

# Summary

## The Historical Imaginary and The Limits of Historicity

Guest Editor: Anatoly Korchinsky

**Igor Kobylin's** article «The Annoying Companion of the Cosmic Sovereign: Historical Imagination and Fantastic Materialism» explores the Soviet fantastic imaginary as a form of historical imagination. Through a comparative analysis of Ilyenkov's «Cosmology of Spirit» and Gennady Gore's «The Most Annoying Companion», it reveals how tragic-optimistic futurology of Soviet modernity in 1950s–60s is linked with today's alarmist projections.

The paper «War cinema and the regime of historicity: “Saving Private Ryan” and “Jojo Rabbit”» by **Dmitry Kostoglotov** is devoted to the analysis of films about the Second World War: «Saving Private Ryan» (1998) and «Jojo Rabbit» (2019) in their relationship with the regimes of

historicity. The problem of transition from one regime of historicity to another, discussed by many contemporary theorists of history, is posed and tested through the example of mass historical cinema.

**Dmitriy Zernov** and **Fedor Nikolai**, in their paper «Historical Imagination, Media Nostalgia and Alternative History in Video Games: *Fallout-4* vs. *Atomic Heart*», explore how historical imagination is transformed by contemporary video games. Based on data received from the 8 focus groups, the study compares *Fallout-4* and *Atomic Heart*, revealing how shifting timelines and media-driven nostalgia shape new forms of historical perception and begin to reconfigure the modern public sphere.

## The Social Imaginary in Russian Prose

In the essay «Between Hegel and Fourier: The Enigma of “The Landlady”» by **Guido Carpi**, Dostoevsky's novella «The Landlady» (1847) is dissected as a juncture between diverse political and intellectual currents: on one hand, the Fourierist utopianism, and on the other, the idea of liberating human personality as advocated by Russian Westernizers influenced by Hegel's philosophy of history. This intersection of ideologies, both familiar to the young Dostoevsky, enables us to fathom the metaphorical construct of the novella.

**Alexey Vdovin** in his article «“Village Detective Story”: The Origin of Crime Fiction About Peasants in the Russian Empire of the 1850s» analyzes a series of crime fiction stories of the 1850s written by Alexei Pisemsky and Ilya Selivanov. Using genre, narratological, and contextual analysis, the author shows how these stories follow a familiar crime-investigation structure, making them precursors to Russian detective fiction.

The article «In the shadow of the “Short Course”: How A.N. Tolstoy's novel “Bread”

did not become the model of socialist realism» by **Vikentiy Chekushin** examines the complex of sociocultural factors that prevented A.N. Tolstoy's story «Bread» (1937) from becoming a benchmark of socialist realism literature. The relative failure of the book was due to

a number of extra-literary reasons, the main ones being Stalin's changing attitude to the historical narrative. Apparently, «Bread», written a year earlier than «A Short Course...», was competing with it in the field of mythmaking about the recent past.

## Socialist Realism After Socialist Realism

*Guest Editor: Valery Vyugin*

**Valery Vyugin's** piece «Socialist Realism as a MacGuffin» approaches socialist realism as a narrative built around a device known as a «MacGuffin». According to this point of view, for «socialist realism» to exist, it does not matter what it really is. The only thing that matters is the discourse about it, or, rather, the narrative constructed around it. From a semiotic perspective, socialist realism resembles Baudrillard's simulacrum; from a narratological perspective, it is akin to Lyotard's grand narrative. The term MacGuffin is advantageous, because it combines both of these meanings.

The paper «Socialist Realism: Life and Death in Developed Socialism» by **Evgeny Dobrenko** examines the process of reform and decline of Socialist Realism in the late Soviet period, when Socialist Realist theory was gradually liberalized as a consequence of its doctrinal dysfunction in the post-Stalinist period. Since what is primary in Socialist Realism are institutions and not theory, which serves only to camouflage them, with their collapse came the collapse of Socialist Realism itself.

