:  
A DIAGNOSIS AND A CALL FOR CHARACTER REASSESSMENT**

Across the board, assessments of the character of Gaev — the eccentric brother of Lyubov Andreyevna in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) whose inaction contributes to the loss of their family's long-held orchard estate — have been predominantly negative, emphasising his alleged foolishness, absurdity, incompetence, immaturity, and social ineptitude. Within the play itself, the wealthy self-made peasant-turned-merchant Lopakhin — who unsuccessfully tries to convince Lyubov and Gaev to convert the orchard to summer cottages and then eventually buys the orchard himself in an auction after it is clear the Gaev family will lose it — responds to Gaev's impracticality by calling him an 'old biddy'.<sup>1</sup> Gaev's nieces Varya and Anya criticise him for his long-windedness (995, 999, 1012), while the elderly butler Firs scolds him for his failure to dress himself properly (995) and the obnoxious young valet Yasha believes him worthy of continual ridicule (1005). Gaev himself admits that he acts 'like a fool' (999) and that he is 'incorrigible' (1005). The first actor to play Gaev, Konstantin Stanislavsky, called him 'a bit stupid' (quoted in Loehlin 2006: 43), and theatre critic Walter Kerr described Joseph Schildkraut's amusing but absurd Gaev in the 1944 Broadway production as being 'incompetent', a 'fool', and an 'ass', albeit an elegant and 'even likeable', one (quoted in Loehlin 2006: 118). Anthony Cookman called John Gielgud's Gaev in the 1961 Royal Shakespeare Company production an 'old fool' who 'deserves to lose his orchard' (quoted in Loehlin 2006: 134). Literary scholars have called him 'ludicrous, nay, grotesque' (Magarshack 1984: 168), 'feck-

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<sup>1</sup> Chekhov (2006: 1006); cited parenthetically hereafter.

less' (Senelick 1997: 68), 'a parody of the after-dinner speaker' (Senelick 2006: 977), a 'child' (Peace 1983: 123; Lindheim 2004: para. 1; cf. Moravcevic 1970: 236), 'ridiculous' (Lindheim 2004: para. 2), 'lazy', 'self-regarding', and 'an intellectual charlatan' (Peace 1983: 131, 132).

Gaev's eccentric characteristics have often been attributed to him being an extreme example of the irresponsible decadence of the pampered and declining aristocracy;<sup>2</sup> in this essay, however, I propose an alternative and, I believe, far more compelling explanation for Gaev's eccentric behaviour: Gaev has Asperger's Syndrome (also known as Asperger's, Asperger Syndrome, Asperger's Disorder, Asperger Disorder). As I demonstrate in detail how Gaev's eccentric characteristics reflect the traits of AS persons, I hope both to lay a groundwork for scholars concerned with Chekhov and medicine to interact further with this fascinating character and to encourage all readers and viewers of *The Cherry Orchard* to appreciate Gaev not as a comic fool who elicits only our mirth, nor merely as a pathetic and dispossessed member of a decaying gentry who elicits our pity, but rather as a complex character whose combination of eccentric behaviour, humour, vulnerability, and surprisingly articulate insight indeed reflects the oft-noted complexities of Chekhov's play.<sup>3</sup>

Asperger's Syndrome (hereafter referred to as 'AS') is generally categorised as a lifelong developmental disorder. It was discovered by Hans Asperger in 1944 but was not recognised by the American Psychiatric Association as a specific pervasive developmental disorder until 1994. Studies seeking to quantify the number of AS persons have varied widely, with some studies indicating that as high as 0.37% of the population has AS (Attwood 2007: 45-46). Persons with AS are classified as being on

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<sup>2</sup> See Rayfield (1975: 252); Rayfield (1994: 68); Gilman (1995: 220); Braun (2000: 117); Saur (2000: 78); Christa (2005: 56).

<sup>3</sup> Peace (1983: 117-23) notes the play's complexity in its tension between comedy and pathos.

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the high functioning end of the autistic spectrum, but unlike persons with classic autism, AS persons generally have normal to high intelligence and impressive verbal skills. At the same time, AS persons are considered socially challenged, displaying, among other things, unusual verbosity and 'an inability to read nonverbal cues' (Barnhill 2007: 116). Persons with AS are also characterised by 'impaired social interaction and restricted, repetitive, or stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities' (Barnhill 2007: 116).

Readers familiar with Gaev can already recognise that this basic outline of AS characterises much of his behaviour, and I hope that this investigation into Gaev's AS will add to the already significant body of scholarship that explores the physician Chekhov's precise portrayal of various physical and mental conditions,<sup>4</sup> a matter particularly intriguing in Gaev's case because AS was not widely recognised until nearly a century after Chekhov's death.<sup>5</sup> By investigating Gaev's AS, this essay engages in what Stuart Murray (2008: 51) calls the 'retrospective diagnosis' and related analyses of autistic characters who appear in works of literature that predate the comparatively recent advances in understanding autistic spectrum disorders. I believe that such retrospective diagnosis and analysis is particularly pertinent in the case of Gaev, both because his behaviour so strikingly resembles many specific traits common to AS persons and also because once Gaev's AS is effectively established, this diagnosis essen-

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<sup>4</sup> Important studies include Duclos (1927); Rabinovich (1946); Geizner (1954); Meve (1961); Polakiewicz (1979); Müller-Dietz (1990); Kluge (1995); Coope (1997); Lewis (2006); Polakiewicz (2007); Swift (2008); and Polakiewicz (2009).

<sup>5</sup> The prescience of Chekhov's precise portrayal of Gaev's AS can be appreciated all the more when one attempts to encapsulate Gaev's multifaceted condition within the limited psychological categories available in Chekhov's time that one might try to apply to Gaev. As a perusal of Berrios (1996) and its presentations of 19<sup>th</sup>-century discussions of 'Obsessions and Compulsions' (140-56) and especially 'Mental Retardation' (157-71) demonstrates, such contemporary categories simply cannot represent the complexities of Gaev's condition.

tially mandates a reevaluation of his character and a proper recognition of the plight of an AS person in his situation more than a century ago.

Gaev's behaviour throughout the play reveals various common AS traits. Perhaps his most obvious AS characteristic is what Richard Peace (1983: 129) calls his 'embarrassing' tendency to offer long-winded speeches in which his listeners have no interest. This behaviour clearly falls under the first criterion for AS listed in the American Psychiatric Associations' *Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-IV): 'Qualitative impairment in social interaction' (quoted in Attwood 2007: 41).<sup>6</sup> The Adult Asperger Assessment (AAA)<sup>7</sup> specifies how such interactive impairment manifests itself in adults. The AAA states that AS persons' social impairment includes a 'tendency to turn any conversation back to self or own topic of interest', a 'pedantic style of speaking, or inclusion of too much detail', and an 'inability to recognise when the listener is interested or bored. Even if the person has been told not to talk about their particular obsessive topic for too long, this difficulty may be evident if other topics arise.' (quoted in Attwood 2007: 50) Professor Ami Klin, director of the Autism Program at the Yale University School of Medicine, extrapolates on this last characteristic, which is so applicable to Gaev. Klin (2006: S9) notes that AS persons often engage their listeners 'in one-sided conversation characterised by long-winded, pedantic speech, about a favorite and often unusual and narrow topic.' Their speech can 'often be tangential and circumstantial, conveying a sense of looseness of associations and incoherence.' These AS speakers 'may talk incessantly, usually about a favorite subject, often in complete disregard to whether the listener might be interested, engaged, or attempting to interject a comment, or change the subject of

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<sup>6</sup> Attwood (2007: 41-44) discusses concerns with the strictness of the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria, which remains the most prominent criteria for diagnosing AS. Throughout this essay I make use of both the DSM-IV criteria as well as criteria from various other sources.

<sup>7</sup> The AAA was developed by Baron-Cohen, *et al.* (2005) to provide AS diagnostic criteria specifically for adults.

## GAEV'S ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

conversation. Despite such long-winded monologues, the [AS] individual may never come to a point or conclusion.' (Klin 2006: S9) Moreover, the AS person's listeners are often 'bored, embarrassed, or annoyed' (Attwood 2007: 198). These descriptions of AS speakers — and the effect they have on their listeners — also describe with striking accuracy how Chekhov scholars describe both Gaev's 'unfailing grandiloquence' (Kataev 2002: 275) during his many speeches that are 'prosaic, repetitive, and [seemingly] empty of meaning' (Kirk 1981: 152) and the 'embarrassment' these 'inappropriate' speeches cause his listeners (Peace 1983: 124).

Gaev's first such speech is his unsolicited apostrophe to his family's hundred-year-old cupboard, an object which he has already discussed sufficiently but which, to his listeners' discomfort, he feels inspired to address:

GAEV Yes... This thing (*stroking the cupboard*). Dear, venerated cupboard! I salute your existence, which for over a century has been dedicated to enlightened ideals of virtue and justice; your unspoken appeal to constructive endeavour has not faltered in the course of a century (*through tears*) in generations of our line, courage, faith in a better future and nurturing within us ideals of decency and social consciousness.

*Pause.*

LOPAKHIN Right...

LYUBOV ANDREEVNA You're still the same, Lyona. (993)

This speech, like his others, 'embarrasses his listeners' (Rayfield 1975: 221) and has been called 'patently ridiculous' (Senelick 2006: 973). But we ought to note that here Gaev, like many AS persons, actually demonstrates impressive vocabulary skills and a high degree of intelligence (Barnhill 2007: 116; Gillberg 2002: 65); and

these skills, seen periodically throughout the play, challenge the rightness of labelling Gaev as, to repeat Stanislavsky's term, 'stupid'. Indeed, certain Chekhov scholars have recognised Gaev's seemingly paradoxical displays of intellect. Donald Rayfield (1975: 62) observes Gaev's ability to make astute comments amidst his socially awkward delivery, noting that 'At his most absurd Gaev tends to be at his wisest.' Elsewhere, Rayfield (1975: 72, 71) credits Gaev with an 'authoritative', 'aphoristic piece of wisdom' when, during the debate in Act 2, he reminds the idealistic student Trofimov, 'All the same you'll die' (1010). And Irina Kirk (1981: 153) asserts that 'there is much truth' in Gaev's speeches, despite his audiences' lack of receptivity. But Gaev's intelligence is generally obscured by the odd and socially inappropriate dimensions of his rhetoric, and the effect, as John Reid notes, is that 'the audience's attention is focused on the banality of such rhetoric rather than any ideational content' (2005: 38). In all this we may recognise the disparity between Gaev's verbal intelligence and his social awareness: the former is significant, while the latter is significantly lacking; this combination is common in AS persons.

Later in Act 1, after his nieces Varya and Anya have scolded him for the aforementioned speech and his other social lapses, he begins another speech while his nieces are trying to get to bed and while Firs is urging him to do the same:

GAEV Right away, right away. Go along, Firs. Have it your own way, I'll undress myself. Well, children, beddie-bye... Details tomorrow, but for now go to bed. (*Kisses Anya and Varya.*) I'm a man of the eighties... People don't put much stock in that period, but all the same I can say I've suffered for my convictions to no small degree in my time. There's a good reason peasants love me. You've got to study peasants! You've got to know what...

ANYA You're at it again, Uncle!

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VARYA Uncle dear, you must keep still.

FIRS (*angrily*) Leonid Andreich! (1000)

The fact that Gaev here again demonstrates logorrhoea when his listeners — and even Gaev himself — all badly need sleep demonstrates another of Gaev's AS characteristics: 'Difficulties in understanding social situations and other people's thoughts and feelings.' (AAA, quoted in Attwood 2007: 49) Here, Gaev not only fails to recognise his nieces' oft-repeated pleas to stop his unusual speeches; he also does not recognise the obvious cues indicating their physical weariness, and he appears to forget that just moments before he himself was urging them to go to sleep. The seeming randomness of Gaev's digression here fits well with Klin's aforementioned description even as it shows his '[t]endency to turn any conversation back to self or own topic of interest.' (AAA, quoted in Attwood 2007: 39)

This same 'tendency' and its attendant lack of social understanding again cause embarrassment in Act 2 when Lyubov scolds Gaev for similarly inappropriate ramblings to uninterested interlocutors:

LYUBOV Why talk so much? Today in the restaurant you started talking a lot again and all besides the point. About the seventies, about the decadents. And to who? Talking to waiters about the decadents! (1005)

Significantly, here Lyubov, despite having her own oddities, is acutely aware of 'Gaev's insensitivity to situations' (Gilman 1995: 225), social proprieties, and the feelings of others, and she gently but wearily chastises him. Her admonition differen-

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tiates between Lyubov and her eccentricities and Gaev and his AS condition, a distinction that I will develop later in this essay.

Later in Act 2, just after Lopakhin and Trofimov have offered short monologues on the problems of Russia and its people, Gaev indulges in his socially unexpected speech to nature:

GAEV (*quietly, as if declaiming*) Oh Nature, wondrous creature, aglow with eternal radiance, beautiful yet impassive, you whom we call Mother, merging within yourself Life and Death, you nourish and you destroy...

VARYA (*pleading*) Uncle dear!

ANYA Uncle, you're at it again! (1012)

Here again, Gaev's impressive vocabulary is undeniable, and his rhetoric is arguably inspiring, and yet his speech alone is regarded by his listeners with discomfort and embarrassment, while Trofimov's and Lopakhin's are received with some appreciation. The listeners' different, negative response to Gaev's speech is explained by his AS; for while both Trofimov's speeches and Lopakhin's speech follow logically from a subject another character has introduced, Gaev here again turns the conversation to his 'own topic of interest', first observing, without cue from another character, that 'The sun has set' (1011), and then beginning his articulate but inappropriate declamation.

The final example of Gaev's strange speeches occurs just minutes before the play concludes, while the various other characters are busily preparing to catch the train that will take them from the cherry orchard that Lopakhin has purchased. Overcome with emotion, Gaev begins:

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GAEV My friends, my dearly beloved friends! Abandoning this house forever can I be silent, can I refrain from expressing those feelings which now fill my whole being...

ANYA (*entreating*) Uncle!

VARYA Uncle dear, you mustn't! (1041)

Here the disparity between Gaev's verbal intelligence and social awareness is again evident. On one hand, his feelings and his desire to share them are completely understandable, and again his words are articulate. And yet once again Gaev demonstrates an insensitivity to the present situation, 'laps[ing] inappropriately into pathos' (Kataev 2002: 275) and seemingly oblivious to the need for others to catch their train instead of listening to him. Gaev consents to 'keep still' (1041), but within seconds he begins again:

GAEV I remember when I was six, on Trinity Sunday I sat in this window and watched my father driving to church...

LYUBOV ANDREEVNA Is all the luggage loaded? (1041)

In this final aborted speech, Gaev reveals yet another AS trait: an 'exceptional long-term memory for events and facts' (Meyer, *et al.* 2000: item 40). Here Gaev demonstrates an impressive ability to recall specific detail from an event forty-five years earlier, noting the exact year, the exact day, the exact place where he was, and the exact destination of his father's trip before his recollection is cut short.

Besides his socially inappropriate speeches, another prominent way in which Gaev's AS manifests itself verbally is his constant perseveration over billiards, mentally playing the game and speaking aloud his fantasy shots in the presence of his amused, confused, or annoyed listeners. Gaev's 'obsession' (Rayfield 1994: 56) with

billiards falls under the category of ‘restricted, repetitive and stereotypical behaviours and interests’ that the DSM-IV lists as a prime criteria for AS, a characteristic often displayed through an ‘encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted pattern of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus’ (quoted in Attwood 2007: 41). And although Beverly Hahn considers Gaev’s ‘incongruous references to billiards’ to be ‘disconcertingly unrealistic’ (1977: 14), they are actually a testimony to the physician Chekhov’s ability to accurately represent a prominent characteristic of a yet-unclassified medical condition. Gaev’s billiards fixation is perhaps his most memorable characteristic, and in his first significant appearance in the play he is perseverating over billiards, described as moving ‘*his arms and torso as if he were playing billiards*’ (988). Gaev’s body movement here is significant, for this particular kind of AS behaviour is often manifested by ‘stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms’, including the kind of ‘complex whole-body movements’ (DSM-IV, quoted in Attwood 2007: 41) that Gaev here displays. Lyubov is so familiar with his fantasy billiards games that she attempts to speak his words for him: ‘How does it go? . . . Yellow in the corner! Doublette in the center!’ (988).

Also significant is the fact that in every instance Gaev perseverates over billiards, he is in a stressful situation. As researchers have noted, AS persons are susceptible to anxiety (Tantum 2000: 56), and AS persons tend to perseverate as a way to alleviate stress (Markham, *et al.* 2007: 91-92). Anxiety can also cause AS persons to take ‘refuge in a special world of idiosyncratic interests, routines and private interests’ (Tantum 2000: 56). Chekhov scholars have certainly observed such behaviour in Gaev. In Kirk’s words, ‘His diversion of imaginary billiards is a defense against reality which preoccupies and soothes his mind’ (1981: 152); and Rayfield (1994: 56) writes that ‘Gaev uses phantom billiards as a displacement activity, to hide embarrassment or distress, reenacting tricky shots to exorcise tricky social moments.’

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Gaev's instances of perseveration are as follows: 1) during the aforementioned highly emotional return of his sister Lyubov (988); 2) just after his first inappropriate monologue, following Lopakhin's and Lyubov's expressions of disapproval. In his stage directions, Chekhov describes him as '*somewhat embarrassed*' (993); 3) just after Gaev has been admonished by Anya and Varya for making his second inappropriate speech; Firs is also yelling at him to go to bed (1000); 4) while Lopakhin is pressuring him and Lyubov to decide about his idea to transform the cherry orchard into summer cottages; 5) while Lopakhin is again pressuring them with his idea, just after Lopakhin has loudly called Gaev an 'old biddy' in front of Lyubov (1007); 6) while Gaev prepares to leave the cherry orchard — which is already being converted to summer villas at the command of its new owner, Lopakhin — just after he ruminates about his new job as a bank employee (1036); 7) a few minutes later, rushing to leave the orchard, just after Anya and Varya have admonished him to stop his emotional speech about leaving the orchard (1041); 8) roughly two minutes later, just after Trofimov has yelled for everyone to go catch the train. As he perseverates here, Chekhov describes him as '*overcome with emotion, afraid he'll cry*' (1042).

Having observed Gaev's proclivity to perseverate under stress, we should note that there are only two significant scenes in the play in which Gaev is present but does not audibly perseverate over billiards, but even in these scenes his billiards obsession is evident. One such instance is just after Gaev is again admonished by his nieces for another inappropriate speech, in this case his declamation to nature. After Anya and Varya implore him to stop, Trofimov jocosely remarks, 'You'd better bank the yellow in the center doublette' (1012). Obviously Gaev's tendency to perseverate over billiards when uncomfortable is so recognisable that Trofimov can mockingly anticipate his scripted behaviour. The other such instance is in Act 3 just after Gaev, described as '*wiping away tears*' (1028), has returned from the auction, crestfallen that his fami-

ly has lost the cherry orchard to Lopakhin. Gaev laments, 'What I've been through!' (1028), but upon hearing that a billiards game is taking place, his '*expression alters, he stops crying*', he tells Firs to help him change out of his wet clothes, and he quickly exits (1028), presumably to join the game (Rayfield 1994: 85).

In addition to his socially inappropriate monologues and his regular perseveration about billiards, another major indicator of Gaev's AS is his 'frequent tendency to say things without considering the emotional impact on the listener (*faux pas*)' (AAA, quoted in Attwood 2007: 50). Gaev's tendency to make inappropriate comments is related to his other aforementioned AS practices, for they all involve Gaev's habit of indiscriminately speaking about what is on his mind and failing to abide by social conventions that others typically understand and heed. Gaev's earliest instances of such comments involve Lopakhin and quickly follow Lopakhin's first attempt to persuade Lyubov to transform the cherry orchard into rental property for summer cottages. But before Lyubov can respond to Lopakhin's sensible albeit distastefully utilitarian idea, Gaev blurts out, 'Excuse me, what rubbish!' (991) and a bit later exclaims, 'What drivel!' (992), even though Lopakhin is not addressing him. Significantly, these are not the first inappropriate and 'supercilious' (Kataev 2002: 278) comments Gaev has made to Lopakhin, who precedes sharing his idea by telling Lyubov that Gaev has called him an 'oaf' and 'a money-grubbing peasant' (990). Gaev's lack of social propriety is accentuated by the comparative gentleness of Lyubov's equally uninterested but more socially adept response to Lopakhin: 'My dear, forgive me, but you don't understand at all' (991). Moreover, Gaev speaks to Lopakhin in this way in front of several other characters. And right after Lopakhin leaves, Gaev not only calls him an 'oaf', but he also goes on to embarrass the already uncomfortable Varya by telling the others, 'Varya's going to marry him, that's our Varya's little intended!' (994). As she

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does during his monologues, Varya attempts to gently admonish him, saying, 'Don't say anything uncalled for, uncle dear' (995).

