

and riveting attention (including beautifully inventive work on the English translations). Barker also usefully contextualizes the works examined within Shvarts's larger oeuvre and within her biography. She also discusses significant predecessors in the Russian tradition: for Shvarts, the triad of Aleksandr Pushkin, Osip Mandel'shtam, and Marina Tsvetaeva constituted her "personal 'Russian classical antiquity'" (25). For this reader, the only missing piece was a broader contextualization of Shvarts's classical reception in the context of her own time and literary milieu—the unofficial poetry scene in Leningrad and elsewhere. Barker refers briefly to poets like Viktor Krivulin and Olga Sedakova (27–28) but could elaborate more on the ways Shvarts's classical reception was in conversation not only with "her" classical authors, but also with fellow Soviet-era poets. This observation, meanwhile, mostly demonstrates the far-reaching potential Barker's work holds for future studies of late- and post-Soviet poetry.

Mikhail Velizhev. *Chaadaevskoe delo: Ideologiya, ritorika i gosudarstvennaia vlast' v nikolaevskoi Rossii.*

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In this meticulous work of microhistory, Mikhail Velizhev aims to overturn popular perceptions of Russian intellectual history's most famous text—Petr Chaadaev's first "Philosophical Letter," printed in 1836. Self-consciously demythologizing the text, its publication, and the ensuing scandal, Velizhev discards the typical proleptic reading of the "Letter" as the spark that ignited the mid nineteenth-century Slavophile-Westernizer debate and set the terms for arguments about Russian cultural identity to the present day. Instead, Velizhev begins retrospectively with a convincing reading of Chaadaev's text as a somewhat antiquated echo of European political and religious discourses from previous decades: emulating the witty style of Enlightenment salon literature, the "Letter" rehashes the views of French Catholic thinkers of the first third of the nineteenth century. Velizhev reveals how Chaadaev's apparent radicalism is an illusion generated not so much by his ideas as by the political and social context in which they were published. Chaadaev and his publisher Nikolai Nadezhdin put forward an argument for providential monarchism precisely when the same political theory was being imposed on public discourse as Russia's first official ideology—but in a vastly different formulation encapsulated by Sergei Uvarov's well-known *Orthodoxy-Autocracy-Nationality* triad. Chaadaev essentially rearranged and reinterpreted the prevailing conceptual system, producing an ultramonarchist essay in which both Orthodoxy and Nationality were side-lined. Yet, Velizhev demonstrates that ideas alone cannot account for the text's explosiveness: the author's and editor's self-positioning in the field of public discourse made all the difference. Chaadaev refused to disguise his foray into ideological discussions as mere antiquarian scholarship or keep it within the freer space of Muscovite salon conversations. Rather, he and Nadezhdin sought to generate support for autocracy by appealing directly to public opinion via the press: they thus bypassed the state monopoly on ideological production, which, as Velizhev argues, was only just taking shape. Chaadaev and Nadezhdin's provocation crystallized the Nikolaevan state's ideological control and simultaneously shattered it.

Velizhev then dissects the decision-making process by which imperial authorities determined that Chaadaev should be declared insane: characterizing Nicholas I's Russia as a neopatrimonial state, Velizhev explains the nature of political power in this period through the fate of one man. Chaadaev's sentence was overdetermined by the system's fundamental instability, as political actors constantly oscillated between applying the rule of law and navigating the preponderant influence of patronage networks. The writer's purported insanity resulted from the tsar's confidence in his own providential historical mission, fortuitously reinforced by momentary political and personal circumstances (any dissenting view appeared as pure nonsense); from the struggle between government departments for control over the ideological sphere (Chaadaev's attempt to influence public opinion as an independent intellectual did not fit within their schemes); and from the personal rivalries between Nicholas's leading statesmen (the emperor decided between opposing claims to authority and recommendations for his course of action). Although it ultimately undermined Russia's competitiveness in the global arena, in the short term this political unpredictability benefitted Nicholas, allowing him to play the role of supreme arbiter; it also benefitted Chaadaev, whose formal insanity lasted only one year and whose light sentence epitomizes the porousness of the reigning legal norms.

Velizhev achieves an extraordinarily thick description of the Chaadaev affair by replacing chronological narrative with a recursive approach that re-examines the same events through eleven different methodological lenses in as many chapters. The chapter employing Pierre Bourdieu's sociology epitomizes Velizhev's creative use of familiar theoretical frameworks: having postponed basic biographical accounts of Chaadaev and Nadezhdin until the sixth chapter, Velizhev adroitly wields the concept of symbolic capital to prove the remarkable affinities between the social positions of these seemingly unlikely collaborators, one an aristocratic socialite and the other a former professor of clerical origins. Thematic echoes and logical progressions between chapters prevent them from becoming disjointed: for example, Velizhev's subtle treatment of religious discourse flows through multiple chapters, showcasing the flexibility of the language of faith in its varied political manifestations.

Velizhev's style and argumentation stand out for their clarity and persuasiveness. Analyzing a text that notoriously turned to Europe in search of Russia's national destiny, Velizhev engages intensively with European scholarly discourses of our own time, responding to a wide array of historiographical and theoretical debates at the intersection of intellectual, social, and political history. A must-read for Russian intellectual historians, this book deserves translation and attention beyond the field of Slavic studies.

Anna Aydinyan. *Formalists against Imperialism: The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar and Russian Orientalism.*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. xii, 224 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$60.00, hard bound.

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The work of Russian formalists has often been defanged, mobilized in service of a quietist political project over and against the "excesses" of Stalinist cultural politics. In this conversation, Anna Aydinyan's *Formalists against Imperialism* promises a corrective, analyzing Iurii Tynianov not just as a formal innovator, but also as an important thinker on Orientalism