**Anna Razuvalova** in her article «Building the Distance: the Reception of Socialist Realist Aesthetics in the Journalism of Village Prose Writers in the 1970s-1980s (Sergei Zalygin and Viktor Astafyev)» examines strategies of dissociation from So-

cialist Realism used by neo-pochvenniki writers S. Zalygin and V. Astafyev in the 1960s–1980s. These writers regarded realism and its opponents (Socialist Realism and the avant-garde) as fundamentally different modes of representation of «the real» and «the ideal», as well as different strategies of relating to «reality» and the possibilities of its radical transformation.

The article «The Socialist Realist Canon in Popular Music: Late Soviet Songs about the Motherland in the Television Festival «Song of the Year» (1971–1986)» by **Daria Zhurkova** is dedicated to the transformation of the Socialist Realist canon on the late-Soviet musical stage. In the first part of the article, the principles of Socialist Realism are defined on the basis of the work of Soviet musicologists on mass song. The second half of this article traces the reflection of these principles in the repertoire policy of the «Song of the Year» television festival. It offers a generic-thematic classification of the musical compositions which were heard in the year-in-review episodes from 1971–1986.

When Timur Novikov announced the creation of the «New Academy of Fine Arts» in the 1980s, his primary theoretical impulse was the desire to make «Russian» art «beautiful» again. But was late Soviet Russian art truly so «ugly»? And why

emphasize «beautiful» rather than «great» or «relevant»? **Liana Battsaligova** in her paper «Metamorphoses of the Post-Soviet Aesthetic: Georgy Gurianov and the Seduction of Socialist Realism» explores the revival of the aesthetics of

beauty and the ideology of Socialist Realism in painting as an attempt to define a new, post-Soviet identity for «Russian» art and a new identity for the «Russian» artist.

## Poetological Studies

**Anton Azarenkov** and **Danil Shved** in their article «Music on the edge: *Tactile Instruments* as a Poetic Testament by Genrikh Sapgir» analyses Sapgir's last poetry collection. Each cycle of the book is built around one or another pan-European poetological topos. All these topoi come together in an original meta-plot about the peculiar physical and mental nature of the poet, who transforms himself into an instrument of his own poetry, but does so playfully, even on the brink of death, avoiding a dramatic conflict between literature and life.

**Tatiana Krasilnikova's** piece «“The Time is Night”, Hilarious: Laughter as Resistance in Ludmila Petrushevskaya's Novel» explores the comical aspect of Petrushevskaya's novel «The Time is Night» (1991). Manipulation of the reader's consciousness is made pos-

sible in this book by the form of the diary, in which the author has the last word. However, readers have the opportunity to resist this imposed perspective and interpret the text not as a melodrama, but as a comedy.

The article «Nodal Point, Turning Point, and Future Narratives: between Interactive and Non-interactive Forms» by **Dina Shulyatyeva** examines forking-path narratives and mosaic narratives in contemporary fiction and film. «Turning points» in forking-path narratives involve the reader in «a flux of activity and agitation», while in mosaic narratives they produce the effect that events occur «everywhere all at once». Interactivity in these forms is replaced by interpassivity: the reader delegates part of his functions to the narrative, which gives him the right to actualize one of the versions of events.

Table of contents No. **194** [4'2025]

NEW POETRY

**7** *Nastya Denisova.* weighted blanket

THE HISTORICAL IMAGINARY AND THE LIMITS OF  
HISTORICITY

**12** *Anatoly Korchinsky.* From the Guest Editor

**14** *Igor Kobylin.* The Annoying Companion of the Cosmic Sovereign:  
Historical Imagination and Fantastic Materialism

**32** *Dmitry Kostoglotov.* War cinema and the regime of historicity:  
«Saving Private Ryan» and «Jojo Rabbit»

**44** *Dmitry Zernov, Fedor Nikolai.* Historical Imagination, Media Nostalgia  
and Alternative History in Video Games: *Fallout-4* vs. *Atomic Heart*

THE SOCIAL IMAGINARY IN RUSSIAN PROSE

**59** From the Editor

**62** *Guido Carpi.* Between Hegel and Fourier: The Enigma of  
«The Landlady»

**76** *Alexey Vdovin.* «Village Detective Story»: The Origin of Crime Fiction  
About Peasants in the Russian Empire of the 1850s

**93** *Vikentiy Chekushin.* In the shadow of the «Short Course»: How  
A.N. Tolstoy's novel «Bread» did not become the model of socialist  
realism