But in spite of Varya's plea, Gaev continues to make 'uncalled for' comments. Upon Lyubov's exit, Gaev tells Varya, in the presence of Yasha, 'My sister still hasn't outgrown the habit of squandering money.' He then immediately tells Yasha, 'Out of the way, my good man, you smell like a chicken coop' (997). He then continues to criticise Lyubov, lamenting her decision to marry 'a commoner' and urging Varya to 'admit she's depraved. You can feel it in her slightest movement' (998). This time it is Anya who gently points out his improprieties (999). Gaev's response is revealing:

GAEV Yes, yes... (*hides his face in his hands*) It's an awful thing to say! My God! God help me! And today I made a speech to the cupboard... like a fool! And as soon as I'd finished, I realised what a fool I'd been. (999)

Like many AS persons, Gaev has become painfully aware of his oddities, an awareness that often leads to depression (Watkins 2007: para. 7), but in spite of Gaev's resolution to 'keep still' (999), his strange speeches continue, as noted earlier.

As we more closely examine Gaev's many inappropriate remarks, we may recognise that they come at a relational cost to him, a relational cost that provides more evidence for his AS. Although Gaev's sister and nieces lovingly bear with him throughout the play, it is noteworthy that he has no male friends and that he is the only man in the play (besides the ancient Firs, who may be widowed) who has neither been married nor has any recognisable interest in a particular woman. Significantly, both an absence of close friends and singleness are typical in AS persons (Attwood 2007: 55-94; Barnhill 2007: 118), who as adults 'are often too awkward to develop strong social connections' (Jurecic 2006: 5; cf. McCroskery 1999: para. 4). Che-

khov's text demonstrates how Gaev's AS tendencies mitigate against him having close relationships. Two of the men who speak disdainfully of Gaev — Lopakhin and Yasha — were, before they expressed any hostility towards him, directly insulted by him. Moreover, Gaev also appears to have a bad relationship with his caretaker Firs. We see that Gaev speaks unkindly to Firs on three separate occasions: twice — ironically enough — telling Firs to '[b]e quiet' or '[k]eep quiet' when the rather senile Firs begins to wax nostalgically about the old days in a manner that strikingly resembles Gaev's own unappreciated speeches (992 and 1009), and, once again ironically, calling Firs 'a pest' after the aging valet urges Gaev to put on his overcoat (1008).

Moreover, Gaev's relational problems with Lopakhin, Yasha, and Firs are all connected with other AS characteristics of his which irk them. When speaking with Lopakhin, Gaev demonstrates three symptoms of AS: an inability to understand colloquialisms, an olfactory sensitivity, and a tendency towards inflexible thinking. Gaev's difficulty in understanding colloquialisms — a problem associated with AS persons' tendency towards literalistic thinking (Attwood 2007: 216-18) — is seen in Gaev's first interaction with Lopakhin. Gaev, reminiscing about his childhood days with his sister, comments, 'now I've turned fifty-one, strange as that seems', after which, he and Lopakhin have this brief exchange:

LOPAKHIN Yes, time marches on.

GAEV How's that?

LOPAKHIN Time, I say, marches on.

GAEV It smells of cheap perfume in here. (989)

Stephen Baehr notes that Gaev 'does not understand' Lopakhin's phrase, and he associates Gaev's confusion with 'The old nobility's inability and unwillingness to understand the passage of time' (1999: 105, 106). But Gaev's lack of understanding is bet-

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ter explained by his AS and his attendant difficulty in understanding the colloquialism Lopakhin has uttered.

We may further note that Gaev follows Lopakhin's repeating of the phrase with a seemingly random comment on what he considers an unpleasant odour. But Gaev's strange remark is consistent with both the AS tendency to make inappropriate comments and the AS tendency towards olfactory sensitivity (Attwood 2007: 282-84), a sensitivity Gaev displays several times (Rayfield 1999: 248), as we shall note presently. We should also consider how this bizarre exchange must affect Lopakhin's view of Gaev. Although Lopakhin does not verbally reply at this point, we can imagine his frustration. Not only does Gaev not acknowledge Lopakhin's clarification, but he also completely changes the subject. And his comment on 'cheap perfume' could certainly be interpreted by Lopakhin as an insult towards him personally since Gaev has, in Lopakhin's words, already described him as a distasteful 'money-grubbing peasant' (990). The idea of an upstart 'peasant' — who, by his own admission, lacks refinement — smelling like cheap perfume seems consistent with Gaev's depiction of Lopakhin elsewhere in the play; at the same time, Gaev's comment might actually result from the combination of his discomfort with his inability to understand Lopakhin's colloquialism, his olfactory sensitivity, and his just-discussed AS tendency to make inappropriate comments.

Gaev's olfactory sensitivity and social improprieties also contribute to his relational conflicts with Yasha (Rayfield 1999: 260). Gaev's first interaction with the young valet involves Gaev telling him, 'you smell like a chicken coop' (997), and Yasha's resentment towards Gaev first displays itself immediately afterwards. Gaev's comment here seems particularly uncalled for, for whatever Yasha smells like, it is very unlikely that he actually smells like a chicken coop. But Gaev's rude comment to Yasha in fact reveals that Gaev is affected by a specific olfactory condition common

in AS persons: being ‘significantly impaired at olfactory *identification*’ (Suzuki, *et al.* 2003: 105, italics mine). And in the two men’s final interaction, Gaev displays a similar combination of AS characteristics, ‘*Looking at Yasha*’ and asking, ‘Who’s that smelling of herring?’ (1036). Here again, a problem with olfactory identification is likely evident, and it may also have elicited Gaev’s aforementioned ‘cheap perfume’ comment to Lopakhin.

Gaev’s interactions with Lopakhin are further exacerbated by another AS characteristic. We have noted Gaev’s disdainful responses to Lopakhin’s suggestion that the cherry orchard be altered to make summer cottages. In these cases, we can see that Gaev’s tendency to speak insensitively conspires with another AS trait to alienate him from Lopakhin. Gaev’s immediate dismissal of Lopakhin’s practical albeit distasteful plan demonstrates his ‘[t]endency to think of issues as being black and white (e.g. in politics and morality) rather than considering multiple perspectives in a different way’ (DSM-IV criteria for AS, quoted in Attwood 2007: 49). Gaev’s ‘black and white’ thinking on this matter manifests itself not merely in his intellectual rejection of Lopakhin’s plan, but also in the emotionally charged moral outrage he expresses when Lopakhin presses his idea. Gaev is described as ‘*getting indignant*’ when he interrupts Lopakhin in mid-sentence, shouting, ‘What drivel!’ (992). Gaev’s complete rejection of Lopakhin’s idea in two separate scenes (991-92 and 1006) makes worse his already strained relationship with Lopakhin, who eventually calls him an ‘old bid-dy’ (1006).

Another one of Gaev’s AS characteristics — his seeming inability to take care of himself in day to day life — negatively affects his relationship with Firs even as it bodes ill for his future at the drama’s end. Throughout the play, Gaev exhibits a child-like dependence on Firs to dress him and attend to his various needs (Lindheim 2004: para. 1), and Gaev’s self-care ineptitude clearly irritates the aged valet. As noted ear-

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lier, Firs nags Gaev to go to bed, becoming visibly angered by his lack of common sense (1000). Another time, Firs scolds him for wearing unclean trousers, saying in frustration, 'What am I going to do with you!' (995) — an expression generally spoken to children. Gaev himself later expresses his reliance on Firs when he specifically asks him to help him change his clothes (1028). Difficulty getting dressed and attending to personal hygiene is common for AS persons (Gillberg 2002: 109), and Gaev's inability to skilfully perform such basic tasks will seriously jeopardise his future, particularly in light of Firs' apparent death at the play's conclusion.

Moreover, Gaev's various AS characteristics threaten to jeopardise his recently accepted job as a bank official. Critics are generally skeptical about Gaev's employment, with David Magarshack predicting that he will be unable to keep the job 'for even a month' (1984: 168). Within the play itself, Lopakhin openly expresses his skepticism about this matter, stating, 'he won't keep at it, too lazy' (1034). Lopakhin emphasises Gaev's perceived laziness, but what seems more likely to endanger Gaev's employment are his various social oddities, a situation consistent with studies that observe AS persons' 'inability to maintain employment due to poor social communication between employee and employer or coworkers, social skills deficits, and sensory issues' (Barnhill 2007: 119). Indeed, Gaev's perceived inability to keep his job stands as another significant indicator of his AS.

Gaev's AS is also suggested by his oft-noted addiction to sugar, something Donald Rayfield calls one of his 'uncontrollable habits' (1994: 59). He regularly eats candy during the course of the play, and his reputation for doing so is such that he laughingly comments, 'They say I've eaten up my whole estate in hard candies' (1007). As Suzanne Lawton observes, sugar addiction is very common to AS persons, who, in general, 'always seem to crave sugar or simple carbohydrates' (2007: 73). Because sugar intake exacerbates various AS problems, Lawton recommends that AS

persons abstain from sugar, and she notes that such abstention can bring about significant behavioural improvements for those who have AS (2007: 83). The significance of Gaev's sugar consumption has not been lost on critics. Laurence Senelick (1985: 69) has equated Gaev's constant snacking with him being 'a Freudian baby arrested at the oral stage', a judgment seconded by Stephen Baehr (1999: 104, 114); and, although this Freudian explanation for Gaev's sugar consumption differs starkly from my own, such a reading ultimately gives credence to the larger argument that Gaev has AS, for AS adults are often known for their 'childlike' ways (McCroskrey 1999: para. 9; cf. para. 3).

A final indicator of Gaev's AS is the fact that his sister Lyubov exhibits several AS traits despite the fact that, based on her behaviour in the play, she herself could not actually be classified as an AS person. As Christopher Gillberg (2002: 69) writes, more than half of AS persons 'have a close relative — parent or sibling — with similar, albeit not necessarily identical, problems.' Gillberg further notes that families with diagnosed AS persons generally have other individuals who demonstrate certain AS traits in more 'subtle' and 'sub-clinical' ways (2002: 70). Indeed, although Lyubov shares certain AS characteristics with her brother, her relatively mild displays of these characteristics actually accentuate their comparative severity in Gaev. In Peace's words, although 'both Lyubov and Gaev have the characteristics of children [...] it is in Gaev that the characteristics of the child are most pronounced' (1983: 123). Peace also calls Gaev 'an obvious comic shadow for the childlike and naively romantic aspects of Lyubov' (1983: 125). Particular AS traits that Lyubov demonstrates include her occasional odd monologue (consider her speech about and to the orchard in Act 1 [995-96]); inflexible thinking (her resistance to Lopakhin's summer cottages idea is just as firm as Gaev's, though expressed more gently. Significantly, Lopakhin's anger is directed towards Gaev while he only expresses frustration with Lyubov); occasional

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inappropriate remarks (her statement to Trofimov, 'At your age not to have a mistress', is most memorable, although we must note that she not only intended the statement humourously but also that she quickly apologises and restores their relationship [1023-24]); and perhaps some olfactory sensitivity, although she, unlike Gaev, correctly identifies the aroma she smells (1004). Her general childlike nature has also been observed by several critics (Peace 1983: 123; Saur 2000: 78; Lindheim 2004: para. 1).

But whatever Lyubov's eccentricities, they do not repel others the way Gaev's do. Peace observes that her speech to the orchard 'is not comic' but rather 'exalted and poetic' (1983: 124). However, Peace also points out that 'what is possible for Lyubov Andreyevna is not allowed for her brother', whose speeches are met with embarrassment and dismissal (1983: 125). Moreover, Lyubov is socially aware enough to maintain her relationships, and the degree to which the other characters care about her and her feelings contributes to Harvey Pitcher's declaration that she is 'at the centre of the play's emotional network' (1973: 174). Moreover, although we are concerned at the play's end about the likelihood that Lyubov will re-enter her destructive relationship with her estranged lover, she has at least already demonstrated an ability to live away from her family's estate and to establish friendships beyond her immediate family circle. Our concerns for Gaev are qualitatively different, for we recognise in him a disconcerting, even frightening inability to function on his own within society.

Indeed, if Gaev's various AS characteristics make the case for his AS compelling, I believe that this diagnosis should substantively affect our interpretation of his character, whether we are readers, viewers, actors, or directors. Most of all, I believe that our recognition of Gaev's AS should effect compassion and understanding towards him. Let us consider Gaev's circumstances as the play concludes: he must depart alone from the only home he has ever known, his family is scattering, his care-

giver Firs is dead, and he is about to begin a job that he seems sure to lose. He is, in Ralph Lindheim's words, 'headed for certain failure' (2004: para. 1). Moreover, while in our present time understanding of AS and support services for AS persons is expanding rapidly, such understanding and services are simply non-existent for Gaev, who, like so many until recent years, has lived his entire life as an undiagnosed AS person. And the combination of Gaev's neurological condition, his traumatic life-changing circumstances, his likelihood of quickly losing his job, and his inevitable social isolation and lack of access to needed support puts Gaev in a very vulnerable situation. As various experts have noted, AS persons are particularly vulnerable to depression (Stewart, *et al.* 2006: 85) and even suicide (Fitzgerald: 2007), and without the support network he seriously needs, Gaev will likely succumb to depression and possibly worse. Were Gaev living today, he could possibly obtain the social training, career counseling, support services, AS persons networking, and dietary intervention that could benefit him immensely. But given his situation at the turn of the twentieth century, Gaev is undeniably at risk.

With these realisations in mind, I would like to conclude by encouraging directors, actors, teachers, and critics to seek to portray Gaev in ways that fairly represents the complexity of his AS and that 'present [his] emotional complexities within the logic of autistic agency' (Murray 2006: 39). Such a portrayal of Gaev could capture not merely his comic social ineptitude, but also his intelligence and his particular predicament as an AS person whose neurological condition is misunderstood and whose needs are unaided.<sup>8</sup> It is true that some actors, perhaps most notably Stanisla-

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<sup>8</sup> One concern in any portrayal of an autistic person is to present that character as an individual person and not in a stereotyped way that ultimately serves, in Murray's words, 'to act as the norm by which autism is judged' (2010: para. 3), and thus 'lose the person in the condition' (Savarese 2007: 198). But this concern should inspire actors, directors, and teachers to portray Gaev and his AS condition all the more thoughtfully.

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vsky and Gielgud, have portrayed Gaev's pathos in ways that have generated considerable audience sympathy (Loehlin 2006: 134-35); but as I note in my opening paragraph, Stanislavsky himself was convinced of Gaev's 'stupid[ity]' and even Gielgud's performance elicited a critical response that emphasised Gaev's 'essential foolishness' (Loehlin 2006: 135) and his '*deserve[d]*' failure (Loehlin 2006: 134, italics mine), reinforcing the negative assessment of Gaev by the play's other characters. I believe that a proper representation of Gaev as an AS person can subtly but distinctly display both the intelligence behind his eccentricities and the disability behind his challenges. The result will be a more effective and indeed more accurate conveyance of a misunderstood and brilliantly written character.

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D.V.U.

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MARK PURVES

**THE MUTED *CRI DE CŒUR* OF DR. RAGIN: 'WARD NO. 6' RECONSIDERED**

The story of Dr Andrei Ragin, protagonist of Anton Chekhov's 'Ward No. 6', is well known: pressured by his father to become a doctor, Ragin tires of the provincial vulgarity of his contemporaries, who watch with indifference as the once eager physician succumbs to apathy in both his personal and professional life.<sup>1</sup> Then, in what seems a wrong turn, Ragin finds himself in the annexed portion of the hospital used to house its psychiatric patients, a dilapidated wing wherein the doctor becomes reacquainted with a man he treated years before, Ivan Dmitrich Gromov. In his meetings with Gromov, Ragin finds not only an interlocutor with whom he can discuss the social and philosophical ideas he has imbibed over the years, but a kindred spirit who succeeds in enlivening the usually unresponsive doctor. Spurred by his meetings with Gromov, Ragin begins to articulate his dissatisfaction with the mismanagement of the town, including the poorly run hospital. Unfortunately for Ragin, the image of the hospital's chief resident fraternising with one of the hospital's mental cases proves too large a pill to swallow for the town's leaders, who remove Ragin from his position. Suspicious of his disaffection, the city potentates summon Ragin to what appears to be an informal gathering at the request of the mayor. Acting on the pretence of concern, the town leaders, with the help of those close to the protagonist, deal with Ragin first by dismissing him and then by committing the doctor to the very ward he once oversaw. Roughly twenty-four hours following his internment, Ragin is beaten to

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<sup>1</sup> The works referenced above are to be found in A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (Moskva: Nauka, 1974-1983). References to 'Ward No 6' ('Palata No 6') are from *Sochineniia* Vol. 8 (1986), 72-126, and are given after quotations in the text. English translations are my own.

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death by his former steward and is subsequently buried, with rites performed by his former assistant.

In contrast to the events leading up to Ragin's removal from office, all of which appear designed to show the ways in which he alienates his freedom for the prospect of personal and professional profit, the scenes that take place after his firing can be read as pronouncements of deliverance from that alienation. Ragin's dismissal from work allows him to reclaim his essential freedom and embark upon the process of self-education away from the servility and deception of his former life. Seeing Ragin as more than the victim of his own passivity, this article seeks to extend the philosophical implications of Chekhov's hero through a close reading of the scenes following his dismissal. Such scenes include Ragin's appearance before the town council, his travels abroad, his brief period of unemployment, his interactions with former friends and colleagues, and the conditions surrounding his death. The focus these scenes place on Ragin's abandonment of the deceptive practices that have shaped his habits brings to mind Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of the inviolability and burden of individual freedom in *Being and Nothingness*.<sup>2</sup> References to Sartre's work will be made throughout this article, though only when needed for examining the story's scenes that emphasise Ragin's efforts to assert an independent sense of self in a world of vast uniformity. As we shall see, the consequences of these efforts make Ragin one of the more dynamic, multifaceted characters populating Chekhov's oeuvre. They also prove fatal. It is my hope that a consideration of the events leading up to Ragin's death within the full context of his life will give readers pause to reflect on

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Être et le Néant* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1943). Further references to this work are given after quotations in the text: French language quotations will cite this original publication, while English-language quotations will derive from the definitive English translation by Hazel Barnes, *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

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the unrealised possibilities of his existence, which should capture not only our attention but also our sympathy.

Few characters are more memorable than Ragin, yet no other figure found in Chekhov’s cosmos has been less augmented since the story’s publication in 1892. Criticism tends towards the primitive and judgmental: some have dismissed Ragin as ‘deviant’<sup>3</sup> or ‘criminally negligent’;<sup>4</sup> for others, he is merely ‘weak and listless [...] completely self-absorbed’,<sup>5</sup> an ‘ideological villain’,<sup>6</sup> guilty of taking ‘philosophical refuge behind the stoicism of Marcus Aurelius, the passivity of Tolstoy’s nonresistance to evil, and the thousand-year perspective of Schopenhauer to glorify his inactivity’.<sup>7</sup> Established approaches to Ragin as a ‘symbolic image of Russia’<sup>8</sup> remain fixed in the minds of modern critics, who discuss the doctor’s experiences as a ‘microcosm of society’.<sup>9</sup> Had Ragin acted differently, it is presumed the doctor could have somehow alleviated the suffering of those around him, perhaps even delayed his own premature and grisly death, or at the very least made life a little better. Ragin, critics insist, ‘has it in his power [...] but he does nothing’.<sup>10</sup> To the injustices around him, Ragin ‘remains absolutely indifferent’, crippled by a ‘social responsibility totally

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<sup>3</sup> Damir Mirković, ‘Anton Pavlovich Chekhov and the Modern Sociology of Deviance’, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 18.1 (1976), 66-72 (p. 68).

<sup>4</sup> Beverly Hahn, *Chekhov: A Study of the Major Stories and Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> Henri Troyat, *Chekhov* (New York: Dutton, 1986), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Hingley, *A New Life of Anton Chekhov* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 215.

<sup>7</sup> Cathy Popkin, *The Pragmatics of Insignificance: Chekhov, Zoshchenko, Gogol* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 227.

<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Vladimirovich Ermilov, *A. P. Chekhov*. (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1959), pp. 311-312.

<sup>9</sup> Il’ia Vinitskii, ‘Dukhovnyi kartser: N.S. Leskov i ‘Palata no 6’ A.P. Chekhova’, *Voprosy literatury*, 4 (2006), 310-322 (pp. 310-311).

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery Belgion, ‘Verisimilitude in Tchekhov and Dostoievsky’, *The Criterion*, 16 (1936), 14-32 (p. 21).

lacking in him'.<sup>11</sup> Where some scholars attribute Ragin's ignominious death solely to his carelessness,<sup>12</sup> others find in his destruction a reproach to the professional inadequacies of a man whose occupation the author shared. Those belonging to the world of medicine are particularly drawn to this conclusion; one practicing physician confessed glee over the violent end of Ragin's life, noting 'a certain satisfaction with the doctor's plight.'<sup>13</sup> The portrait painted by current critics, with few notable exceptions,<sup>14</sup> is incomplete, diminished by its inattention to the scenes in which Ragin gradually arms himself against the apathy that had secured his social position for so long and begins to act independently rather than being acted upon by some outside force.

