

Soviet film industry's war-time evacuation to Kazakhstan, and ultimately the appearance of films directed by ethnic Kazakhs at their native studio, with Shaken Aimanov's directorial debut, *A Poem About Love* (1953) initiating the way.

In charting this path, Rollberg treasures every Kazakh-themed film, including shelved works, regardless of its aesthetic value or critical reception at the time of release or following the Soviet collapse, revealing the gradual but consistent progress toward gaining directorial, acting, and technical expertise, as well as seeking more agency and control over visual representations of Kazakh culture, land, and society on screen. To this effect, Rollberg teases out even the finest shoots of innovation and/or expression of Kazakh distinctiveness that consistently build on each other, leading to ever more significant advances in shaping uniquely Kazakhstani cinema. In this inclusive account, the Kazakh New Wave appears not as an isolated breakthrough enabled by mentorship from the center, but as an integral part of a wider late-Soviet Kazakh cinema's search for authentic values and liberation from Soviet cinematic norms. During perestroika, both older and new generations of Soviet Kazakh filmmakers produced a "harvest of masterpieces" (Rollberg, 400) questioning the Soviet status quo, including, but not limited to, processing traumas of Stalinism in Kalybek Salykov's *The Balcony* (1988), breaking the taboos of collectivization and famine in Damir Manabaev's *Surzhekei, the Angel of Death* (1991), and questioning the impact of Soviet modernization in Bolat Kalymbetov's *My Darling* (1990). Rollberg demonstrates the dynamism and complexity of Kazakhstan's cinematic landscape in the late 1980s by showcasing these and other less-known films alongside the more critically acclaimed gems coming out of the Solov'ev masterclass, including Rashid Nugmanov's *The Needle* (1988), Serik Aprymov's *The Last Stop* (1989), and Abai Karpykov's *Little Fish in Love* (1989).

Rollberg's detailed filmography combined with enlightening film analyses examining sociopolitical factors, aesthetic and genre experimentation, and strivings for the expression of national identity is a veritable goldmine for researchers looking for a deeper understanding of not only specific themes within Kazakh cinema, but also Soviet cinematograph's wider thematic and generic patterns, such as Kazakhfilm's unique contributions to the historical-revolutionary and WWII genres, children and youth films, and sports dramas. Particularly illuminating are the five chapters (4–8) documenting the gradual maturation and flourishing of Kazakh cinema during the Thaw under the creative leadership of such native masters of direction as Shaken Aimanov, Mazhit Begalin, Sultan-Akhmad Khodzhikov, and Abdulla Karsarbaev. Rollberg devotes a separate chapter to Aimanov as "the foundational figure of Kazakh cinema" (191), in honor of whom the Kazakh Studio was named in 1984. In addition to serving scholars of Soviet and Central Asian film, *Cinema of Soviet Kazakhstan* will be the primary reference for anyone exploring Kazakh cinema, as well as a great teaching resource.

ELENA MONASTIREVA-ANSELL
Colby College

The Symphonies. By Andrei Bely. Trans. Jonathan Stone. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. xxxii, 512 pp. Notes. \$24.95, paper.
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Published in the first decade of the twentieth century, Andrei Bely's four *Symphonies* mark the emergence of one of the major prose stylists of Russian literature and demonstrate the habits of polarization and juxtaposition that fueled Russian symbolist thinking. Symbolism strove to see the unseeable, to say what words cannot capture, to touch

worlds beyond human reach. It was for this reason a somewhat inherently experimental idiom, premised on the potential of as yet untested artistic methods to reveal as yet unapprehended truths. The *Symphonies* embody this paradoxical approach and the utopian energies of their author at the beginning of his career; they can be understood as a series of explorations into the proposition (which would remain fundamental to Belyi's understanding of symbolism) that there are separate realms of existence and meaningful links between them. Belyi's *Symphonies* test whether something is to be gained by casting "ordinary" experience in terms of centaurs and dragons; by relating the psychological experience of alienation to the gap between appearance and reality in science or in mystical practice; by trying to illuminate the cycles of human feelings and experiences with the patterns of artistic composition; and, most obviously, by applying some of the principles of music to literature.

The peculiar challenge of translating this sort of work is to preserve the text's clarity and its elusiveness, its elegance and its awkwardness. Belyi's *Symphonies* can be a thrilling pleasure to read; part of the thrill and the pleasure involve imagining not only the worlds sketched out in the texts, but also the ideas and aims of the author as he arranged his material in this unusual way. For works like these, even the plainest, most matter-of-fact sort of reading requires a hefty load of conjecture. Words, sentences, and larger sections cannot be assumed to function as they do in ordinary language or in any existing literary form (and this is by design) so the text's potential meanings and reverberations lack the guiderails that might insure against gross misunderstanding in reading—or translating—less aggressively innovative texts. Jonathan Stone's achievement is impressive: re-enacting Belyi's lexical repetitions without allowing them to become more (or less) obtrusive than they are in the original, and judiciously evoking some of Belyi's word play without turning the work into a distracting English-language game. He reproduces the distinctive combination of over- and under-determination that is so striking in the original.

Another challenge is to know how much introducing to do in the introduction and how much information to provide in the endnotes. Too little, and all that comes through is the strangeness of the work. Too much, and one risks preconditioning the reader's experience of works that were clearly and perhaps above all meant to be capable not only of inspiring many different readers' responses but also in some sense of "being" many different things. To my mind, Stone gets this just right as well: enough background and ground-level interpretation to give the reader a start (and a reason to start), not enough to make the texts feel like a set of homework assignments with an answer key.

Belyi's particular aspirations entailed the harmonization of empirical, rational, evocative, and mystical aspects of symbolization, and in this respect the work of translation is similar: the demands of denotation and suggestion, content and form, idea and feeling, and presence and potential bear simultaneously on the project and must all be coordinated with minimal loss and maximal effect. With this daunting task, on these challenging texts, Stone succeeds brilliantly.

TIMOTHY LANGEN
University of Missouri

Is Russia Fascist? Unraveling Propaganda East and West. By Marlene Laruelle. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021. vii, 256 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. \$39.95, hard bound.
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One of the features of the new cold war between the west and Russia is the notion, propagated by some western journalists, scholars, and politicians, that the regime of