SOCIALIST REALISM AFTER SOCIALIST REALISM

**114** *Valery Vyugin.* From the Guest Editor

PARTS I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

**118** *Valery Vyugin.* Socialist Realism as a MacGuffin

**134** *Evgeny Dobrenko.* Socialist Realism: Life and Death in Developed  
Socialism

PART II. INDIVIDUAL CASES

**154** *Anna Razuvalova.* Building the Distance: the Reception of Socialist  
Realist Aesthetics in the Journalism of Village Prose Writers in the  
1970s-1980s (Sergei Zalygin and Viktor Astafyev)

- 175** *Daria Zhurkova. The Socialist Realist Canon in Popular Music: Late Soviet Songs about the Motherland in the Television Festival «Song of the Year» (1971–1986)*
- 200** *Liana Battsaligova. Metamorphoses of the Post-Soviet Aesthetic: Georgy Gurianov and the Seduction of Socialist Realism*

#### POETOLOGICAL STUDIES

- 210** *Anton Azarenkov, Danil Shved. Music on the edge: Tactile Instruments as a Poetic Testament by Genrikh Saggir*
- 227** *Tatiana Krasilnikova. «The Time is Night», Hilarious: Laughter as Resistance in Ludmila Petrushevskaya's Novel*
- 242** *Dina Shulyatyeva. Nodal Point, Turning Point, and Future Narratives: between Interactive and Non-interactive Forms*

#### FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE OF L. M. BATKIN

- 259** *Nadezhda Batkina, Nikolay Poselyagin. From the Guest Editors*
- 261** «Maybe we'll see each other sometime, who knows»: From the Correspondence of L.M. Batkin

#### CHRONICLE OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

- 308** *Olga Balla. That's where we'll fly (a review of O. Yuriev *Vineta: novel*. Moscow, 2024)*
- 313** *Aleksandr Zhitnev. The Strolls and Conversations of Aleksandr Ilyannen (a review of A. Ilyanen *The Nanny's Little House*. Petrograd, 2025)*
- 319** *Aleksandr Ulanov. The Survival of Feelings (a review of A. Frolov *Intuitive Pages*. Moscow, 2024)*
- 323** *Aleksei Porvin. Indicate the Girl (a review of V. Baronetz *Farewell Words*. Almaty, 2024)*

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

##### CHINESE STUDIES OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE

- 328** *Li Qin. Russian literature and criticism at the turn of the century: a view from China (A review of *Current trends and tendencies in Russian literature and criticism*. Beijing, 2023)*
- 334** *Sun Xiaoli. The results of the development of Russian «new realism»: a view from China (A review of Xue Ranran *Studies in Contemporary Russian New Realist Prose*. Hanzhou, 2021)*

- 341** *Cai Jiafen, Ye Lei, Tao Yuan.* From «holy foolishness» to Russian classical literature (A review of Wang Zhigeng. *The Aesthetic Dimension of the «Holy Foolishness»: Cultural Interpretations of Russian Classical Literature.* Beijing, 2013)
- 347** *Fedor Nikolai.* Studies of nostalgia: memory politics, history of emotions, and the discussions of temporality (A review of Becker T. *Yesterday: A New History of Nostalgia.* Cambridge (MA); London, 2023; *The Routledge Handbook of Nostalgia.* Abingdon; New York, 2025)
- 358** *Yevgeny Savitsky.* The Text as a Mirror, Trace, and Anamorphosis: Iconic Narratives of Pre- and Post-Modernity (A review of Eick A.-L. «Geschichte zerfällt in Bilder, nicht in Geschichten»: *Visualität in der literarischen Geschichtsdarstellung.* Paderborn, 2024; Hoffmann U. *Dimensionen von «bilde» – Ansätze zu einem ikonischen Erzählen im späthöfischen Roman.* Berlin; Boston, 2023)
- 370** *Sergei Tashkenov.* From entertaining coprology to scatological excess: the limits of the «unculture» in cultural sciences (A review of R. Lyuin *Shit: forays into scientific, cultural, и socio-historical coprology,* 2024; D. Laport. *A History of Shit,* 2024)
- 379** *Sergei Fokin.* Charles Baudelaire, Yakov Shiffrin, «Pleiades», or how the author of *The Flowers of Evil* became canonical (A review of Baudelaire Ch. *Œuvres complètes.* Paris, 2024)