It is not my intention to unhorse every pronouncement ever uttered about Chekhov's luckless hero. Received wisdom about Ragin — for all its obvious interpretive limitations — rightly identifies the doctor's shortcomings, including his occasional snobbery, penchant for speechifying, and misbegotten philosophies. And yet, Ragin's specific identity should ensure more ambiguity than readers have cared to notice. For instance, conventional interpretations of Chekhov's story revolve around the commonplace that Ragin's death is the result of sanctioning the wicked world he somehow had the power to change. Readers advance this proposition as axiomatic, despite the attention Chekhov calls to the prohibitive forces that have long governed Ragin's behaviour. For example, as a student, the very pious (*ochen' nabozen*; Chekhov 1892: 82) Ragin intended to enter a theological academy; these plans are dismissed and

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<sup>11</sup> Amar Basu and Sankar Basu, 'Author's Voice in "Ward No. 6"', *Journal of the School of Languages*, 7 (1981), 41-47 (p. 45).

<sup>12</sup> Ronald Hingley, *The Oxford Chekhov: Stories 1892-1893* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> John Stone, 'The Wisdom of Pain: A Responsive Reading', *Literature and Medicine*, 9 (1990), 142-149 (p.148).

<sup>14</sup> Yuri Corrigan, 'Chekhov and the Divided Self', *The Russian Review*, 70 (2011), 272-287 (p. 286). See also Radislav Lapushin, 'Tragicheskii geroi v "Palate No 6"', in *Chekhoviana: Melikhovskie trudy i dni*, ed. by V. Ia. Lakshin (Moscow: Nauka, 1995), pp. 60-65 (p. 63).

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mocked by his physician father, who ‘announced categorically that he would not consider him his son if he became a priest’ (Chekhov 1892: 82). Driven by the fear of severance from his family, Ragin follows in his father’s footsteps although ‘he never felt any calling for medicine’ (Chekhov 1892: 82). The disjunction between what the son desires professionally and that dictated by his father casts a dark shadow for Ragin, who will spend the remainder of his life surrendering his passions in exchange for social and occupational security. In fact, the penumbra cast by Ragin’s father and the conformity it represents emanates long after Ragin becomes a doctor. Ragin’s first post overseeing the hospital in which the story takes place attests to this influence. ‘Of the old doctor, Andrei Efimych’s predecessor’, the narrator relates, ‘they said that he had dealt secretly in hospital alcohol and ran a whole harem for himself among the nurses and ailing female patients’ (Chekhov 1892: 83). From his natural father, Ragin acquires a sense of servility and compliance — essential attributes for survival in the bleakly ordinary world of ‘Ward No. 6’. From his predecessor, a vocational father, Ragin inherits a morass of professional and sexual mismanagement, a den of thievery where those in charge steal medical supplies and abuse the infirm (Chekhov 1892: 83). The patriarchal order these two fathers embody connotes the narrow set of choices available to Ragin, whose gradual abandonment of the role assigned to him helps to precipitate his downfall. The contention that ‘Ragin is easily reconciled with the horrors of the existing state of affairs and flourishes amidst them all’<sup>15</sup> is similarly misguided, an exercise in wilful ignorance about the emotional range of Chekhov’s protagonist, indicated by the feelings of ‘sorrow’ (*skorb*’; Chekhov 1892: 92) he experiences over the absence of stimulating friendships and over patients dying from other-

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<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Markovich, “‘Archaic’ Constructions in “Ward Six””, in *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: Poetics, Hermeneutics, Thematics*, ed. J. Douglas Clayton (Ottawa: The Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, 2006), pp. 75-91 (p. 80).

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wise treatable diseases. What is more, this line of reasoning overlooks the genuine efforts Ragin makes early in his career (*v pervoe vremia Andrei Efimych rabotal och-en' userdno*; Chekhov 1892: 84) towards improving the salubrity and productivity of the hospital, a place whose resident 'cockroaches, bedbugs, and mice' (Chekhov 1892: 83) called home long before the doctor did. These efforts have yet to merit critical attention, and contemporary interpretations of Chekhov's protagonist are the poorer for it.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The hostile reading Ragin tends to elicit is by no means the province of scholars; direct references to Ragin figure predominantly in Tanure Ojaide's poem, 'Ward 6', which likens the doctor's apathy to the disease, terror and malice ravaging the poet's native Nigeria. The poem is premised on the conviction shared by most critics, namely, that Ragin should have made use of the resources he enjoyed as the town's medical doyen. See Tanure Ojaide, *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems*, Oxford: Malthouse Press Ltd, 1990, pp. 87-88. Though diverse in genre, adaptive conceptions of 'Ward No. 6' are remarkable most of all for the uniformity with which they promulgate prevailing beliefs. Contemporary adaptations of 'Ward No. 6' intended for screen and stage are no less captious in their appraisals of Chekhov's protagonist, who it seems cannot even disport himself within the walls of home without currying ire. One actor recently cast as Ragin in a dramatisation of 'Ward No. 6' remained recumbent for the entirety of the play in order to highlight the doctor's 'snobbish self-absorption' (Weismann). Suzana Purkovic focuses comparable attention on Ragin's apathy and refusal to stand for any principle in *Po motivima priče 'Paviljon br. 6' A.P. Čehova* (2008), a short cinematic study of Chekhov's story in which Ragin delivers nearly all of his lines while seated. Other films adapting Chekhov's story of late include Kirill Serebrennikov's *Ragin* (2004) and *Ward No. 6* (2009) by Karen Shakhnazarov. While differences between the two could not be starker in choice of setting and time, both agree in their mutual antipathy for Ragin, whom they regard as vain (he preens proudly before the mirror) and uncaring (to the screams bellowing out the annex, Ragin gives a cool shrug). Shakhnazarov's tendency to foreground Ragin against the fuzzy figures around him vividly points up his isolation; yet the film's conclusion about its main character — Ragin is a poor doctor and second-rate philosopher is unremarkable. *Ragin*, described by Leslie Felperin as 'mannered, stage-style thesping', also achieves occasional success in the liberties it takes with the secondary characters of Chekhov's story, such as Ragin's nurses, whose grotesque sexual manipulations of their patients frustrate the doctor's efforts at bringing discipline to his lawless hospital. (Leslie Felperin, 'Ragin', *Variety Film Reviews* (2005) <http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117927645?refcatid=2617.htm> [accessed 12 November 2012]). The creative energy both films devote to the doctor's derelictions is highly suggestive: Ragin deserves his brutal comeuppance. To be sure, by the time these films conclude Ragin's problems have alienated its audience to the degree that even the injustice of his

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*Being and Nothingness* provides a helpful frame for grasping Ragin's longing for self-constitution and the resistance this longing provokes among the doctor's contemporaries. For Sartre, one may remain in the mire (*le visqueux*; 1943: 701) in which life deposits us, where individuals practice bad faith (*mauvaise foi*; 1943: 85) by alienating their essential freedom in exchange for security or the benefit of some social function. Individuals can also break from this position of passivity to become a fully constituted self through the practice of good faith (*la bonne foi*; Sartre 1943: 111). Increasingly self-aware, these individuals recognise the absurdity of their existence and as a result experience a particularly acute form of moral anguish (*l'angoisse*; Sartre 1943: 66). This anguish, while painful, offers meaning to their lives through the exercise of free choice: 'It is in anguish', Sartre contends, 'that man gets the consciousness of his freedom' (Barnes 1956: 29). Ragin's experience before the town council gives rise to such feelings for the protagonist, whose gradual understanding of the meeting's purpose — 'to verify his mental abilities' (Chekhov 1892: 108) — leaves him 'bitterly sorry' (Chekhov 1892: 108), and in an 'anguished mood' (Chekhov 1892: 109). Called to stand before his superiors, Ragin is forced to look at himself as either distinct or indivisible from the controlling powers that manage the world he inhabits. The result is agony: 'for the first time in his life he felt humiliated and furious' (Chekhov 1892: 108). The ensuing anguish of this encounter is surprisingly heuristic, however; Ragin's initial feelings of despair quickly give way to something more substantial, namely a desire 'to sharply upset the order of life established for twenty years' (Chekhov 1892: 108). Though humiliating, Ragin's anguish actuates his abandonment of the false identity imposed upon him by bad faith, where he comes to resemble Sartre's notion of the individual 'who in the face of reproaches or rancour dissociates

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violent death fails to engage much sympathy for a 'tiresome character we never feel we get to know or even care about'. (Eric Monder 'Film Review: *Ward No. 6*', *Film International Journal* (2010) 1).

himself from his past by insisting on his freedom and on his perpetual re-creation' (Barnes 1956: 58).

Sartre's distinction between the epistemological and ontological components of bad faith and good faith sheds important light on both the existential motives for Ragin's behaviour and the curious hostility this behaviour elicits within the doctor's small but influential circle of acquaintances. At bottom, bad faith is the self-deceit individuals practice 'willingly' (ibid.: 48) in order to flee the burden of responsibility. Further features Sartre identifies as central to bad faith include an aversion to 'displeasing truth', something it either conceals or repurposes as 'a pleasing truth' (ibid.: 49) out of expediency. As 'the normal aspect of life for a very great number of people', it 'implies a constant and particular style of life' (ibid.: 50) confirmed by 'the exact nature of its requirements' (ibid.: 68). Bad faith is not only suspicious of 'critical thought' (ibid.: 68) but openly hostile towards opinions it refuses to engage: '[I]t ruins the beliefs which are opposed to it' (ibid.: 70). Having 'disarmed all beliefs in advance', bad faith 'is an immediate, permanent threat to every project of the human being' (ibid.: 70). To conjure such a bleak picture is not to inspire resignation; along with Sartre's assertion, contested by many, that even in prison one remains free is his claim that even as we allow ourselves to believe an idea we know to be false, 'that does not mean we can not radically escape bad faith' (ibid.: 70). The falling action and dénouement of 'Ward No. 6' constitute a crucial codicil to its better known passages by bringing into focus the problems associated with escaping bad faith.

Ragin's confrontation with the town council in chapter 12 concretises bad faith's tendency to dismiss, avoid, or turn a blind eye to critical evidence. When asked about renovating the hospital's dilapidated annex, an issue he attempted to bring to the attention of the town council a decade before, Ragin rebuts, dismissing the idea as financially imprudent. Standing before the town's leadership, Ragin continues by call-

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ing into question its system of ‘unneeded buildings and superfluous jobs’ (Chekhov 1892: 106-107), only to be rebuffed by a gelid, ‘Well, then let’s just set up a different system’ (Chekhov 1892: 107). According to Sartre, ‘bad faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into good faith’ (Barnes 1956: 68). Ragin’s disquiet touches his listeners on the raw, pointing up bad faith’s refusal to consider its basic assumptions as possibly misconceived. Moreover, the distorted ethics of bad faith characterise the town council’s understanding of the role it seeks to impose on Ragin, whose uncritical presence over the years is held up as a virtue. For his maladministration of the town’s sole medical facility over the years, Ragin earns not the slightest reprimand. For his criticism of the town’s governing council, however, to say nothing of the affection he shows to the imprisoned Gromov, Ragin is forced into retirement. Punished for transgressing the boundaries of the status quo, Ragin commits the crime of acting outside of his official role.

The town council’s antagonism for Ragin betrays the anxiety bad faith derives from the thought of those living outside the strictures it demands. Or, in terms closer to Sartre, the tendency of bad faith ‘to imprison man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition’ (Barnes 1956: 59). Ragin’s brief stint abroad, comprising chapters 13 and 14, marks an important period of self-education away from the assumptions directing his former life. Moreover, it highlights the distress practitioners of bad faith suffer over the emergence of a freely constituted Other and the lengths they will go in conscripting that Other into the order of itself. Departing for Moscow and St. Petersburg, Ragin reaches Warsaw before discovering that despite the vast geographical distance separating him from home, home has found a way of accompanying him abroad, as indicated by the presence of his escort, the boorish Mikhail Averianych.

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The relationship Mikhail Averianych shares with Ragin sets up a complex interplay between Ragin's efforts at reordering his response to the world on his own terms and the resistance he encounters in the process. As Ragin's traveling companion, Mikhail Averianych's role is not aleatory, but metonymic: standing in for the town council, whose affinity for officialdom and want for order he shares as the city's postmaster, Mikhail Averianych frustrates Ragin's transition of bad faith into good faith. Evidence of this involves their tour of Moscow's well-known attractions, including a visit to the Kremlin and its neighboring Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. During this interlude, Mikhail Averianych takes Ragin to see the Iberian icon, a renowned work of eleventh-century Byzantine iconography venerated for its wonder-working properties.<sup>17</sup> Returning the reader to the tensions separating Ragin from his ruffled superiors, Mikhail Averianych strains to visit as many places possible, adding to the atmosphere of agitation. In his insistence that Ragin see the holy icon 'before anything else' (Chekhov 1892: 110), Mikhail Averianych recalls the haste with which the town council handled Ragin's firing, the anxiety motivating bad faith's denial of what Sartre considered an enduring human need: the need for individual self-assertion. Mikhail Averianych's firm, unreasonable demands create a certain mistrust of the retired officer, who gradually loses all credibility as Ragin's friend. Rising from his fervent genuflection before the icon, the postmaster turns to Ragin and 'importantly' (Chekhov 1892: 110) urges him to kiss the ancient picture: 'Even if you don't believe, you feel somehow more at ease once you've prayed. Kiss it, my dear' (Chekhov 1892: 110). Embarrassed, Ragin submits himself low to the ground and purses his lips against the icon.

Few understood the brutishness of affected piety better than Chekhov. As a child, he was often made to bow for hours on end before the various icons belonging

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<sup>17</sup> T. S. Eremia, *Mir russkikh ikon i monastyrei: Istorii, predaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1998), p. 523.

to his father, a devout patriarch known for his cruelty and insecurity.<sup>18</sup> Chekhov’s attitude toward religion was nevertheless respectful, upheld by his reverence for sacred music, for the sonorous ring of church bells, for the richness of the liturgical language used throughout Russian Orthodoxy. For the religious tendency to stagy solemnity however, Chekhov felt differently. According to Rosamund Bartlett, a principal subject ‘Chekhov rebelled against’ in his work was the ‘theatricality of religion’, including ‘its icon processions’.<sup>19</sup> In other words, Ragin’s reluctance to pay proper tribute to the icon is far less distressing than the sanctimonious Mikhail Averianych, whose loud injunction to kiss the sacred image the author would have found showy and coercive. The icon as a tool of coercion figures in Chekhov’s story ‘The Blunder’ (‘Neudacha’, 1886), albeit to comedic effect. In this short piece, two parents hoist the venerated image above an unwilling tutor in the hopes of pressing the young man to marry their daughter. By commanding Ragin to stoop and kiss the icon, Mikhail Averianych enacts the wishes of a town council characterised by its desire to exact obedience. As the child depicted in the icon gives himself to his parent, so too must Ragin submit to the conditions bad faith determines for others. By asking Ragin to bow before an image depicting the union of Madonna and child — itself a reminder of his subordinated position within the town’s governing family — Mikhail Averianych reflects the anxieties that underlie the boundaries bad faith superimposes on those pursuing the possibility of personal autonomy.

Where Ragin’s bow before the icon forecasts his eventual acquiescence to the forces determined to punish him, other gestures highlight the doctor’s developing desire to break from the structures of power associated with bad faith. Aggrieved by the presence of the chatty Mikhail Averianych, who considered it his duty not to let Ragin

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<sup>18</sup> Nina Gitovich, *V vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1986), pp. 42-46.

<sup>19</sup> Rosamund Bartlett, *Chekhov: Scenes from a Life* (London: The Free Press, 2004), pp. 88-89.

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‘go a step away and to provide him with as many diversions as possible’, Ragin takes to the sofa — ‘face to the wall’ (Chekhov 1892: 111). Sartre’s description of freedom and existence — ‘liberté, étant assimilable à mon existence’ (1943: 520) — as a relationship constrained by the circumstances of experience sheds light on the philosophical implications of this seemingly simple gesture. The expression of Ragin’s freedom is restricted by the circumstances around him, yet he remains free to act within those circumstances, to do something rather than nothing — even if that something amounts to a mere turn of the head. Turning away from the familiar visage of Mikhail Averianych, Ragin turns his back on the deceptive and safe certainties offered by bad faith. This is not moral timidity but a posture of protest by which Ragin rejects the false consolations of his previous life.<sup>20</sup> Similar to Gromov, whose discovery of life’s absurdity occurs behind bars, Ragin faces ‘the wall’ (Chekhov 1892: 111) to catch a clearer glimpse of reality than he has ever experienced. Facing the back of the sofa, Ragin senses that ‘the reality Ivan Dmitrich spoke about is getting to me’ (112). From this new perspective, Ragin views the world around him with fresh eyes, instanced in his response to Mikhail Averianych’s dyspeptic discourse on European politics: ‘He took leave and came out with me out of friendship, out of magnanimity...There’s nothing worse than this genial tutelage’ (111). This is not to say that Ragin only now begins to recognise the intellectual vacuity of his former friend; he doubtlessly dis-

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<sup>20</sup> The freedom Ragin exercises in facing the wall and the personal autonomy it expresses finds an interesting parallel in two short stories by Ernest Hemingway, ‘Indian Camp’ and ‘The Killers’ both of which feature men who turn their backs to the shallow mores of their respective societies by facing the wall; see Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribner, 1998), pp. 69, 221. This action of turning away represents neither resignation nor indifference, but a declaration of personal liberation from the identities and expectations modern life places on individuals — the central idea Sartre explores in his short story, appropriately entitled, ‘The Wall’. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Le Mur* (Paris, 1939). For a detailed discussion about the ethical implications of turning away, see Mark Cirino, ‘Beating Mr. Turgenev: ‘The Execution of Tropmann’ and Hemingway’s Aesthetic of Witness’, *The Hemingway Review*, 30 (Fall 2010), 31-50.

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covered this long ago. Separated by thousands of miles from the patria that claims him, Ragin begins to sense the dubious role Mikhail Averianych has played in this journey. For Ragin, nothing is worse than the kind of companionship, or, to state it closer to the Russian, the genial tutelage (*druzheskaia opeka*; Chekhov 1892: 111) with which the postmaster condescendingly treats his so-called friend. Importantly, his initial annoyance with Mikhail Averianych gives way to something far more revealing: self-discovery and responsibility. Perturbed at his own impassivity, Ragin chides himself for his pettiness and thereby begins to accept the totality of the idea of the individual as a self-controlling agent to act and not be acted upon.

The contradictions and compromises arising out of the individual's longing for meaningful interaction with others are a key issue of Chekhov's work. A critic recently explained,

Throughout Chekhov's stories, central characters display an ambivalence as to whether they want to be part of the group or not: or rather, they want to be part, but then feel diminished by this belonging; they need to feel superior to the group or relationship as well as being in it, they need to escape, but if they do, they are immediately anxious to return.<sup>21</sup>

As the central character of 'Ward No. 6', Ragin appears to be an exception to the tendency described above. He betrays no such anxiety over rejoining the highly placed individuals whose company he has escaped. Returning from his travels abroad, Ragin finds himself poor. Mikhail Averianych has succeeded in fleecing nearly all the doctor's finances save a meagre eighty-six rubles. He is also unemployed, homeless,

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21 Tim Parks, 'Why Readers Disagree', *New York Review of Books Blog*, (2012): <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs-nyrblog/2012/apr/25/why-readers-disagree.htm> [accessed 25 April 2012].

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and deprived of any social context within which to re-experience himself as a normal person. The profundity of his situation is dramatised in the liminal space Ragin occupies upon arrival; caught between the homes of his past and present, though never really at home in either, the former insider must re-contextualise the familiar features of his natal landscapes from the unfamiliar perspective as town outsider. In other words, Ragin's decision to escape the group has cost him dearly, yet his attitude towards this group and the consoling illusions sustaining their fixed worldview can hardly be described as ambivalent. For Ragin, the initial advantages of adopting such a vantage point pay dividends in unexpectedly welcome ways. Where Ragin once viewed himself as little more than the deterministic 'particle of an invincible social evil' (Chekhov 1892: 92), powerless to effect any change, he now exercises his freedom in creative and ethical ways, looking to simpler things through the resumption of interests formerly set aside.

'Anguish, abandonment, responsibility', Sartre explains, 'whether muted or in full strength, constitute the quality of our consciousness in so far as this is pure and simple freedom' (Barnes 1956: 95). Having experienced the anguish of personal humiliation before the town council, whose insistence on bad faith the doctor subsequently and decidedly abandons, Ragin proceeds to assert his simple freedom in Chapter 15, where in his new lodgings as a tenant to a local tradeswoman, he embarks upon a new life characterised by a capacity for fellow-feeling and responsibility:

Sometimes the landlady's lover came to spend the night with her, a drunk who got violent during the night and frightened the children and Dariushka. When he came, settled down in the kitchen, and began to demand vodka, everybody felt very worried, and out of pity the doctor would take the crying children to his rooms and lie them down on the floor, and this gave him enormous pleasure (Chekhov 1892: 113-114) .

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The facility with which Ragin accustoms himself to his new surroundings underlines his evolving sensitivities. Gone are the days, when, treating a bawling younger patient, Ragin in his official role would quickly dash off a prescription so as to free himself from the din of infant screaming. Now, instead of pushing an anxious child away, Ragin gathers his landlady’s frightened children to himself. Moreover, Ragin’s concern for children for whom he bears neither paternal nor professional responsibility can be understood as a reaffirmation of his previously forsaken responsibility for the factual elements of his relations. For Sartre, facticity (*facticité*, 1943: 561) signifies every concrete detail belonging to the existence and limitations of human freedom. Such details include the particular time and place of one’s birth — an event outside of individual control whose constituents nevertheless create certain conditions for which one must assume responsibility: we cannot choose the family into which we are born, but we can negotiate family relations in a responsible way. Ragin cannot accept responsibility for the existence of the children living under his roof, but, by exercising his freedom, he is able to defend them. The protection Ragin offers clearly answers something deep within him, including a feeling of compassion caused by the suffering these children endure. Inexplicably, this moment has gone unnoticed by scholars, who maintain that Ragin fails ‘to undergo catharsis upon witnessing the actual suffering of others [...] [Ragin] fears and pities only when the suffering becomes his own’.<sup>22</sup> Gradually, he discovers something most would have thought impossible at this late juncture: deep pleasure. Among these pleasures are those of a simpler order; because the old books ‘no longer interested him deeply’ (Chekhov 1892: 114), Ragin develops a capacity for healthy prosaic trifles, finding it ‘interesting to sit in the kitch-

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<sup>22</sup> Liza Knapp, ‘Fear and Pity in ‘Ward Six’: Chekhovian Catharsis’, in *Reading Chekhov’s Text*, ed. Robert Louis Jackson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 145-54 (p. 153). See also Anatoly Sobennikov, ‘“Ward Six” — the Protagonist and His Idea’, in *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: Poetics, Hermeneutics, Thematics*, ed. J. Douglas Clayton (Ottawa: The Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, 2006), pp. 93-95 (p. 97).

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en and peel potatoes with Dariushka or sort buckwheat' (Chekhov 1892: 114). Ragin's efforts to civilise his days in a world of uncompromising cultural distemper reflect the possibility of living a life of good faith through the renewal of former interests once put aside.

For Sartre, the individual's attempt at escaping bad faith 'supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted' (Barnes 1956: 70). Evidence of this self-recovery comprises the final details of chapter 15, which closes by marking Ragin's attendance at church on weekends: 'standing by the wall, eyes closed, he listened to the singing and thought about his father, his mother, the university, religion; he felt at peace, cheerless, and afterwards, leaving the church, was sorry the service ended so soon' (Chekhov 1892: 114). In these moments of self-reflection, Ragin's thoughts carry him to the past, to the image of his parents. Discovering Ragin recalling his father's memory during these church services, one might suspect the son of reopening wounds best left alone. Instead, Ragin feels only regret the moment cannot last longer. The sense of peace he experiences stems from his maturity in reconciling the once irreconcilable images of the church and his father, making peace with the latter while ensconced within the walls of the former. By successfully bringing the two into apposition, Ragin demonstrates his willingness to square the unchangeable past with a future gestant with possibility. Unemployment is Ragin's bid for the life of moral solvency denied by his professional duties. Unable to reclaim the years spent in the service of his own misconceptions, Ragin alights on a path of self-awareness. The time he spends in new lodgings, under new conditions, both material and existential, affords Ragin the requisite opportunity to reflect upon the changes he has undergone since his journey abroad. It also brings to the fore his own marginalisation from the society he engaged as the merest of visitors.

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Little can account for the strange interest the town fathers exhibit in their recalcitrant son, except to speculate that they understand too well the potential repercussions they may face should Ragin's unconventional behaviour go unpunished.<sup>23</sup> For them, Ragin's gesture of friendship to Gromov, coupled with his audacity before the local leaders and his decisive break from the figures representing the aims of the town fathers, amount to a rebellion that cannot remain unrequited. Chapter 16, in which Ragin is duped into incarceration, emphasises how often the interest bad faith shows in the Other betrays a tendency to control it. For practitioners of bad faith, it is not so much a matter of tricking people as of insulating them. Redoubling their efforts to keep Ragin as close as possible, Mikhail Averianych and Khobotov resume their duties as the overweening elder brothers to the town's rebellious younger son. Continuing to stand in for a town council increasingly discomfited by Ragin's strange (non-public) behaviour, Khobotov and Mikhail Averianych visit the doctor with greater regularity. With rehearsed contrivance, Khobotov prescribes Ragin bromide and rhubarb pills, doing his best to convey 'that he was truly treating him' (Chekhov 1892: 117). The suspiciously nervous Mikhail Averianych, whose 'affected insouciance and forced guffaw' (Chekhov 1892: 115) confirms the perfidious role he has played in betraying the confidence of his former friend, enters Ragin's bedchambers out of 'duty to visit his friend and divert him' (Chekhov 1892: 115), to compliment the success Ragin's retirement has had in improving the doctor's good looks. 'He had not repaid his Warsaw debt', the narrator relates, 'and was oppressed by heavy shame, was on edge, and therefore tried to chortle more loudly and talk more wittily' (Chekhov 1892: 211). The obsequies and histrionics of these meetings transform the tranquility of

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<sup>23</sup> Irving Massey, troubled by all 'the espionage' inflicted on Ragin, wondered: 'Why all this investigation? What is there to spy upon?' See Irving Massey, 'Escape from Fiction: Literature and Didacticism', *The Georgia Review*, 3 (1978), 611-630 (p. 625).

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Ragin's rooms into an atmosphere of revolving-door disorientation. When we read that the postmaster's social calls are in fact motivated by his desires to distract Ragin, we are taken back to the weeks they travelled abroad and Mikhail Averianych's insistence on stuffing their calendar with as many distractions possible. The purpose of these distractions is to return the hero to his former life of servitude, to prevent him from vocalising his disaffection any further, to put down, in short, Ragin's rebellion of self-assertion through the practice of good faith.

Ragin's quarrel is existential, not merely with the social conventions of the time. Unimpressed by his former friends' frenetic attempts to distract his attention from the criticisms he wishes to make known, Ragin responds to their visits by once again taking to the sofa, 'face to the back' (Chekhov 1892: 115). In refusing to recognise the presence of his unwelcome friends, Ragin assumes the same physical position he adopted during his travels with Mikhail Averianych, albeit under different circumstances. While abroad, Ragin's conscious shift away from the familiar face of his companion served not only to underscore the protagonist's slowly emerging rejection, but also provided him the opportunity to accept partial responsibility for his own misery. Now that Ragin finds himself back home, the resumption of this posture of protest operates along similar lines but to a more dramatic effect in the life of its hero. Facing only the upholstery fitting his couch, Ragin simultaneously faces the reality of his situation: try as he might to peaceably disassociate himself from those comprising his former circle, he cannot escape them entirely; in fact, he is surrounded.

The incapacity bad faith suffers in maintaining mutually contradicting perspectives is reflected by its tendency to annul the alterity of the Other by transforming it into the same. 'A perpetual effort', Sartre contends, 'to annihilate the subject's subjectivity by causing it to be assimilated' (Barnes 1956: 379). The descending slope of the story's dramatic structure does more than trace the decline of its protagonist: it

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provides a fretful look at how the systems of thought governing this world ensure Ragin’s annihilation through assimilation. Late in the story, Ragin is visited once again by Mikhail Averianych and Khobotov. The evening’s conversation consists of the usual flummeries, touching on Ragin’s improving good looks and the need for the doctor to return to public life. The topic then turns to Ragin’s marriage prospects — nothing if not another last-ditch effort to normalise the protagonist by reinstalling him to the structures of power from which he grows increasingly estranged. Constitutionally opposed to the emerging self, bad faith demands not total apprehension but complete acceptance. The executors of bad faith who comprise the town council, here represented by Ragin’s acquaintances as their latent partners, would like nothing more than to see the doctor marry, to see him follow, that is, a convention that secures rather than shakes the social stability it demands. When Mikhail Averianych intones that he designs to have Ragin married by next summer’s end, Ragin explodes. ‘This is so banal’, he interrupts, ‘don’t you understand that you’re speaking in banalities?’ (Chekhov 1892: 212). Staring in amazement and fear, Ragin’s guests are helpless to stop the doctor’s fury: ‘Get out, both of you’, he shouts, ‘Obtuse people! Stupid people! I need neither your friendship nor your medicine, stupid man! Banality! Rubbish!’ (Chekhov 1892: 117). His guests scatter, ducking under the bottle of potassium bromide Ragin sends crashing down behind them. The strength of this passage issues from Ragin’s sudden release of emotion; serving as the objective correlative for the internal torments Ragin has long suppressed and has finally unleashed, the scene is entirely consonant with a handful of other outbursts made by some of Chekhov’s most deeply searching characters.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> These include Dr. Nikolai Stepanovich from ‘A Boring Story’ (‘Skuchnaia istoriia’, 1889), and Sasha Lebedeva from the play *Ivanov* (*Ivanov*, 1889).

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It is a compelling paradox that what constitutes the work's falling action should centre so strongly on the trope of rising. When chapter 16 begins, Ragin continues to lie on the sofa, a spatially low place suggestive of his usual inability to verbally stand up to his oppressors. However, the arrival of Khobotov and Mikhail Averianych causes Ragin to move from his recumbent position to sit upright. Having learned one chapter earlier that Mikhail Averianych's visits not only increase the doctor's misery but also inflame his esophagus with bile, we are not surprised to read that following the postmaster's subtle nod to conventionalism in his proposal to marry Ragin off, 'Andrei Efimych suddenly felt a scum reaching up to his throat' (Chekhov 1892: 117) bringing him to his feet. Scolding his guests for their garishness and false friendship, Ragin makes his anger obdurate by getting up quickly, clenching his fists, and raising them above his head. Prior to this dramatic moment, Ragin dealt with the trivial feelings his obtrusive guests induced in him in one of two ways: he either turned his back to them or strained to stifle the annoyance he felt in their presence. As Ragin shouts at his guests, he recognises the impropriety of his actions, and he wants 'to go on gently and politely' (Chekhov 1892: 117). Abandoning the pliancy of these methods, Ragin rises 'against his will' (Chekhov 1892: 117) nevertheless, and in doing so rises above his frailties. With this, he advances the latent, muted nature of his rebellion into a full-blown *cri de coeur* by vocally averring his self-constitution. And yet, while the practice of good faith enlarges Ragin's opportunities to live authentically, free from the identity formerly imposed upon him, it cannot relieve him from injustice nor from the violence bad faith enacts on the autonomous individual. On the pretence of looking into a 'most interesting case' (Chekhov 1892: 119) Ragin, accompanied by the man he threatened the day before, agrees to assist Khobotov in treating a patient living in the insane asylum. When Ragin turns to find a churlish Nikita mo-

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tioning towards the doctor’s recently installed cot, Ragin understands ‘everything’ (Chekhov 1892: 120) — the consequences of his disaffection most of all.

The closing scenes making up the falling action of ‘Ward No. 6’ return the reader to bad faith’s identifying disposition: to imprison those who stray from the conformity it requires by conscripting the offending Other into the order of itself. For instance, as the first matter of business marking Ragin’s arrival, the doctor is instructed first to disrobe then dress himself in a pair of undergarments and slippers that once belonged to someone else. The ostensible ordinariness of this request cloaks its sinister symbolism; Ragin is ordered to divest himself of the clothing belonging specifically to him, and the protagonist must now dress in a manner designed to make him look like everyone else. In what appears the successful negation of Ragin’s developing sense of autonomy, the doctor sits in the darkness dressed in ‘someone’s underwear and slippers’, another prisoner virtually indistinguishable from his fellow inmates (Chekhov 1892: 120). Conditioned to defeat, the begrimed inhabitants of the annex are scarcely differentiated from the discarded oddments surrounding them. Having long lost the ‘ability to think and feel’, (Chekhov 1892: 80) they are the ideal citizens in a world construed by bad faith: mechanically (*mashinal’no*; Chekhov 1892: 73) accepting food and drink, an unthinking and insensible populace living in the ‘passive obedience’ Sartre described. With the doctor’s induction into this lowly group, the local power structure achieves the conformity it long sought from Ragin. However, that a simple switch of clothing should settle the matter of Ragin’s disaffection, let alone annul his freedom entirely, belies the confidence bad faith reposes in its ability to control human life by simply consigning it away.

The atmosphere of Ragin’s defiance thickens in the final pages of the story, a possible prefigurement of Sartre’s famous contention that even in prison one remains free to act against the restraints imposed from without. Evidence of this can be drawn

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from the way Ragin chooses to spend the final hours of his mortality. Unlike his fellow prisoners — ideal detainees in their doleful resignation and paralytic silence — Ragin refuses to bend. Rising to leave, he once again rises above his former frailties by insisting he be granted a stroll around the hospital courtyard — a request he undoubtedly knows is impossible but makes all the same. Standing defiantly before a seething Nikita, whose recourse to violence the doctor knows as well as any other, Ragin demands his release. In response to his former employer's queries as to why he cannot step outside, Nikita dutifully represents the town council with his characteristic insistence on order: 'You can't, you can't, it's not allowed...don't start any disorder, it's not good!' (Chekhov 1892: 124). The purposeful nature of Ragin's response: 'but if I go out, what's that to anyone?' (Chekhov 1892: 218), clusters around the broader existential dilemma he faces in situating his identity within a world soon to reject him. For Gromov, whose earlier discussions with Ragin helped to bring the simmering protagonist to a boil, Ragin's imperatives for freedom resonate deeply. Taking his cue from the man he formerly denounced as soft and lazy, Gromov rises to defend Ragin's overtures to self-determination. 'What the devil is all this?' Gromov shouts, getting to his feet, 'What right does he have not to let you out? How dare they keep us here? The law clearly states that no one can be deprived of freedom without a trial! This is oppression! Despotism!' (Chekhov 1892: 124). Encouraged by Gromov's impassioned support, Ragin and his demand for deliverance produces a powerful image of two embittered brothers defiantly asserting their rights before an imperious patriarchy. For all it inspires, however, the moment marking the fruition of Ragin's rebellion of self-assertion also heralds its sad cessation, forcibly brought to an end by Nikita's kicks and fists. As the bloodied Ragin lies crumpled upon his bed, it appears the doctor has finally learned his lesson: we take part in our own deception, and it is up to us how much pretext we decide to add to our life.

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Condemned to live without the things he cannot live without — his books and beer — Ragin devolves neither to self-pity nor to nihilism. Showing that his rejection of the constraints bad faith imposes on the world of ‘Ward No. 6’ is more than simply kicking against the pricks, Ragin, his feet no longer able to lift him as they did before, ‘rips the robe and shirt on his chest’ (Chekhov 1892: 125). Tearing at the clothing issued to all entering Ward 6, the protagonist divorces himself from the material means used to reduce his identity to that of a nameless prisoner. Disrobing in the face of physical punishment, Ragin divests the exteriors of his outer self to assert the indomitability of his inner self — a gesture emblematising his refusal to be finalised according to the power structure around him, no matter how paralysing in its certainty. Unable to speak, Ragin nevertheless maintains his unique sense of self. We come to discover that Ragin has functioned as humanely as his circumstances would allow, a point his dead body makes clear the next day: exposed and yet ‘not ashamed’ (Chekhov 1892: 126). That his eyes must be physically closed underscores his defiance, building the tragedy of Ragin’s understanding that the possibility of leading a self-determined existence beyond bad faith’s controlling power strictures will never be more than a glimpse. Even so, for all the darkness pervading its pages, ‘Ward No. 6’ is surprisingly life-affirming as it depicts one man’s attempt to escape the fixed identity imposed upon him as a fight that, though unwinnable, must not be abandoned.

To break from the certainty and security bad faith promises is to undergo a dramatic displacement. And while Ragin’s decision to remove himself from the accepted reality of bad faith ultimately sets his imprisonment and death in motion, it also enables him to leave behind the false image of the world on which he had previously based his life. At the same time, he leaves behind the false image of himself. By surrendering to the change in himself created by recent disruptions in his world, Ragin finds a new kind of self-realisation indicated in the dream concluding his story. Fol-

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lowing the visits of Mikhail Averianych and Dr Khobotov to Ragin's bedside, it looks as though the protagonist is doomed to live out his days within the vicious circle he admits to have created; having endured Nikita's blows, he will soon succumb to death at the hands of a fraud by which he himself was knowingly deceived. Suddenly, however, something begins to take possession of Ragin's body and senses, a sensation that while initially vile inexplicably gives way to a vision wherein Ragin sees 'a herd of deer, extraordinarily beautiful and graceful' (Chekhov 1892: 126) running past him. The drove of beautiful deer making up Ragin's vision recalls Gromov's belief in the existence of a 'beautiful life' free from the 'obtuse and cruelty of oppressors' (Chekhov 1892: 75). For a moment, Gromov's promise of peace in a world untouched by the brutality of the present is enacted in Ragin's dream, symbolised in a group of animals running wildly, unfettered by the forces of power ending the protagonist's life. In death, Ragin refuses to go the way of the peaceable prisoner whose life has been mercilessly brought to its end; his brilliant dream contrasts with the dark ignominy of his death. That the deer pass so swiftly out of sight before the dying doctor points to Ragin's inability to realise his dream of living life on his own terms. As his lifeless body faces the night sky, Ragin waits with his eyes open for his final interment inside a local chapel. The following day, the dead doctor receives a visitor in the person of his former assistant, who forces Ragin's eyes shut; even his corpse is the vestigial reminder of a man whose determination to forge a place beyond the accepted assumptions of the status quo cost him his life.

It is difficult even now not to hear the fatal sounds intoning the conclusion of Chekhov's story, but beneath them we might give ear to something richer and more permanent: the sound of Ragin's unshackled yearning for life. The transition of bad faith into good faith is the story of personal liberation through adversity. It is also

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much more than that: it is an expansion of our sense of possibility to affirm the renewal of life in a world as bleak as Chekhov's 'Ward No. 6'.



HEINZ L. KRETZENBACHER, JOHN HAJEK, ROBERT LAGERBERG, AGNESE BRESIN

ADDRESS FORMS IN LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LANGUAGE CONFLICT:  
THE CURIOUS HISTORY AND REMNANTS OF *ONIKÁNÍ* IN CZECH

**1. Introduction**

Among contemporary Czech forms of address, *onikání* (the use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (3pl) verb form for 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (2sg) address, i.e. toward a single interlocutor) provides a noteworthy anomaly. *Onikání* has an interesting history in the development of a Czech standard language from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the extent and specifics of its usage and stylistics, and its social connotations in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, are not clearly defined in most of the research literature. In this article we undertake a preliminary study of the historical and contemporary usage of this address form.

When Friedrich Gedike gave a talk about forms of address at the Berlin Academy of Sciences in 1794, the system of German address forms had reached its peak of complexity, and, of all the highly specialised V address forms, the pronoun *Sie*, grammatically the 3pl form, but also used for single interlocutors, began to emerge as the one with the widest semantic extension.<sup>1</sup> Gedike compared the double shift of grammaticalised politeness in the German pronoun *Sie*, the one from singular to plural

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, we follow the convention of address research to use V for the ‘polite’ form of address (as opposed to a ‘familiar’ T address) in languages where such a distinction exists. Examples for V address pronouns are Czech *vy* (for 2sg and 2pl address), French *vous* (also for 2sg and 2pl address) or Spanish *usted* (for 2sg address), respectively *ustedes* (for 2pl address).

and the one from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person,<sup>2</sup> with V address pronouns in other European languages and found that it was rather unique:

Übrigens ist die deutsche Sprache beinahe die einzige, die, indem sie mit Sie anredet, beides, sowol das Vergrößerungsglas als das Fernglas der Höflichkeit, d.i. den Pluralis und zugleich die dritte Person gebraucht. Wenigstens wüßte ich bis itzt außer ihr nur die Böhmische und Dänische Sprache zu nennen, die aber wol unstreitig diese Form von ihrer Nachbarin und Schwester erst spät entlehnt haben.

*By the way, the German language is almost the only one which, by addressing with Sie, applies both the magnifying glass and the telescope of politeness, i.e. the plural and at the same time the third person. At least I could name only the Czech and Danish languages apart from German to date, both clearly having borrowed this form from their [German] neighbour and sister only at a later stage. (Gedike 1794: 14-15)*

As the quotation above makes clear, both Danish and Czech had already calqued this German V address already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are among a limited number of Germanic and Slavonic languages spoken in the northern, eastern and south-eastern neighbourhood of the German-speaking area of Europe that took over and adapted the double shift of personal deixis manifested in the German V address, either directly from German or via mediation through another language.<sup>3</sup> In each of

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<sup>2</sup> The development of such a double shift in personal deixis is apparently rare in address pronoun systems (certainly within the Indo-European language family), albeit not entirely unique to German. Gerhard Rohlfs, for example, found it locally in Sicilian (cf. Rohlfs 1968: 183).

<sup>3</sup> For a brief discussion of *Sie*-calquing in some of the Slavonic languages see Stone 1977: 498-499.

those languages and dialects the respective *Sie* calques have developed in a different way, and in each of them the question of what remains of the respective calqued V address merits specific attention, as would the question of why none of the Germanic and Romance neighbouring languages to the west and south of the German-speaking area appears to have calqued the German address form. In this article, however, we will restrict ourselves to Czech and report on an exploratory study on the history of *onikání* and on how much of it remains in contemporary Czech usage. One of the purposes of this study was to find out whether an empirical study on contemporary knowledge about and usage of this *Sie* calque would be feasible and promise interesting results. We will also restrict ourselves to looking at *onikání* as a form of direct address, either solely in the 3pl ending of the verb or in combination with the 3pl pronoun or a title, although it is disputed whether title use can be considered exactly equivalent to pronoun use in this context (cf. Stone 1977: 499). Consequently, we will disregard both the related phenomena of 3pl reference for a single absent person of high social standing (cf. Berger 1996: 27-31) and 3sg address (*onkání*, cf. Stone 1977: 499).

## 2. Review of the research literature

Of all the *Sie* calques, Czech *onikání* has probably the best researched history. This is mainly due to the studies of Tilman Berger who built on work done previously by Gerald Stone and Josef Vachek, but especially thanks to Michael Betsch's (2000) monograph, originally a PhD thesis at the University of Tübingen supervised by Tilman Berger.

As far as agreement is concerned, *onikání*, i.e. V address with the 3pl pronoun, takes a middle position between the old (and now revived) *vykání* V address with 2pl

pronoun and the obsolete *pluralis maiestatis*, i.e. self-reference with the 1pl pronoun *my*:

	finite verb	past tense (= participle)	attributive ad- jective
<i>vykání</i>	pl	sg	sg
<i>onikání</i>	pl	pl	sg
<i>pluralis maiestatis</i> ( <i>mykání</i> )	pl	pl	sg/pl

*Table 1: Number agreement of onikání, compared to vykání and mykání*  
(after Rosen and Saloni 2006: 39, cf. Betsch 2000: 74)<sup>4</sup>

Betsch shows how the new V address pattern with 3pl pronoun in Czech was calqued from German, how it spread and almost completely replaced the old 2pl V address rapidly from the middle of the 18th century (it was first mentioned in a Czech grammar in 1756, cf. Betsch 2000: 74), and how at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the first grammars tried to revive the 2pl V address instead of the ‘foreign’ 3 pl address, the latter had gained a strong foothold in Czech usage (Betsch 2000: 75). This period at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when 3pl address in German itself reached more or less default status as V address (cf. Gedike 1794), is also the time when the Czech *národní obrození* (National Revival) movement started to develop, one of whose goals was the purification and perfection of a Czech standard language as a tru-

<sup>4</sup> Examples of *vykání* and *onikání* (addressing a single male) are, respectively:

Present tense (pronoun + finite verb + adjective): Vy jste tak hodný. / Oni jsou tak hodný. (‘You are so nice.’)

Past tense (pronoun + finite verb + (past tense) participle + (adjectival) participle): Vy jste byl slušně vychován. / Oni byli slušně vychován. (‘You were well brought up.’) The absence of an auxiliary verb in the latter example (i.e. *oni jsou\* byli*) is normal in the Czech past tense for both 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg. and 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. pl. grammatical expression.

ly national medium of communication (Betsch 2000: 16-17; cf. Berger 1995: 52). In this cultural and political climate, the calquing of *Sie* evident in *onikání* becomes a target for Czech purist fervour, being seen not only as foreign to ‘genuine’ Slavonic address systems, but – what was worse – as German at that.<sup>5</sup>

In letters from the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 3pl address is consequently increasingly replaced by 2pl address (Betsch 2000: 124-130; 141-142). From the 1850s on, *onikání* is more or less reduced to appearing only in substandard varieties (Betsch 2000: 168; 172-173; Betsch 2003: 143). Josef Vachek reports ‘that as late as the middle of the 20th century the use of *oni* was often highly evaluated by some lower-class speakers of colloquial Czech who felt rather flattered if addressed in that manner.’ (Educated speakers, according to Vachek (1987: 280), have always classified such usage as grossly substandard.) Apart from traces in substandard varieties, *onikání* is reported in the research literature as a stylistic device, mostly in ironic use, having been successfully replaced by *vykání*. Thus, for example, Betsch writes (Betsch 2003: 143): ‘Today, Czech pronominal address uses only the pronouns of the second person singular and plural [...]; some traces of the older address system subsist in the substandard, or are used in literary works as stylistic devices.’

### 3. *Onikání* today: evidence from the World Wide Web

Methodologically, our study of Czech combined a review of the existing linguistic synchronic and diachronic research literature with an extensive search for the use of *onikání* (and inflected forms) on the Internet. In our experience, linguistic forms, specifically address forms, that are not taken as granted by a language commu-

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<sup>5</sup> Czech nationalism, quite naturally, saw the political and cultural dominance of the German-speaking élite of Austria as the main ‘enemy’, the Czech heartland — known as ‘Lands of the Bohemian Crown’ — having been a dependent part of the Austrian Empire (respectively, later, after 1867, of the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) since 1526.

nity, but whose use is not the default or even disputed, can leave clear traces of discussion in online forums and blogs on the Web that can be useful in understanding how accepted or otherwise a particular address form is (cf. Kretzenbacher 2011; Norrby and Hajek 2011). On the one hand, our online research generally confirms the picture given by the cited research literature. On the other hand, it adds an aspect that we did not find mentioned there: one particular connotation of *onikání* is stereotypical Jewish usage of Czech, often used to give ethnic flavour to Jewish jokes in Czech, as detailed in 3.4 below.

### 3.1. *Onikání* as an ironic device

The use of *onikání* as a means of expressing irony is reflected in a rather large number of discussions on address in Czech language Internet forums. One example is the, perhaps, surprising use of this form of address to mitigate somewhat the force of swearing:<sup>6</sup>

**(1) Proč není moudré si nadávat**

[...]

napsáno 16. července 2011

Radkin Honzák [odborník psychologie.cz]: To nevím, ale měl jsem pacienta, který si ‘onikal’ a v takových situacích se vlídně oslovoval: ‘voni jsou hovado.’

TomM: Onikání je hezký, působí na mě důstojně, aristokraticky, ale s mírným nádechem Švejka :) [...]

Martin Pechr: Docela jsem se pobavil, při té představě...

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<sup>6</sup> The following examples contain the original Czech text (including typographical errors in the original) and our translations in italics, followed by the URL and the date we last accessed the respective website.

## ADDRESS FORMS IN CZECH

### *Why it is unwise to swear at people*

[...]

Posted 16 July 2011

Radkin Honzák [expert psychologie.cz]: *I do not know, but I had a patient who used onikání in such situations, kindly addressing others [as]:*

*'You [3pl] are a beast.'*

TomM: *Onikání is nice, it has an effect of dignity on me, of aristocracy, but with a slight flavour of Švejk :) [...]*

Martin Pechr: *I was rather amused at the thought...*

<http://psychologie.cz/proc-neni-moudre-si-nadavat/> [25/05/13]

TomM's association of the ironic use of *onikání* with Jaroslav Hašek's popular fictional character of 'the brave soldier *Švejk*', whose mixture of (feigned?) stupidity and incompetence on the one hand and (equally feigned?) submissive reverence towards his superiors on the other wreaks havoc in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War, is far from original. This Švejkian connotation of the contemporary use of *onikání* is widespread: Hašek has Švejk himself use *onikání* (Berger 1995: 42 and 1996: 19).

A Czech online women's magazine, *ŽENA-IN*, carried a tongue-in-cheek article in which a 'Vice chairman of the [Male] Chauvinist Movement of the Czech Republic' suggests that women should show their deference to men by addressing them using *onikání*:

**(2) Ženy by měly mužům vykat, neřkuli onikat**

[...]

Ing. Jaroslav Petr

Místopředseda Šovinistického hnutí České republiky

HEINZ L. KRETZENBACHER

*Women should use vykání adressing men, nay, onikání*

[...]

*Engineer Jaroslav Petr*

*Vice chairman of the [Male] Chauvinist Movement of the Czech Republic*

<http://zena-in.cz/clanek/zeny-by-mely-muzum-vykat-nerkuli-onikat/kategorie/laska-a-vztahy> [25/05/13]

The old-fashioned and humoristic connotation of *onikání* ensured that none of the readers' comments took any part of the article seriously, and the general tone of the comments is one of unimpeded mirth.

### **3.2. Use of *onikání* in letters up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century**

In an online review of the correspondence of the Czech writer František Hrubín, published in several biographical works, Jiří Poláček remarks that the fellow writer Jaroslav Seifert (who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1984) sometimes used *onikání* to address Hrubín in his letters:

#### **(3) Korespondence Františka Hrubína**

[...]

První z nich představuje sto jednačtyřicet dopisů a pohlednic, které si Hrubín vyměňoval s Jaroslavem Seifertem v letech 1943–1970. Ač si oba básníci byli dlouhodobě blízcí, po celou dobu si v korespondenci vykali; Seifert občas dokonce používal *onikání*.

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*The correspondence of František Hrubín*

[...]

*The first one [i.e. set of correspondence] is the one hundred and forty-one letters and postcards that Hrubín exchanged with Jaroslav Seifert between 1943 and 1970. Although both poets were close during all that time, throughout the correspondence they used vykání to address one another; Seifert sometimes even used onikání.*

<http://www.nakladatelstvi.hostbrno.cz/cs/ohlasy/adresat-frantisek-hrubin/korespondence-frantiska-hrubina> [25/05/13]

This usage can certainly not be called sub-standard. To what extent it could be called humoristic is not discussed in Poláček's review, but it might be worthwhile to check this in the context of the original correspondence.

### **3.3 Non-reciprocal use by children towards their parents in the first decades of the 20th century**

According to the reminiscences of the daughter of the Czech writer Ludmila Hořká, she and her siblings addressed their parents using *onikání*:

(4) Otcí jsme říkali „tačičku“ a mamince „mačička“ a oběma jsme onikali.

[...]

Oslovovali jsme ji „mačička“ a onikali jsme jí. [...] Otcí jsme říkali „tačičku“ a i jemu jsme onikali.

*Father we called "tačičku", mother "mačička", and we used onikání addressing both of them.*

[...]

*We called her "mačička" [mommy (non-standard jocular form)] and used onikání addressing her. [...] Our father, we called "tačičku" [daddy (also non-standard form)] and also used onikání addressing him.*

<http://www.zijemenaplnocizky.cz/Clanky/a1237-Nazyvaji-ji-Bozenou-Nemcovou-Hlucinska.aspx>

[25/05/13]

This suggests that, at least, the old Czech system of T and V address does not follow the trend that Berger (1996: 21) states ‘for a number of Slavonic dialects’, namely that in the case of a distinction between a 2pl and a 3pl V pronoun, the 2pl pronoun is the usual address ‘for all adults of one’s own sphere (including one’s parents [...]), while the 3pl pronoun is used for “persons from town and members of higher social levels (including the priest)”’ (Berger 1996: 21; our translation from the original German). It does, however, resemble to some extent the use of *onikání* for addressing older relatives in 19<sup>th</sup>-century letters reported by Betsch (2000: 141-142).

#### **3.4. Use of *onikání* for ethnic stereotyping in Jewish jokes**

One particular contemporary use of *onikání* that we found in our online search is not mentioned in the linguistic research literature at all, as far we can see. This is all the more surprising given that it seems widely known among Czech speakers. It can be found in numerous online discussions and even in the Czech Wikipedia article on *onikání*: <http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onikání> [14/05/13]. This is the use of this address form in Jewish jokes in Czech (presumably, in particular such jokes for a non-Jewish Czech audience) as a stereotypical characterisation of Jewish Czech.

In a journal article on Jewish humour, Fingerland (2012: 50) characterises the stereotypical Czech Jewish joke by three elements: ‘[...] že v nich vystupuje Kohn,

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říká “um Gottes Willen” a někomu oniká’ [*that Kohn appears in them, says ‘um Gottes Willen’ and addresses someone using onikání*]. That this is a widely known linguistic way of ethnic stereotyping of Jews in Czech is confirmed by a number of forum discussions, e.g. this one in English about Czech address:

(5) 25th September 2009, 5:12 PM

bibax / Senior Member

‘We don't use onikani any more.’

Not true. [smiley emoticon]

We use onikání in Jewish anecdotes<sup>7</sup>

Co si přejou, Kohn? = What do they (= you) wish, Kohn?

Vědí, Roubíček, co je nového? = Do they (= you) know, Roubíček, what's the news?

Kohn, já jim říkal, že ... = Kohn, I told them (= you) that ...

<http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=1520440> [25/05/13]

It is also apparent in another apparently slightly tongue-in-cheek article of ŽENA-IN.cz about forms of address during sex from 2009, where, immediately underneath the article itself, a text box titled ‘pearls from the editors’ brings in the same ethnic stereotype of the allegedly typical Jewish Czech *onikání*:

### (6) Vykání při sexu

[...]

Redakční perličky

[...]

- Ortodoxní židovská rodina, blízká naší kolegyni Marii Šrámkové, dotáhla onikání k takové dokonalosti, že od nich můžete slyšet věty ty-

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<sup>7</sup> Misspelling in the original.

pu: “*Podívají se, co ty děti zase provádí.*” Údajně si onikají i při sexu...

*Using vykání during sex*

[...]

*Pearls from the editors [...]*

• *An orthodox Jewish family, well known to our colleague Maria Šrámková, brought onikání to such perfection that from them you might hear phrases like: “Just see [3pl] what those kids are doing again”. Reportedly they use onikání even during sex...*

<http://zena-in.cz/clanek/vykani-pri-sexu/kategorie/ona-s-nim/rubrika/vztahy-a-sex> [25/05/13]

This perception of non-Jewish Czechs about the Czech *Sie* calque as typical or even stereotypical for Jewish Czech is consistent with the different national and linguistic loyalties of ethnic Czechs and Jews in the old Cisleithania, the western part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, to which Bohemia and Moravia belonged (now forming the major part of the Czech Republic). It was cultural and linguistic assimilation to the German-speaking ethnic group of the Monarchy that appeared to give Jews the best chance of emancipation and entry into the middle class, not to the Czech ethnic group where the *Sie* calque of *onikání* was considered by many to be unpatriotically German.<sup>8</sup> In Bohemia and Moravia, the influence of the German-speaking Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskala*) of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, represented by eminent thinkers such as Moses Mendelssohn, was very strong, and this movement had denigrated Yiddish as the language of an allegedly backward-looking Eastern European Jewry and argued

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<sup>8</sup> And of course the 3pl address had nothing to do with any possible influence of Yiddish, whose V address pronoun is the 2pl *ir*.

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for linguistic assimilation into German as a means of both enlightenment and emancipation. This positive attitude towards German language and culture (in turn seen as unpatriotic by the Czech nationalist movement) was reinforced by the fact that since the reforms of the Emperor Joseph II,<sup>9</sup> German-speaking secondary schools and universities across the Lands of the Bohemian Crown (but not Czech-speaking ones) were open to Jewish students and offered them a way of social ascent by education. This closeness to German language and culture (and, correspondingly, a certain reluctance to identify with Czech language and culture) of the Jewry in Bohemia and Moravia is illustrated by the fact that even in the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938), more than double the number of Jews identified themselves as ethnic Germans in the 1921 and 1930 censuses compared with those who identified themselves as ethnic Czechs or Czechoslovaks.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the use of *onikání* for ethnic stereotyping of Jews in Jewish jokes (presumably targeted to a non-Jewish Czech audience) appears to reflect three ethno-linguistic attitudes: (a) a connotation of the Czech *onikání V* address as German rather than ‘genuinely’ Czech; (b) an alleged traditional identification of Czech Jews with German language and culture and, linked with this, (c) an alleged lack of loyalty of Czech Jews to ‘genuine’ Czech language and culture.

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<sup>9</sup> The Josephine Edicts of Toleration for Jews were published in separate documents for different Habsburg possessions, the ones for the Lands of the Bohemian Crown in 1781 and 1782.

<sup>10</sup> This in spite of the fact that the Czechoslovak censuses allowed ethnic identification, including Jewish ethnicity (with which the majority of Jews in Czechoslovakia identified both in 1921 and 1930). The Austro-Hungarian censuses taken from 1857 on only allowed indication of a ‘colloquial tongue’, not of ethnicity; and in them more than 80% of Czech and Slovak Jews had indicated German as their main language. These numbers are from Nesládková 2009: 91; for further background compare Čapková 2012.

#### 4. Conclusion

The German origins of the *Sie* calques in Czech and other Slavonic languages which had complemented, but never completely replaced the older 2pl V address pronoun in Czech (as well as in Slovak), were well known in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For Czech and Slovak, Josef Jakub Jungmann declares in 1836: ‘ONI tertia pers. germanismo vulgato per Slovacos, Moravos et Bohemos in primis oppidanis usitatur in allocutione pro justiore et Slavico’. [*ONI, 3<sup>rd</sup> p., as a widespread Germanism, is used by Slovaks, Moravians and Bohemians for addressing urban superiors instead of the more correct and Slavonic [address]*] (Jungmann 1836: 939).<sup>11</sup>

Typically, as in the case of Czech *onikání*, the *Sie* calques in Slavonic languages first appeared in urban use, but later spread increasingly to rural use almost to the exclusion of the former, with connotations of being outdated (cf. Berger 1996: 20). The emergence of those calques in the towns reflects the demographic situation, with German speakers dominating towns and cities, and the hinterland settled mostly by Slavonic speakers. This created a sustained language contact situation, above all in the urban areas where the Czech (and other Slavonic) middle classes calqued German *Sie* as part of adopting German cultural traits as marks of high social standing.

Of course, the calques did not mean a complete take-over of the German pronominal address by translation. Each of the languages which calqued German *Sie* adapted the use of the respective calques to their own pragmatic and sociolinguistic rules. During the Slavonic Revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Sie* calque was rejected as ‘foreign’ by nationalist purists in Slavonic languages, most ardently by the Czechs. The effect was a slow process of ousting the *Sie* calque from the address pronoun systems of the respective Slavonic Standard languages. As Reindl (2007: 155) states with

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<sup>11</sup> We do not agree with Reindl’s (2008: 170) translation.

## ADDRESS FORMS IN CZECH

reference to Slovene, the calques are ‘clearly in decline. Perhaps best evidenced by the fact that [they] can be used in jest.’ In order to be used in a humorous way, an address form must be recognisable as inappropriate, for example, because it is outdated or obsolete (cf. Norrick & Babel 2009).

While the history of Czech *onikání* is relatively well researched, the exact spread of its usage and related phenomena such as 3sg *onkání*, as well as the actual amount to which these forms are still passively and actively known in different varieties of Czech, certainly merit more extensive research. The strong association that the *Sie* calque *onikání* always had and continues to have with German (and in periods of strong Czech nationalism accordingly ‘un-Czech’) culture is an example of how deeply micro-pragmatic elements of language such as address forms can be connected with cultural and linguistic identity. They represent, therefore, excellent objects for the study of language contact (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2005: 93), but also of language contact and conflict in Czech-speaking areas and elsewhere.

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ROBERT LAGERBERG

THE PRAGMATIC FACTOR, PROFESSIONAL SPEECH AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO  
STRESS VARIATION IN RUSSIAN<sup>1</sup>

**1. Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to examine certain areas of Russian in which two related accentual phenomena, Zaliznjak's so called 'pragmatic factor' (*прагматический фактор*) and 'professional speech' (*профессиональная речь*) operate, both of which were given some prominence in his monograph *От праславянской акцентуации к русской* (Zaliznjak 1985). The relationship between these two phenomena and word stress, *inter alia*, lies in the fact that they are both, to varying degrees, factors which can affect the position of stress and can cause alternative stress positions to occur. In a previous article (Lagerberg 2012), the scope of the pragmatic factor was examined and it was found that, although its basic premises are entirely valid, the actual areas in which it operates are far from defined and require significant further analysis. In this paper, after a preliminary description of the pragmatic factor and professional stress, a number of areas in which these two phenomena are discernible, but not covered by Zaliznjak, will be analysed.

**2.1 The pragmatic factor**

Zaliznjak (1985, 12) defines the first of these two phenomena, the pragmatic factor, as the effect on stress in both underived and derived words of their relative assimilation or lack of (respectively *освоенность/неосвоенность*) by native speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the written version of the paper accepted for the XV International Conference of Slavists in Minsk, August 2013.

Zaliznjak states: 'Для взрослого носителя языка освоенными являются слова повседневной обиходной лексики, названия предметов, связанных с его профессиональной деятельностью, слова, специфические для его микроколлектива или ограниченной среды. Неосвоенными являются, в частности, названия предметов из жизни других стран или прошлых эпох, термины незнакомых данному человеку профессий, слова чужих микроколлективов, для большинства носителей языка - также все слова возвышенно-книжного и архаизирующего стиля. Неосвоенным для данного человека является также всякое слово, которое он только что узнал; однако через некоторое время, иногда довольно короткое, он может вполне освоить это слово.'<sup>2</sup> Assimilated words, therefore, are defined as those with which speakers of Russian are familiar in the course of their everyday or professional lives; unassimilated words are those words with which such speakers are not familiar, since they are connected, for example, with other countries, professions, historical eras or social/professional groups, or they are words with which a given speaker has only recently become acquainted.

The effect of the pragmatic factor, according to Zaliznjak, depends on whether it is operating on underived or derived words. Zaliznjak (1985, 23) states that unassimilated underived words display a tendency towards 'trivial' stress (by which he means essentially fixed stem stress), while for assimilated underived words 'non-

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<sup>2</sup> 'For an adult native speaker assimilated words are words of everyday colloquial vocabulary, names of objects connected with his or her professional work, words specific to his or her micro-group or confined milieu. Unassimilated words are, in particular, names of objects from the life of other countries or previous eras, terms from professions which are unfamiliar to the person in question, words of other micro-groups, and also, for the majority of native speakers, all words of an elevated bookish and archaising style. An unassimilated word for the person in question is also any word which he or she has only just become familiar with; however, after a certain period of time, sometimes quite short, he or she can assimilate this word fully.' [Author's translation (R.L.)]

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trivial' stress (i.e. desinential or mobile stress) is the general rule.<sup>3</sup> The logic of this is reasonable and basically follows the argument which I have also made also for frequency in underived words (see, for example, Lagerberg 2011 *passim*), namely that relatively higher frequency in inflectional stress is connected with a higher probability of more complex stress patterns (i.e. asymmetric mobile patterns), as well as a concomitant higher probability of stress variants (one of which may be innovative and/or deprecated) occurring in individual inflected forms, though generally not in the base form (e.g. infinitive or nominative singular).<sup>4</sup> It is, of course, also true that assimilation is *ipso facto* closely related to frequency, since low frequency words are, or are in the process of becoming, unassimilated for most speakers, and vice versa. Indeed, the

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<sup>3</sup> 'Акцентный эффект, создаваемый морфонологическим (число слогов основы, характер ее исхода) или семантическим фактором, всегда носит локальный характер, т.е. ограничен определенным морфонологическим классом слов. [...] Более универсальный характер носит влияние прагматического фактора. У непроизводных слов везде, где он вообще действует, его акцентный эффект таков: неосвоенное слово обнаруживает (в речи соответствующего носителя языка) тенденцию к тривиальному акцентному типу, освоенное — к нетривиальному.'

<sup>4</sup> Henceforth we use the generally adopted alphabetical system of Russian stress patterns found, for example, in Zaliznjak 1977b. There follows a list of some of the main noun stress patterns used in our further discussion (mobile stress types are marked in bold):

a: fixed stem stress;

b: fixed desinential stress;

**d**: desinential stress in the singular, stem stress in the plural;

**f**: desinential stress throughout, except for the nominative plural which has stem stress on the initial stem syllable;

**d'**: as pattern **d** above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *спинá*);

**f'**: as pattern **f** above, but with stress retracted on to the initial stem syllable in the accusative singular (e.g. *рукá*, *головá*).

Although three main patterns of stress for short adjectives are generally accepted (e.g. Ukiah 2000, 126), *viz* pattern *a* (stem stress, e.g. *богáт*, *богáта*, *богáто*, *богáты* 'rich'), pattern *b* (ending stress with conditional stem stress in the masculine, e.g. *умён*, *умнá*, *умно́*, *умны́* 'clever') and pattern *c* (mobile stress, e.g. *мо́щен*, *мо́щнá*, *мо́щно*, *мо́щны* 'powerful'), two other sub-types play a role here: pattern *cI*, which is the same as pattern *c* except for ending stress in the plural, and pattern *bI*, which is the same as pattern *b* except for stem stress in the plural.

pragmatic factor is essentially a measure of the effect of frequency for an individual speaker, or, the frequency factor on a human scale, so to speak.

For derived words Zaliznjak (1985, 56-57 and 79-80) takes the view that, wherever the pragmatic factor takes effect, assimilated suffixed words yield stress to the suffix, while unassimilated suffixed words are conservative and retain original or older stem stress positions. Zaliznjak is, therefore, describing the effects of the pragmatic factor here directly in terms of stem vs. suffixal stress, i.e. as a specific syllabic position. According to Zaliznjak (*ibid.*, 56), unless the suffix is marked by the stress property containing the mark ← (i.e. one which places stress to the left of itself), in which case the word retains its original (i.e. on the same syllable as in the base word) stem stress, intermediate stems (*промежуточные по силе основы*, i.e. those which are unstable in retaining or yielding the stress) are determined by the pragmatic factor in the following way: ‘если производное является освоенным, они (i.e. *промежуточные по силе основы* [author’s note]) ведут себя как слабые, если неосвоенным – как сильные недоминантные.’<sup>5</sup> By way of example Zaliznjak (*ibid.*, 79-80) cites the adjective *мускулистый* ‘muscular’, which, in his view, has a more colloquial suffixal stress variant (*мускули́стый*) by virtue of the fact that it is assimilated; the conservative, morphemically inherited stress variant *му́скулистый* (from *му́скул* ‘muscle’ with fixed stem stress) represents, in his view, the literary norm.

Zaliznjak’s reasoning here would appear to go against what has been empirically shown to be the case for certain suffixes: unassimilated derived words are less likely to retain a conservative stress position if it is at odds with the general stress characteristics and dynamics of the suffix in question (cf. Lagerberg 2011, 129-130).

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<sup>5</sup> ‘... if a derived word is assimilated, they (i.e. intermediate-strength stems [author’s note]) behave as weak, if unassimilated - as strong non-dominant.’ [Author’s translation] Zaliznjak’s non-intermediate stems are of no interest here, since they behave entirely predictably according to the accentual characteristics of their morphemes.

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By contrast, assimilated derived words, because they are in more regular use, appear to be more likely to retain anomalous (from the point of view of a given suffix's stress characteristics) stress positions. Just as high-frequency, assimilated underived words are able to maintain more complex mobile patterns in the linguistic consciousness of most speakers purely through their constant use, and those which become less frequently used and less assimilated gradually adopt more simple (fixed or columnar) stress patterns, so high-frequency, assimilated derived words are better able to maintain a stress position which differs from the general pattern, while low-frequency, unassimilated words tend to follow the general tendency for a given suffix and thus create large 'nests' of derived words with the same stress (in terms of the word-formational or syllabic structure of the word in question).

### 2.2 Professional speech

Professional speech, as far as accentuation is concerned, is identified by Zaliznjak (1985, 68-69) as a variant stress (which, he states, is often 'non-trivial' stress, i.e. desinential stress or mobile stress) in the spoken (specialised) vocabulary of certain professions, in fact, a kind of phonological jargon, e.g. pattern-*b* (desinential) stress in *массáж* 'massage' amongst masseurs, as opposed to what is termed 'trivial' (pattern-*a* stress, i.e. fixed stem) stress in the standard language. It should be noted, however, that professional speech is in fact frequently no more than an alternative 'marked' stress, i.e. it can often be simply a different, 'trivial' pattern-*a* stress. Certainly this is the overall impression formed from the forms labelled as such in Gorbačevič (2000). For example, the lexeme *атмосфера* 'atmosphere' is given with two possible stress positions: *атмосфэра* and *атмосфeра* (Gorbačevič 2000, 15). The latter form is designated 'неправильно' ('incorrect') and 'встречается в профессиональной речи в знач. «единица измерения давления»' ('occurs in pro-

fessional speech in the meaning “a unit of pressure measurement” [author’s translation]) (*ibid.*), but both forms have pattern-*a* stress (which is by definition ‘trivial’). Similarly, the word *алкого́ль* ‘alcohol’ has an alternative form also with fixed (‘trivial’) stem stress, *viz* *áлкогoль*, which is widespread ‘в речи медиков’ (‘in the speech of medics’) (*ibid.*, 14). Also striking (*ibid.*, *passim*) is the seemingly random choice among professionals of both conservative and innovative stress patterns and positions. Professional speech essentially represents the same effect or effects as that of the pragmatic factor, but with a further reduction in its scope vis-à-vis speakers of the language, one which is limited to restricted groups of professionals in the course of their regular interaction in the workplace.

### 3. WIDER SCOPE

In a previous article (Lagerberg 2012) I analysed the scope of the pragmatic factor in Russian. Although Zaliznjak’s conclusions regarding underived words appeared to be justified in principle, it was also clear that there was a need to refine the precise areas of its operation. In this regard, my article presented information about pattern-*b* feminine nouns and pattern-*f* feminine nouns as evidence of the limitations of the pragmatic factor. Zaliznjak’s conclusions regarding the effect of the pragmatic factor on derived words were shown to be even more problematic, since derived words do not seem to have any correlation to the difference between trivial and non-trivial stress which exists in underived words, and, therefore, the connection between the pragmatic factor and syllabically referenced stress, which Zaliznjak makes, appears to be unmotivated.

In the following section some other areas of the language in which the pragmatic factor and professional speech appear to be operating are presented. Among these areas are some of the most complex and dynamic areas of Russian stress: the

nominative plural of masculine nouns in *-á/-я́*, the stress of short adjectives, the present and future tense of second-conjugation verbs, and, as an example of derivational stress, the nominal suffix *-аж*. The latter suffix is also notable for the fact that nouns derived by means of it appear to be affected by the pragmatic factor in such a way as if they were underived words. This section does not claim in any sense to offer a complete picture of all such areas, but, rather, is offered as a contribution towards such a picture which may appear in the future as more research is conducted into this large and complex field of study.

### 3.1 The nominative plural of masculine nouns in *-á/-я́* (alternating with *-ы/-и* (stressed or unstressed))

There has been a notable progress from the second half of the twentieth century for the ending *-á/-я́* (always stressed; referred to here as type *C(I)*) from monosyllabic Slavic or non-Slavic hard-consonant stems (e.g. *дом* ‘house’, *сорт* ‘sort’) and pleophonic Slavic stems (*бóрег* ‘shore’, *тéрем* ‘tower chamber’) to include also (see Stankiewicz 1993, 191-194):

- names of professions (Slavic and non-Slavic (including soft-stem) roots): *до́ктор* ‘doctor’, *ма́стер* ‘master’, *ле́карь* ‘doctor’, *учи́тель* ‘teacher’;
- technical terms (generally non-Slavic) roots: *бу́фер* ‘buffer’, *сви́тер* ‘sweater’;
- other terms (Slavic and non-Slavic): *а́дрес* ‘address’, *о́стров* ‘island’, *вéчер* ‘evening’.

The phonetic shape of these lexemes, colloquial usage, the pragmatic factor and frequency are all possible factors in the spread of *-á/-я́*. They are also a feature of professional speech, though, as stated above, it is not clear whether this is likely to affect the language as a whole or to remain restricted to such ‘micro-groups’. One

form of variation (semantic) results from the plural ending distinguishing homonyms: *счёт* > *счёта* ‘bills’, *счёты* ‘personal accounts, abacus’. Other ‘pure’ variance (without semantic differentiation) is the result of a hitherto unresolved choice of ending (and generally stress too), *-á/-я́* generally representing the newer type and, presumably, the direction of the variance: *дьякон* ‘deacon’ > *дьяконы/дьяконá*, *слёсарь* ‘metal craftsman’ > *слёсары/слесаря́*. That the ending *-á/-я́* with its concomitant stress can be viewed as the more dominant of the two can be ascertained by its gradual (non-normative) spread into nouns with stem-final stress in the nominative singular, e.g. *инженёр* ‘engineer’, nom. pl. *инженёры/инженерá*, the latter certainly regarded as incorrect (cf. entry for *инженер* from Gorbačevič (2000)), but nevertheless making inroads into what was previously regarded as not possible (i.e. nouns with pattern *a* stress on the final syllable): thus, initial stress *дóговор* gives *дóговорá*, while final stress *дóговór* gives *дóговóры*, but not vice versa.

This area of the language is also one where professional speech comes to the fore. For example, there are several examples cited in Gorbačevič (2000) of a variant with professional speech: for the most part the professional variant is represented by type *C(1)* noted above. Thus, the entry for *коррèктор* ‘proof-reader’ shows variation between pattern *a* (nom. pl. *коррèкторы*, gen. pl. *коррèкторов*) and *C(1)* (*проф.*, i.e. professional speech) (nom. pl. *корректорá*, gen. pl. *корректорóв*); however, it is interesting to note the opposite effect also. For example, the entry for *инспèктор* ‘inspector’ has as the basic pattern *C(1)* (nom. pl. *инспекторá*, gen. pl. *инспекторóв*) and (*проф.*) pattern *a* (nom. pl. *инспèкторы*, gen. pl. *инспèкторов*), i.e. professional speech is here represented by ‘trivial’ stress and appears to be playing nothing more than a differentiating role.

### 3.2 Short adjectives with mobile stress

The stress of short adjectives in Russian is certainly one of the most complex areas of stress in the language, influenced by such factors as dialect, literary tradition and rhythmic tendencies (Gorbačevič 1978, 110), and made more complex still by the fact that many of these forms are not central to spoken Russian, indeed, increasingly less so, and are, therefore, often problematic for Russian speakers, in particular of younger generations, to use correctly or decide on in linguistic surveys. As Zaliznjak (1977a, *passim*) demonstrates, it is also the pragmatic factor which is involved here, since the frequency and/or level of assimilation of such forms affects the resulting stress among individual speakers. Variation in this area is both complex in terms of the amount of competing stress patterns, as well in the purely numerical sense, with as many as 290 adjectives showing variance (Ukiah 2000, 126) on the basis of data contained in a standard source (Zaliznjak 1977b).

Although three main patterns of stress for short adjectives are generally accepted (e.g. Ukiah 2000, 126), *viz* pattern *a* (stem stress, e.g. *бога́т, бога́та, бога́то, бога́ты* ‘rich’), pattern *b* (ending stress with conditional stem stress in the masculine, e.g. *умён, умна́, умно́, умны́* ‘clever’) and pattern *c* (mobile stress, e.g. *мо́щен, мо́щна́, мо́щно, мо́щны* ‘powerful’), two other sub-types play a role here: pattern *c1*, which is the same as pattern *c* except for ending stress in the plural, and pattern *b1*, which is the same as pattern *b* except for stem stress in the plural. Larsson’s (Larsson 2006) sociolinguistic survey confirms, at least to some extent, the overriding tendency in the stress of Russian short form adjectives, especially monosyllabic, qualitative ones (Zaliznjak 1985, 27), namely the development of an opposition between stem-stressed full forms and ending-stressed short forms, or, in other words, a grammaticalisation of stress: *у́мный* - *умён, умна́, умно́, умны́*. Oversimplification in this area, however, is dangerous, and there remains a whole range of unresolved problems and

cases. Instructive in this is the considerable divergence of conclusions which Ukiah (2000) and Larsson (2006) come to on the basis of similarly conducted surveys. In particular, Ukiah concludes that younger speakers appear to be favouring a stem-stressed plural short form, especially in lower frequency adjectives, while Larsson finds no such evidence on the basis of the responses of her informants. Larsson concludes (2006, 257-258) that for short form adjectives in Russian:

- the amount of variation is increasing significantly;
- a strong tendency exists towards desinential stress in the plural form of the mobile (*c*) pattern (movement of pattern *c* to *cI*);
- a weaker tendency exists for mobile (pattern *c*) short adjectival forms to move to pattern *a* by means of the feminine shifting stress to the stem, or vacillating between the two stress positions: *мóдеи, мóднá, мóдно, мóдны* ‘fashionable’. This corresponds to the same tendency found in Ukiah’s survey (Ukiah 2000, 136).

There is a still weaker tendency towards pattern *b* from pattern *c*, and, thereby the creation of an opposition between long (stem stress) and short forms (end stress): *высóкий - высóк, высокá, высокó, высокí*.

Overall, according to Larsson, the five types of stress pattern found in short adjectives, namely patterns *a*, *b*, *bI*, *c* and *cI*, appear to be moving towards four main types, patterns *a*, *b*, *bI* and *cI*. This process appears to be taking place at the expense of pattern *c*, with pattern *cI* becoming the dominant pattern, but it is far from a clear-cut process with a large amount of variation occurring, as the respective surveys of Ukiah and Larsson demonstrate. It remains extremely difficult to give either general or even individual directions of change in short adjectives, though the pragmatic factor may be contributing towards a general movement (from stem stress) towards end-

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stressed neuter and plural forms in higher frequency adjectives, and a movement (from end stress) towards fixed stem stress (i.e. uniform stress for long and short adjectives) in lower frequency adjectives.

### 3.3 Second-conjugation verbs in *-ить*

There has been a general tendency in second-conjugation verbs in *-ить* with variation between ending and mobile stress (exemplified by the present tense of the verb *звонить* ‘to call, telephone’: 1st p. sg. *звоню́*, but 2nd p. sg. *звони́шь*, 3rd p. sg. *звони́т* etc.) to change their stress in the (imperfective) present/(perfective) future forms from ending stress (characterised in the modern language by *говорить* ‘to speak’, *говорю́*, *говори́шь* etc.) towards a mobile stress type with ending stress in the first person singular and stem stress in all the remaining forms (characterised by *курить* ‘to smoke’, *курю́*, *кури́шь* etc.) (see, for example, Vorontsova 1979, 204-236, for a detailed account). Verbs of a higher style (and lower frequency, especially in everyday speech), which include Church Slavonicisms (e.g. *благословить* ‘to bless’), tend to have fixed ending stress. Of course, this continuing stress shift has resulted in a large number of variants in the language, in which the newer stress pattern (i.e. mobile) has, presumably, failed to oust completely the more traditional forms with ending stress. In one well known case, that of *звонить* quoted above, the choice of stress is a type of shibboleth indicative of the educational/provincial status of the speaker, the newer form in this case representing the ‘lower’ end of the scale. More recently, however, this situation has changed to some extent so that Gorbačevič (2000, 72-73) admits the opinion of one linguist on the ‘artificial character’ of the case against mobile stress in this word, though he also includes (which is unusual for a dictionary) humorous anecdotal evidence against this non-standard stress pattern, and classifies it as ‘not recommended’.

As Comrie (1996, 87) points out, the situation is complicated further by the fact that derivatives of verbs may have a different stress from the verb from which they are derived, e.g. *сади́ть* (mobile stress) ‘to plant, put down’ vs. *сади́ться* ‘to sit down’ (ending stress), though Stankiewicz (1993, 212) classifies this efficiently by a general rule according to which such transitive verbs tend to have mobile stress and intransitive ones - ending stress.

Comrie (1996, 88-89) also points out that the tendency towards mobile stress in verbs in *-ить* (which he views as a particularly clear case of southern dialect influence) is unusual in that it actually increases the amount of stress variability in the verbal forms rather than reducing it, i.e. it is a reverse kind of analogy. As he states (*ibid.*, 89), ‘learned, less frequent words tend to retain fixed stress, while everyday words acquire mobile stress.’ This may even become lexicalised as in the case of *просвети́ть* (‘to shine through’ - mobile stress) vs. *просвети́ть* (‘to enlighten’ - fixed ending stress). Nevertheless, though perhaps unusual for an ‘anomalous’ type of stress (in the sense that the mobile stress pattern actually increases the amount of syllabic stress positions) to become the dominant model and, therefore, attract more words towards itself (rather than merely retain those words which already exist within the given pattern), in fact the pattern of higher frequency correlated to assimilation, the pragmatic factor and anomalous stress patterns, which can be viewed as the general type for Russian stress variation, is repeated here with the added factor of the type actually acquiring numerous new members, which should not be altogether surprising in such a large and important class of verbs. One can also view this tendency as analogous to singular/plural stress opposition in nouns, so that present/future tense stress on the stem is opposed to ending stress in the infinitive/past tense. The differentiation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. pl. and plural imperative, viz *ку́рите/кури́те* respectively, may also play a role in this. Of course, the first person singular is at odds with this, since it always

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has ending stress in verbs with infinitive stress *-ítъ*, but that much must be put down to historical factors which are irreversible given the high frequency of this form. Certainly, though, where variation exists between mobile and ending stress in individual verbs, even where the former is deprecated, the direction of change would appear to be overall in the direction of mobile stress (i.e. towards the stress type of *кури́ть*).

### 3.4 Suffix *-аж*

The suffix *-аж* illustrates particularly clearly the effects of the pragmatic factor and professional speech. While a more basic analysis of its accentual characteristics, such as that of Fedianina (1982, 50-51), simply lists them as varying between stress of pattern *a* and pattern *b*, Zaliznjak offers a more detailed account (Zaliznjak 1985, 68-69). Zaliznjak classifies *-аж* as a dominant pattern-*b* suffix, i.e. stress is consistently on the final syllable (and on the ending if present), e.g. *типáж* ‘type’, gen. sg. *типажа́*, dat. sg. *типажу́* etc, although the effect of what he terms ‘Polysyll’ means that words with a base component of more than one syllable generally have pattern-*a* stress, e.g. *шпиона́ж* ‘espionage’, gen. sg. *шпиона́жа*. What is relevant for the present discussion, however, is that pattern-*a* stress also occurs when a word is not assimilated (i.e. this is the effect of the pragmatic factor and professional speech). Thus, for example, the words *зонда́ж* and *масса́ж* both have pattern-*a* stress in standard use, but pattern-*b* stress in professional speech. Among these words, as Zaliznjak (*ibid.*, 69) states, ‘в этом списке в основном представлены слова либо книжные, либо малоизвестные основной массе носителей языка, т.е. именно такие, для которых литературная норма обычно предписывает ударение,

соответствующее неосвоенности.<sup>6</sup> What is notable here, then, is that nouns derived with this suffix behave, from the accentual point of view, as though they were un-derived words: the unassimilated words have trivial stress, while the assimilated words (i.e. within the given professional micro-group) display non-trivial pattern-*b* stress.

Other examples of this phenomenon, including some variants deprecated as, for example, ‘неправильно’, but which are, nevertheless, important, as they show the general direction of change, and some even with polysyllabic base components and possible or deprecated ending stress, are the following from Gorbačevič (2000):

- арбитра́ж* ‘arbitration’ - gen. sg. *арбитра́жа* and *арбитра́жа́* (*неправ.*)  
*вitráж* ‘stained-glass window’ - gen. sg. *вitráжа́* vs. (*устарелое*)  
*вitráжа*  
*демонта́ж* ‘dismantling’ - gen. sg. *демонта́жа́* vs. (*устаревающее*)  
*демонта́жа*  
*кабота́ж* ‘sabotage’ - gen. sg. *кабота́жа* vs. (*неправ.*) *кабота́жа́*  
*камуфля́ж* ‘camouflage’ - gen. sg. *камуфля́жа* vs. (*неправ.*) *камуфля́жа́*  
*кура́ж* ‘boldness’ - gen. sg. *кура́жа́* vs. (*устарелое*) *кура́жа*  
*мира́ж* ‘mirage’ - gen. sg. *мира́жа́* vs. (*устаревающее*) *мира́жа*  
*трелья́ж* ‘trellis’ - gen. sg. *трелья́жа* and (*не рек.*) *трелья́жа́*  
*фикса́ж* ‘fixing agent (photography)’ - gen. sg. *фикса́жа* and (*не рек.*)  
*фикса́жа́*  
*фюзеля́ж* ‘fuselage’ - gen. sg. *фюзеля́жа* and (*не рек.*) *фюзеля́жа́*

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<sup>6</sup> ‘In this list are represented for the most part words which are either bookish or little known to the great bulk of speakers of the language, i.e. precisely those people for whom the literary norm usually prescribes stress which corresponds to a lack of assimilation.’ [Author’s translation]

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this paper two related phenomena, Zaliznjak's so called 'pragmatic factor' and 'professional speech', have been examined. While both phenomena operate on word stress in a similar fashion, the scope of the latter is much narrower than that of the former: professional speech represents variant stress among restricted groups of professionals in the course of their interaction in the work place and is unlikely to have any significant effect on stress development in the language as a whole, although such stress variation may indeed be in line with general developments occurring in the language. Although Zaliznjak views the main characteristic of professional stress as being non-trivial stress (ending or mobile stress), further investigation suggests that it is basically a stress position distinct from that of the literary norm, so that, while it may often represent non-trivial stress, it may also on occasion merely represent trivial stress on a different syllable from that in the standard language. In this paper I have attempted to identify the effects of both the pragmatic factor and professional stress in several complex areas of Russian stress. While neither phenomenon may be taken to be the sole cause of such accentual complexity, it is certainly likely that they are factors and need to be taken into account in any comprehensive analysis of these areas of word stress in Russian.

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**BRIAN COOPER**

**DUTCH LOAN-WORDS IN RUSSIAN DENOTING SAILS**

A study of Russian nautical terms reveals a significant number of nouns of the soft masculine paradigm, most of which are drawn from Dutch. A subgroup of these terms comprises words for sails. This short paper examines members of this latter group in detail, many of them dating from the time of Peter the Great, whose role in the russianisation of Dutch nautical terms is also examined. Relatively little work has been done on this topic: among the important sources are Brockhaus & Efron (1897) and van der Meulen (1909). Why should the Russian words for sails be derived predominantly from Dutch? First and foremost Peter the Great seems to have spent more time learning shipbuilding (by working as a ship's carpenter) in the dockyard of the Dutch East India Company at Zaandam, after which he went to Great Britain, working in the Royal Navy's dockyard at Deptford. It was in his reign that the first Russian-Dutch dictionary (more a word list) of nautical terms was produced, as van der Meulen explains (1909, 7-8), quoting Vaxtin's foreword: 'Het eerste zeemanswoordenboek in Rusland werd samengesteld tijdens PETER DE GROOTE en door Hem eigenhandig verbeterd.'<sup>1</sup> Van Meulen goes so far as to say that the work was written in Peter's name (1909, 7): 'Het eerste zeemanswoordenboek staat op naam van PETER DEN GROOTE zelf.' Another factor is that the Dutch had the world's biggest navy and the Dutch East India Company was bigger than the British East India Company.

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<sup>1</sup> In Russian: 'Первый морской словарь в России составлен был при Петре Великом и выправлен Его собственною рукою.'

## NOTES

The names of sails on a three-masted ship depend to an extent on the mast on which they are found, i.e. the mizzen-mast (*бизáнь-мáчта* < Dutch *bezaansmast*), the mainmast (*грот-мáчта*, the middle mast of three < *grootmast*), and the fore-mast (*фок-мáчта* < *fokmast*). The mizzen-mast is just aft of the mainmast, while the fore-mast is at the bow of the ship. On the mizzen-mast the mizzen staysail is *áпсель* < *aarzeil*. *Бизáнь* or *безáнь*, exceptionally feminine, is a mizzen sail < *bezaan*. It is divided into *косáя бизáнь* ‘spanker’ or ‘driver’ (also *контр-бизáнь*) and *прямáя бизáнь* ‘crossjack’ or ‘mizzen course’. The mainsail is *гротсель* < *grootzeil*. *Бли́ндзейль* < *blindzeil* is a sail on the bowsprit, while *бра́мсель* or *бра́мзель* < *bramzeil* is a topgallant sail. The latter has several compounds, such as *бом-бра́мсель* ‘royal sail’ (which is above the topgallant) < *bovenbramzeil*, *грот-бра́мсель* ‘main topgallant sail’ < *grootbramzeil*, *фор-бра́мсель* ‘fore topgallant sail’ < *voor-bramzeil*, *фор-бом-бра́мсель* ‘fore royal sail’ < *voorbovenbramzeil* and *грот-бом-бра́мсель* ‘main royal sail’ < *grootbovenbramzeil*. *Бом-утлэ́гарь* < *bovenuitleger* is the flying jib (boom), on which is set the *бом-кли́вер* ‘flying jib (sail)’, in old usage *бом-кльо́вер* < *bovenkluiver*, *кли́вер* being a jib, a triangular sail at the bow of a ship, while *утлэ́гарь* < *uitleger* is the jib-boom, a spar run out from the end of the bowsprit.

*Ли́сель* < *lijzeil* (also *lijsel*) is a studding-sail and has numerous compounds, such as *брам-ли́сель* ‘topgallant studding-sail’ < *bramlijzeil*, *грот-ли́сель* ‘a main studding-sail’ < *grootlijzeil*, *грот-брам-ли́сель* ‘main topgallant studding-sail’ < *grootbramlijzeil*, *марса-ли́сель* or *марс-ли́сель* ‘topmast studding-sail’ < *marslijzeil*, *грот-марс-ли́сель* or *грот-марса-ли́сель* ‘main topmast studding-sail’ < *groot-marslijzeil*, *унтер-ли́сель* or *ундер-ли́сель* ‘lower studding-sail’ < *onderlijzeil*, the latter perhaps influenced by German *unter*, *фор-брам-ли́сель* ‘fore topgallant studding-sail’ < *voorbramlijzeil*, *фор-марс-ли́сель* or *фор-марса-ли́сель* ‘fore topmast

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studding-sail' < *voormarslijzeil* and *зук-мисель* 'jigger' (a small sail at the stern) < *gijklijzeil*.

*Вáтерзейль* is a watersail < *waterzeil*, while *вúндзейль* or *вéндзейль* is a windsail < *windzeil*. The latter is a sort of ventilator of sail cloth in the form of a long cylinder which is lowered below decks with the upper opening against the wind to freshen the air. In dialect it takes the form *вéнзель*. *Вúнтель-зейль* and *вúнтер-зейль* < *winterzeil* have the same meaning as *вúндзейль*. *Ды́мсель*, a smoke sail, is a partial calque of the Dutch *rookzeil* (< *rook* 'smoke').

*Крю́йсель* or *крю́сель* (in older usage *крéйсель* or *крéйзель*) is the mizzen topsail < *kruiszeil*. *Крю́йс-* like *бизáнь* denotes sails on the mizzen mast. There are many compounds, such as *крю́йс-бом-бра́мсель* 'mizzen royal sail' < *kruisbovenbramzeil*, *крю́йс-бом-брам-ста́ксель* 'mizzen royal staysail' < *kruisbovenbramstagzeil*, *крю́йс-бра́мсель* 'mizzen topgallant sail' < *kruisbramzeil*, *крю́йс-брам-ста́ксель* 'mizzen topgallant staysail' < *kruisbramstagzeil*, *крю́йс-стен(ь)ги-ста́ксель* or *крю́йс-стен(ь)га-ста́ксель* 'mizzen topmast staysail' < *kruisstengstágzeil* (*сте́ньга* or *сте́нга* is the topmast, *гротсте́ньга* or *гротсте́нга* the main topmast < *grootesteng*, *форсте́ньга* or *фор-сте́нга* the fore topmast < *voorsteng* and *крю́йс-сте́ньга* or *крю́йс-сте́нга* the mizzen topmast < *kruissteng*). In old usage *сте́н(ь)га* is found as *стенг*, which is closer to the Dutch, cf. English dialect *stang* 'pole, stake' and German *Stange* in the same sense; in compounds it can take the form *стень*, as in *фор-стень-ста́ксель* (also *фор-стеньги-ста́ксель* or *фор-стеньга-ста́ксель*) 'fore topmast staysail' < *voorstengstagzeil*.

*Ма́рсель* < *marszeil* is a topsail, *грот-ма́рсель* < *grootmarszeil* is the main topsail, while *фор-ма́рсель* < *voormarszeil* is the fore topsail. *Му́нсель* is the moonsail or moonraker, a small square sail set above the skysail. It is presumably from Dutch *maanzeil* under influence of the English *moonsail*. The skysail is

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*трю́мсель* < *truimzeil*. *Ста́ксель*, also found as *шта́ксель*, is a staysail < *stagzeil*. It has a number of compounds, including *мидель-ста́ксель* ‘middle staysail’ < *middelstágzeil*, *грома-ста́ксель* or *гром-ста́ксель* ‘main staysail’ < *grootstagzeil*, *гром-стеньга-ста́ксель* ‘main topmast staysail’ < *grootstengstagzeil*, *гром-бом-брам-ста́ксель* ‘main royal staysail’ < *grootbovenbramstagzeil* and *гром-брам-ста́ксель* ‘main topgallant staysail’ < *grootbramstagzeil*. *Гром-*, as shown above, is the equivalent of ‘main’ in compound words of this type. *Фор-* and *фок-* designate sails on the fore mast nearest the bow; there are various compounds, some of which have been mentioned above. Others include *фок(а)-ста́ксель* ‘fore staysail’ < *fokstagzeil* and *фо́к(а)зейль*, which is a foresail (< *fok* or *fokzeil*) and is not to be confused with *фо́рзейль* ‘reconnoitring ship’ < *voorzail*. The Dutch *fok* is cognate with German *Fock* in the same sense and is thought by Kluge to be possibly connected with German *ficken* ‘fuck’ because the sail resembles the female genitalia, though this seems somewhat improbable.

*То́псель* (also *ма́рсель*) is a topsail < *topzeil*. It too has compounds, such as *гром-то́псель* ‘main topsail’ (also *гром-ма́рсель*) < *groottopzeil* and *фор-то́псель* (also *фор-ма́рсель*) ‘fore topsail’ < *voortopzeil*. *Фок-то́псель*, from *foktopzeil*, is synonymous with *фор-то́псель*. *Рёйковый* (or *лю́герный*) *то́псель* would seem to be a topmast lugsail, presumably from the Dutch *loggerstopzeil*. A lugsail is a quadrilateral sail bent on and hoisted from a yard (*рей* or *ре́я*, hence *ре́йковый*, from the diminutive *реёк* ‘lug yard’ with the genitive *рейка́*). A lugger (Russian *лю́гер*, Dutch *logger*) is a small ship carrying two or three masts with a lugsail on each. Dutch *gaffeltopzeil* gave rise to Russian *гафтто́псель* ‘gaff topsail’. A topsail is a square sail set on a topmast next above the lowest fore-and-aft sail on a gaff, which is a pole to which a fore-and-aft sail is bent. *Три́сель* ‘trysail’ or ‘spencer’ is known in Dutch as *gaffelzeil* and is thus exceptionally of English origin < *try* (obsolete for this type of

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sail) and *sail*. There are compounds, such as *грот-трисель* ‘main trysail’ < Dutch *groot* plus English *trysail*, and *фор-трисель* ‘fore trysail’ < Dutch *voor* plus English *trysail*.

The lateen, derived from French *voile latine* ‘Latin sail’ because it was common in the Mediterranean, is a triangular sail on a long yard at an angle of 45 degrees to the mast. The lateen yard would be *латинский рей* (or *латинская рёя*). *Латинская бизань* would be the lateen mizzen, presumably from the Dutch *latijns-bezaan*. The word *унтерзейль*, from the Dutch *onderzeil*, denotes the strength of the wind at force 8 on the Beaufort scale in relation to the disposition of the sails, which at that wind speed would be *марсели в три рифа* ‘topsails with three reefs’, a reef being one of several strips across a sail for taking it in or rolling it up to reduce the surface area in a high wind.

It should be noted that a number of sail terms in Russian have both standard and professional stress in the nominative plural, as Zaliznjak observes (1977, 589). The professional plural, as the name suggests, is a special form used only by sailors themselves, e.g. *ансель*, nominative plural *анселья́* (standard stress *ансели*). As can be seen from this example, the professional plural generally has its ending in stressed *á/я́*, which is parallel to many nouns with this ‘irregular’ ending, viz (hard stem) *го́род/городá* (‘town, city’), (soft stem) *учи́тель/учите́ля* (‘teacher’). The soft-stem sail nouns with this type of stressed ending in the plural, most of which are disyllabic in their non-compound form and stressed on the first syllable in the singular, include *ансель*, *бра́мсель*, *крю́йсель*, *ли́сель*, *ма́рсель*, *ста́ксель*, *то́псель*, *три́сель* and *трио́мсель*, cf. the plural *зеле́ня́*, exceptionally from the disyllabic feminine *зе́лень* (Zaliznjak 2002, 548). In a similar way, a number of English words for sails are pronounced differently in professional use from how they are pronounced in non-

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professional use, e.g. *stays'l* (alongside non-professional *staysail*), *skys'l* (= *skysail*), *stuns'l* (= *studding-sail*), *tops'l* (= *topsail*) and *trys'l* (= *trysail*).

The terms for sails in Russian are of limited frequency, generally occurring in a historical context, though of course there are still some sailing ships to be found in modern times, such as clippers and tall ships. Most of these Russian words are derived from Dutch, in particular the Dutch word for sail, *zeil*, and almost all of them are of masculine gender ending in a soft sign, evidently because the Dutch *zeil* is neuter and could not be readily turned into a neuter noun in Russian, so the analogous masculine gender is preferred to the feminine. There are, of course, no neuter nouns ending in a soft sign in Russian. One Russian sail word ending in a soft sign, *безань* 'mizzen' (< Dutch feminine *bezaan*), is feminine, but does not end in *-сель* < *-zeil*. Although *zeil* usually takes the form *-сель* in Russian words for sails, a few have the phonetically closer form *-зейль*. The stress on basic, non-compound words of this type is on the first syllable of two and generally accords with the original Dutch (or English when this is the origin), e.g. Dutch *sta'gzeil* > Russian *ста́ксель* or *шта́ксель* = English *stáysail* and English *trýsail* > Russian *три́сель* (= Dutch unrelated *gaffelzeil*). In spite of the preponderance of Dutch loan-words for sails in Russian, the English influence is also apparent to a slight extent, e.g. in the words *му́нсель* 'moonsail, moonraker', *три́сель* 'trysail', and perhaps also *то́псель* 'topsail' and *гафто́псель* 'gaff topsail' (= Dutch *gaffeltopzeil*).

The sounds of the Dutch words are fairly consistently taken into Russian. However, there are exceptions, such as *bovenbramzeil* > *бом-бра́мсель*, *windzeil* > *вэ́ндзейль* alongside *ви́ндзейль* (also *вэ́нзель* in dialect), *kruizeil*, *kruisel* > *крю́(й)сель*, and in older usage *крéйсель*, *крéйзель* (somewhat closer to the original Dutch diphthong *ui*) and *kruisstengstagzeil* > *крюс-стен(ь)га-ста́ксель* (notice that the Dutch *g* in *stag-* becomes Russian *κ*). Long vowels in Dutch are generally con-

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verted into the nearest normal Russian vowels, e.g. *bezaanmast* > *безáнь-мáчта*, *grootmast* > *зрoт-мáчта*, *aarzeil* > *áncель*, so that there is no distinction from short vowels as in *bramzeil* > *б́рámсель* or *б́рámзель*, and *bovenkluiver* > *бoмклю́вер* or in older usage *бoмклюóвер*.

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Rick McPeak and Donna Tussing Orwin (eds), *Tolstoy on War: Narrative Art and Historical Truth in 'War and Peace'*, Cornell University Press, 2013, 246 pp.

This book is interesting as much for its provenance as for its content. The English translation of Lev Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1865-69), a fixture on countless Western university literature courses, is also a set text for students in the Department of Foreign Languages at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Famous for turning out warriors and statesmen, West Point's military training is taught alongside Engineering and a Liberal Arts curriculum.

In April 2010 the Academy hosted a conference for the contributors to this book plus other guests who included Academy staff members and the ten cadets studying *War and Peace*. 'Discussion and debate continued day and night, during official sessions, at meals, at events and on tours of the Academy grounds,' writes Rick McPeak, one of the editors, but also a West Point professor and a colonel in the US Army. The hottest topic, according to McPeak, was Tolstoy's surprising elevation of the humble, selfless anti-leader, the Russian General Kutuzov, over the self-aggrandising 'great man', Napoleon. Leadership and leadership style being issues the students discussed frequently (e.g., analysing the differences between 'virtuous violence' and the abuse of power at Abu Ghraib), their reactions to Tolstoy's idiosyncratic and very Russian view were passionate and not altogether positive. What would he know about it anyway, when his military career was so brief, and relatively subordinate to boot? Yet McPeak pronounced himself gratified when he realised that at the end of the conference several of his students had glimpsed in *War and Peace* a 'fictive universe clearly too large for any of them to label.'

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This anecdote encapsulates the strengths and limitations of the collection itself, which in turn dictate the difficulties of writing about it. Nothing is more irritating than a review which focusses on the book not written, rather than the one before one's eyes. Reviewers and readers alike have an obligation to assess a work within the parameters set, usually for good reason, by the author/s. In this case, the several invited writers are all admirable in their ability to 'Keep to the Topic'. It must have helped that they are mostly specialists in history, political science, and international relations – scholars naturally interested in quarrying *War and Peace* for its relevance to their discipline. Eyes straight ahead, few so much as peek at the sections of the novel that deal with Peace – the chapters where people fall in and out of love or marriage, get the harvest in, practise freemasonry, go to church, debate the peasant question, join the zemstva, dance and make hay. The adoption of blinkers facilitates an entirely appropriate exercise, but one may still find that the square has its limitations.

Mikhail Bakhtin (mentioned in four footnotes, although his chronotopes are not) pointed out that all writing is positioned along space/time axes ('x' and 'y') that intersect as in geometry. In this book the axes of the eponymous 'war' are naturally 1812 and Borodino, despite occasional references to earlier battles, particularly Austerlitz. Thus, their discussion crowds around the intersection of the axes, whereas the novel itself stretches far beyond this point in all directions; anyone who has read it, or knows anything at all about Tolstoy, will find it as hard to erase from their minds their awareness of what happened to the characters before and after 1812, as to ignore the about-turns in Tolstoy's own views regarding war in the decades following 1869. But none of those things are relevant to this book. You ask one last time, is context entirely irrelevant then? Yes it is, given this book's brief. Military historians and political scientists were asked to read *War and Peace* and contribute to Tolstoy and War precisely because of their specialised knowledge and interest. They probe the text and

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throw expert light on aspects of the novel that the common reader would probably never interrogate, showing us that it is allowable to reduce even a universal classic to a teaching text when it has so much to impart to specialist readers.

Several articles challenge the historical accuracy of *War and Peace*, although they allow that Tolstoy did not wilfully distort the ‘facts’. It was just that some facts in Tolstoy’s magisterial hierarchy were, like George Orwell’s animals, more equal than others. He saw historians as limited because they looked only at results, whereas his own eyes were focussed on what happened ‘in the minute’. Only in that ‘now’ could he hope to find the answer to ‘the most important question of all’: what force moves people? David Welch, an International Relations theorist, agrees that this is a basic question not only for Tolstoy but for all scholars in his field, but argues that Tolstoy fails to deal with it satisfactorily. He wanted the answer to be ‘the people’s will’, and he wanted Kutuzov to be at one with the selfless representative of that will. But even he could not pretend that the people had any such thing as will in the political sense, which makes his exaltation of Kutuzov a mystery at best. Welch softens his judgement of Tolstoy’s failure by claiming that at least no one ever described the problem better, making one wonder whether or not this is a conscious echo of that non-military man, Anton Chekhov’s, perception: ‘Nothing is solved in *Anna Karenina*, but it satisfies completely because in it all the questions are put so perfectly.’

Even more interesting is that towards the end of his article, Welch writes, ‘For too long political science has ignored what Tolstoy considered “real life with its essential concerns of health, illness, work, rest, with its concerns of thought, learning, poetry, music, love, friendship, hatred, passions...which goes on independently of and apart from political science’s futile attempts to pretend that it does not exist.”’ What kind of a book might this have been then if even one token political scientist or historian had been ‘disobedient’ in the way that another contributor, Elizabeth Samet, uses

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that word? Samet finds ‘disobedience’ in Tolstoy’s refusal to submit to the discriminatory literary ‘policing’ that makes a novel by Henry James such a beautifully shaped work of art, and in his rejection of the commonly accepted view of his contemporaries who saw warfare only in heroic terms - great men leading their mindless, helpless troops to victory or destruction for the sake of the nation.

Samet is one of several contributors to quote the lines from Tolstoy’s 1868 essay, ‘A Few Words about the Book *War and Peace*’, in which he insisted his opus was neither novel, epic nor chronicle, that it was to be understood only ‘as the author wanted to and could express in the form in which it is expressed.’ And indeed *War and Peace* does escape the categorisations of genre, like a strong man bursting free of an iron band around his chest. That this volume respects iron bands is not a negative; it teaches non-militarists much about the yellow brick road, about the ball you keep your eyes on, about the ability to ‘stay focussed’. That said, however, it is surprising how many of the articles cannot forego a surreptitious nod to that ‘fictive universe too large to label’.

Judith Armstrong<sup>1</sup>  
The University of Melbourne

*Poltava 1709: The Battle and the Myth*. Ed. Serhii Plokyh. Cambridge, Massachusetts: distributed by Harvard University press for the Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 2012. Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies. xxv + 703 pp.

By the standards of books based on conferences, *Poltava 1709* is a singularly satisfying tome. It contains much that is revealing and new, including several funda-

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Armstrong’s most recent book is the novel, *War & Peace and Sonya*, Murdoch Books, 2011.

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mental studies. It is interdisciplinary, bringing together inquiries from (geo)political, military, cultural and religious history, archaeology, art history, linguistics, literary studies and memory studies. It is given unity by its focus on a single historical event, its participants and its historical context, examined successively through the prisms of several scholarly disciplines. Serhii Plokhy's splendid introductory essay, 'The Battle that Never Ends', creates the perspective from which this coherence is immediately evident. Plokhy heralds on the volume's first pages its leading motifs: the role of the battle as symbolic of the enduringly unresolved relationships between Russia and Europe, on the one hand, and Ukraine and Russia, on the other; and its significance for two national myths, where myth is 'a phenomenon that helps large collectivities define the foundations of their identity and system of values' (xvii).

In large part, this is a book about Russia and Ukraine (Sweden and Charles XII, militarily the main antagonists of Muscovy and Peter I in the battle, end up taking a somewhat secondary role, and this one of the few discontents with the collection that one might articulate). It is also a book that, by bringing together 'Russianists' and 'Ukrainianists', has created a symmetry of significance that is unusual for each field by itself. Peter I and Mazepa present themselves to the reader as parallel figures whose thoughts and actions equally deserve the attention of scholars. This is evident in the organisation of the collection's twenty-six chapters into five parts: while the figure of Peter looms large throughout, the fourth section, 'Grappling with Mazepa', encompassing ten essays, focuses upon the Hetman.

The first part of the collection establishes contexts (Zenon Kohut considers the political geography of the Ukrainian lands in Mazepa's time, while Tatiana Tairova-Iakovleva looks at administrative reform in the Hetmanate during the Northern War) and explores the immediate prehistory of the battle (Volodymyr Kovalenko draws upon archaeological evidence for his account of the destruction of Mazepa's capital Ba-

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tury). In Part II, 'The Battle and its Aftermath', two inquiries into military history (those of Donald Ostrowski and Peter B. Brown) are followed by Paul Bushkovich's demonstration that the curtailment of the autonomy of the Hetmanate following Poltava was not part of a general policy of centralisation and was synchronous with quite different practices in, for example, the Baltic provinces of the Empire. Robert I. Frost cautions against accepting too readily the view that Poltava rendered inevitable (rather than merely possible) Russian domination of the internal politics of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. John LeDonne draws the reader's attention to the four main players in Western Eurasia at the time of Poltava (Muscovy, Sweden, Poland and the Crimean Khanate) and proposes a novel view of the geopolitical consequences of the battle: 'Contrary to popular opinion, the victory at Poltava did not bring Russia into the ranks of the European powers. Rather, it accelerated Muscovy's transformation into a great Eurasian power, facing Europe to the west and China to the east' (188).

Part III, 'The Making of the Myth', reflects in many ways on the remarkable aptitude of Peter I for public relations and his successes in determining the tone of posterity's judgment of his deeds. This is noted in regard to the visual arts in the contributions by Alexander Kamenskii, Elena N. Boeck, Liliya Berezhnaya and Tatiana Senkevitch, and with reference to the art of the homily, again, by Kamenskii, as well as Giovanna Brogi Bercoff. Brogi Bercoff offers a revealing analysis of two remarkable sermons, one by Stefan Iavors'kyi, in which she detects as a subtext 'a sort of crypto-celebration of the fallen Hetman' (210), the other, influential and unequivocally pro-Petrine, by Feofan Prokopovych. Nadieszda Kizenko offers a full, usefully introduced and densely annotated translation into English of the thanksgiving service that Peter commissioned following Poltava (which contains, among other choice mor-

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sels, reference to ‘a son of perdition, a devil in manner, and not a man, the thrice-cursed Mazepa’; 253).

In Part IV Taras Koznarsky’s monograph-length essay ‘Obsessions with Mazepa’ shows forth the complex trajectories of the name and image of Mazepa and the motif of the Poltava battle in Ukrainian and Russian literature and criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century, offering incisive analyses of infrequently consulted sources. George Grabowicz uncovers in the school drama ‘Mylost’ Bozhiia, Ukraynu... svobodyvshaia’ (1728) the paradigm of ‘Ukraine as both fallen and degraded and yet endowed with a divine promise of resurrection’ (550-51). Valuable new findings emerge from explorations of Mazepa as a literary motif in the essays of Alois Woldan (for German-language literature) and Ksenia Kiebuzinski (for literature in French). Kiebuzinski also inquires into the Mazepa image in French art, while Volodymyr Mezentsev marshalls the available evidence to reconstruct the Baroque appearance of Mazepa’s palace in Baturyn. Olenka Z. Pevny considers the ideologically allusive power of architectural styles as she examines the restorations conducted at various times of ancient Kyivan monuments to their medieval or eighteenth-century appearance. Michael S. Flier offers a linguistic analysis of Mazepa’s love letters to Motria Kochubei, and Michael Moser addresses a similar task in relation to the language of Mazepa’s proclamations (‘universals’) and official correspondence. Andrii Bovgyria sheds light on the baleful afterlife of Mazepa’s taking sides against Peter I: the interrogations, imprisonments, exile and executions of suspected followers of Mazepa.

The two essays that comprise Part V, ‘A Never-Ending Past’, return to the theme announced by Plokhy in the introduction: the prevalence in the discourses and politics of the twenty-first century of the Ukrainian-Russian tensions that found their early climactic embodiment at Poltava. Guido Hausmann reflects on the complexities

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and the awkwardness of official measures in Poltava to mark the tercentenary of the battle in the penultimate year of the Yushchenko presidency, while Kristian Gerner considers the divergent official and scholarly readings of the battle in 2009, the year of the anniversary, in Ukraine, Sweden and Russia, concluding his essay – and the book – with a logically puzzling, but sinister quotation from the then prime minister of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin: ‘You should certainly read Anton Denikin’s diary; specifically the part about Great and Little Russia. He says nobody should be allowed to interfere between us. This is only Russia’s right.’ (691)

It is a topos often encountered in the collection that Poltava was a historical ‘turning point’. But the narratives and interpretations in *Poltava 1709* suggest that the notion of a radical change in historical fortune is only partly apposite. In the case of Sweden, the lost battle may well be looked upon as symbolic of the country’s decline as a European power. But as far as Russia and Ukraine are concerned, a great deal of the evidence adduced in the book suggests that Poltava was but an episode in the unfolding of a power – Muscovy, soon to be rebranded as the Russian Empire – sustained by the demographic advantage of a large population, the strategic advantage of a large territory and the capacity, marshalled through means traditional as well as modern, military and administrative as well as cultural, to subject the efforts of many to a single will.

Like all publications in the ‘Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies’ series, the book is handsomely presented, with the reproduction of a detail from Jean-Marc Nattier’s *Battle of Poltava in 1709* (1717) gracing the front cover.

Marko Pavlyshyn  
Monash University

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Olga Soboleva and Angus Wrenn, *The Only Hope of the World: George Bernard Shaw and Russia*. Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt-am-Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang, 2012. xi + 231 pp.

The six chapters comprising this study are in effect six stand-alone essays devoted to diverse aspects of the 'Russian dimension' in the life and work of G.B. Shaw over more than a century. Thematically (though not literally: the reader must wait until the penultimate chapter), the centrepiece is the playwright's well-known visit to the Soviet Union in 1931, subject of an exhibition curated by the joint authors at the London School of Economics some years ago, and the original inspiration for this project.

The opening chapter examines Shaw's early contacts in London with Russian political exiles like Kropotkin, Stepniak-Kravchinsky and Nikolai Tchaikovsky in the context of the evolution of his political ideas. If this broader narrative seems sometimes to take over, and if the difficulties inherent in writing at once for specialist and general readers are not always overcome, the authors offer some insights (for example, into the Shaw's impatience with liberal democracy as an echo of the aristocratic populists' disillusion with the passivity of the *narod*) that help explain his later enthusiasm for the 'strong men' of Bolshevism.

Questions of literary 'influence' dominate the following three essays, largely devoted to the 'kinship of thinking' (p. 72) linking Shaw with both Tolstoy and Gorky. If most of this material is familiar enough in general outline, the specific instances of what the authors term 'reflective influence' (p. 81) may come as a revelation: *The Power of Darkness* as the inspiration for *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet* and *Man and Superman*, for example, or the echoes of *Summer Residents* [*Dachniki*] (1904) in *Heartbreak House* (1916). A more direct reflection of Russian themes is discovered in the originally pseudonymous 'playlet' ('from the Russian of Gregory Biessipoff'),

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*Annajanska the Wild Grand Duchess* (December 1917; later retitled *Annajanska the Bolshevik Empress*). A reasonable case is made for its significance in anticipating the ideological convictions that would lead GBS to send Lenin a copy of *Back to Methuselah*; although there is little in the account of this forgotten farce to challenge Shaw's own view that it was of 'no literary importance' (p. 110).

Situated as it is, and drawing mostly on material already generally well-known, the chapter on Shaw's nine-day visit to Russia in the summer of 1931 is less of a focal point than might have been expected. Like many another Western intellectual celebrity he took the guided 'Soviet tour' from electrical factory to collective farm to correctional centre, although with a difference: there were welcoming crowds, official celebrations to mark his seventy-fifth birthday and a two-and-a-half hour audience with Stalin. It was, as the authors suggest, the progress of an 'archetypal fellow traveller' (p. 163); and if his projected book on the visit got no further than a few typescript pages, there were newspaper reports and interviews enough to propagate his faith in the new Russia as 'the only hope of the world'. The question of whether Shaw was duped or deluded, or saw or told 'the truth,' is one the authors do not avoid, drawing attention to his notorious comments on the abundance of food in Moscow or to the starker observations of Nancy Astor, Lord Lothian and others in his party; but on the whole they are content to leave the last word with him: 'The things I wanted to see were precisely the things I did see' (p. 166).

The final contribution to the collection is more of an appendix than a conclusion, revealing that for all his status as a 'progressive' writer, Shaw's plays were little performed in the Soviet Union before the celebrations for his ninetieth birthday in 1946, and that his real success as a dramatist with Russian audiences came only with Vadim Golikov's famous production of *The Apple Cart* at the Leningrad Academic Theatre of Comedy in 1972. More widely popular, however, was *Dear Liar*, translat-

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ed and adapted from Jerome Kilty's Broadway hit about Shaw and Mrs Patrick Campbell, first performed in Leningrad nine years before.

The authors approach their task from different disciplinary perspectives (Soboleva is a Russianist, Wrenn a comparativist), a fact which (together with the very diversity of the topics covered and the sources referred to) may explain why the collection at times seems to pull in different directions or digress beyond the subject immediately in hand. More rigorous editing might also have weeded out some unfortunate misprints (Shaw's play is once cited as *Androcles and Lion*: p. 32; and Gorky's novel as *Foma Gorgeev*: p. 75), as well as some oddities in English expression: Feuchtwanger's *Moscow 1937* is said to have been 'effaced from the pallet of the Soviet press' (p.141). The 11 illustrations (quaintly designated 'figures') include some rare contemporary photographs from the LSE archives, although the portrait of Shaw with Soviet workers (in high Stalinist style) suffers in monochrome reproduction and comes with no indication as to provenance or authorship. All in all, this is a book that offers much to interest a wide circle of readers and encourage them in further research; ultimately, however, it might have achieved more by attempting less.

John McNair

The University of Queensland

Marko Andryczyk, *The Intellectual as Hero in 1990s Ukrainian Fiction*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, 183 pp.

More often than not, intellectuals in East Central Europe are portrayed as generators of the events that resulted in the dismantling of the Socialist Bloc and the USSR. Yet, simultaneously, these events had a serious impact on the place and role of the intellectuals in transforming societies. The book under review contributes to our

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understanding of changes in the situation of the intellectuals in one of the states of the region, Ukraine.

Marko Andryczyk proposes an original approach to these issues. By analysing fictional texts from the 1990s whose protagonists are intellectuals, he promises to address the questions of who intellectuals were, and what their place was, during that country's first post-Soviet decade. Andryczyk identifies three interdependent and often inseparable tendencies that determined Ukrainian prose in the 1990s: euphoria, chaos and community. The book is structured around their discussion. Euphoria, embodied in the 'era of festivals' of the final years of the Soviet Union's existence and first years of Ukrainian independence, characterised the initial period when old traditions and institutions were creatively and successfully challenged by a new generation of intellectuals. Their activities supplanted traditional static cultural models with ideas of flux, freedom and play. In subsequent years, having divested themselves of political significance, Ukrainian intellectuals ended up in a state of chaos, disillusionment and disorientation. Andryczyk concludes his account of the decade by stating that, in response to the changes that turned them into 'Superfluous People', post-Soviet intellectuals formed their own 'community of others'. He also classifies and analyses the new role models for intellectuals that were proposed in fiction: the Swashbuckling Performer, akin to a rock-star and a celebrity; the Ambassador to the West, who must worthily represent Ukraine and its culture to the world; and the Sick Soul – the physically or mentally sick person, maladjusted to, and malfunctioning in, the changed circumstances.

Andryczyk's analysis centres on several issues, such as the position of post-Soviet Ukrainian intellectuals vis-à-vis language, the West and tradition. The book portrays the shift of the intellectuals from their early attempts to deconstruct and undermine the Ukrainian language in their quest for liberated expression to their later

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efforts at enhancing the social standing of that language. Andryczyk convincingly documents the uneven and fragmentary perception and transmission of Western culture by Ukrainian intellectuals. At the same time, he stresses that they considered a 'Western' orientation, however vaguely defined, to be the only one possible and constructive for Ukrainian culture. Post-Soviet intellectuals embarked on this future-oriented project after mocking and rejecting both Soviet and national traditions.

Throughout the book Andryczyk points to a radical shift in the self-conceptualisation of Ukrainian intellectuals: the first post-Soviet generation rejected the previously dominant idea of serving and being responsible for society and, instead, distanced itself from it. However, after refusing the status of 'conscience of the nation', intellectuals failed to find any other satisfactory role in society. This, according to Andryczyk, explains certain developments in the ways Ukrainian intellectuals perceived themselves in the first decade of Ukrainian independence. He shows that their rejection turned out to be not only liberating, but also problematic – the protagonists of the analysed texts feel lost in this newly formed void.

The book is geared to an audience with a prior knowledge of Ukraine and its contemporary history. For these readers, the story told by Andryczyk will be compelling. Yet it is hard to fight the impression that within the book Ukrainian intellectuals – both authors and the protagonists of their works – seem to exist in a kind of social, political and cultural vacuum. The book is well researched and carefully thought through. By highlighting the specificity of the intellectual community he researches, Andryczyk contributes to our understanding of intellectuals as historically and culturally bound figures. However, the author makes little attempt to contextualise his findings in relation to the work of other students of the region and of post-Socialist transformations. This impression is enhanced by the rather limited theoretical apparatus of the book, which seems to be based on almost the same reading list as that of the intel-

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lectuals in Andryczyk's book. For instance, Andryczyk follows the well-established East European tradition of seeing intellectuals almost exclusively as people dealing with literature. The narrowness of this definition goes against the grain of contemporary views on intellectuals in the social sciences. Yet such a focus allows Andryczyk to tell us a gripping and rich story of the group he singles out as intellectuals. This leaves open for future researchers the question of how the processes Andryczyk has analysed are related to processes in the wider social group of what is known to students of the region as 'the intelligentsia'.

However refreshing and productive Andryczyk's approach to the study of intellectual life of the post-Soviet Ukraine is, he does not apply it consistently. His analyses of situations of the heroes of literary texts are complemented by his reports of interviews and opinion pieces in which the authors of these texts explain their views on Ukrainian intellectuals. Contrasting and comparing the direct statements of the authors with the destiny of the characters in their books could have led to interesting conclusions. Instead, Andryczyk switches between analysis of literary characters and observations on the lives of their authors without special reflection on this critical procedure.

These remarks notwithstanding, the book offers an insightful account of Ukrainian writers-cum-intellectuals looking for their place in society in the uncertain times of the first years of the post-Soviet transformation. This book contributes not only to our knowledge of contemporary Ukrainian literature, but also to our understanding of certain processes in Ukrainian society. Though quite short, it nevertheless covers a considerable number of authors and texts and captures the *Zeitgeist* of the period well.

Khrystyna Chushak  
Monash University

## Notes on Contributors

**Agnese Bresin** is an Italian linguistics PhD student at the University of Melbourne, Australia, investigating regional variation of address practices in Italy. In 2008 she graduated in English and German as foreign languages at La Sapienza University, Italy, with a translation and linguistics thesis. Her interest in teaching languages has brought her to join various scholarship-based international programs to work as an assistant language teacher in a number of countries, including Scotland (2005), Australia (2009) and Slovakia (2011). Alongside her PhD project, Agnese is currently co-operating on a broader research project on address in European languages, based at the University of Melbourne.

**Brian Cooper** has a MA and PhD from Cambridge University and has recently retired as an Affiliated Lecturer in Russian in the Department of Slavonic Studies at Cambridge University. His address for correspondence is 21 Redgate Rd, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0PP, United Kingdom.

**John Hajek** is an experienced linguist (Italian, Romance and general) with a wide range of interests and is Professor of Italian at the University of Melbourne. He has worked for many years, as well as published with colleagues at that institution and elsewhere, on patterns of address across a range of different languages. He is also a fluent speaker of Slovene and Croatian.

**Heinz L. Kretzenbacher** is a senior lecturer and the convenor of the German Studies Program in the School of Languages and Linguistics of the University of Melbourne.

His main research interests are sociolinguistics, academic communication and the teaching and learning of German as a second or foreign language.

**Robert Lagerberg** is the convenor of the Russian Program in the School of Languages and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne and is the main editor of *ASEES*. His research interests are mainly in Russian linguistics, in particular the study of word stress. He recently published a monograph on the topic, *Variation and Frequency in Russian Word Stress* (Sagner: Berlin/Munich, 2011).

**Henrietta Mondry** is Professor of Russian at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. She has published widely on Russian 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century literature, cultural history and intellectual thought. Her two latest books are: *Exemplary Bodies: Constructing the Jew in Russian Culture since the 1880's* (Academic Studies Press, 2009) and *Vasily Rozanov and the Body of Russian Literature* (Slavica, 2010).

**Mark Purves** received his PhD in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Virginia. His work concerns the plays and prose of Anton Chekhov, and, more recently, the German film-maker Hans Richter. Assistant Professor of Russian at Brigham Young University, Dr. Purves lives in Provo, Utah, with his wife, novelist Ann Purves, and their five children.

**David V. Urban** is Associate Professor of English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the co-compiler and co-editor of *John Milton: A Bibliography, 1989-1999* and the co-editor of *Visionary Milton*. His articles on Milton, Hawthorne, Melville, and other subjects have appeared in journals such as *Milton Quarterly*, *Milton Studies*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Leviathan*, *Connotations*, and *Appositions* as well

as in various book collections. His articles on Tolstoy's influence on the South African playwright Athol Fugard have appeared in *Renascence* and *Notes & Queries*. He regularly reviews for the *Review of English Studies* and other journals.