#### HACKWORK

- 390** *Vera Milchina.* «Sparks grow dim out in midair...» On the Commentaries to the Parisian Impressions of Nikolai Nadezhdin (A review of N.I. Nadzhedin *The Sparks of Divine Light. From European Impressions /* compiled by M.G. Talalay, M.A. Biryukova; edited text by M.A. Biryukova. St. Petersburg, 2025)
- 398** New Books

#### CHRONICLE OF SCHOLARLY LIFE

- 412** *Kulshat Medeuova.* International seminar «Reconsidering Modernity & Socialism» (Princeton University, October 11–12, 2024)
- 416** *Aleksandr Fokin.* The Moment of Transition: The Soviet System in Search of a New Equilibrium. International conference «1954: The First Year of a New Era» (МВЛШСЭН, МИФИ, September 16–17, 2024)
- 422** *Anna Isayeva, Darya Strizhkova.* International conference «Theories and Practices of Literary Craft»: «Dialogue with the Reader» (HSE University (Moscow), September 13–14, 2024)
- 439** Summary
- 442** Table of Contents
- 445** Our Authors

## Our authors

### **Anton Azarenkov**

Lecturer, HSE University at St. Petersburg, PhD  
aazarenkov@hse.ru.

### **Olga Balla**

Literary critic, essayist  
gertman65@gmail.com.

### **Nadezhda Batkina**

Independent researcher;  
Moscow  
nbatkina@gmail.com.

### **Liana Battsaligova**

Oberlin College, Assistant  
Professor; PhD  
battsali@oberlin.edu.

### **Guido Carpi**

University of Naples  
L'Orientale; Full Professor;  
PhD  
gcarpi@unior.it.

### **Vikentiy Chekushin**

Reshetnev Siberian State  
University of Science and  
Technology; Senior Lecturer;  
PhD  
vikesha@bk.ru.

### **Nastya Denisova**

Poetess.  
robokukla@gmail.com.

### **Evgeny Dobrenko**

Ca' Foscari University of  
Venice; Professor, PhD  
evgeny.dobrenko@unive.it.

### **Aleksandr Fokin**

ISS RANEPa; Senior Research  
Fellow; Moscow School of So-  
cial and Economic Sciences;  
Assistant Professor; PhD  
aafokin@yandex.ru.

### **Sergei Fokin**

Saint Petersburg State Univer-  
sity of Economics; professor;  
Doctor of Philology  
serge.fokine@yandex.ru.

### **Anna Isaeva**

HSE University (Moscow);  
Junior Research Fellow  
isaevanna23@gmail.com.

### **Cai Jiafeng**

PhD student of the School of  
Foreign Studies, Southeast  
University (Nanjing)  
cai.jiafeng@mail.ru.

### **Igor Kobylin**

Russian State University  
for the Humanities; Associ-  
ate Professor; Privolzhskiy  
Research Medical University;  
Associate Professor; PhD  
kigor55@mail.ru.

### **Dmitry Kostoglotov**

Russian State University for  
the Humanities; lecturer  
dakostoglotov@gmail.com.

### **Anatoly Korchinsky**

Russian State University for  
the Humanities; associate  
professor, chair of the depart-  
ment of theory and history  
of the humanities; Candidate  
of Sciences in Philology  
korchinsky@mail.ru.

### **Tatiana Krasilnikova**

Columbia University in the  
City of New York; researcher,  
graduate student instructor  
tak2159@columbia.edu.

### **Ye Lei**

PhD student at the Institute  
of Language Sciences,  
Shanghai International  
Studies University  
blkserene@gmail.com.

### **Kulshat Medeuova**

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian  
University (Astana); PhD  
mkulshat@gmail.com.

### **Vera Milchina**

Institute of Higher Human-  
ities Research Russian State  
University for the Humanities;  
leading researcher; School of  
Current Humanities Research,  
Institute of Social Sciences,  
RANEPa; leading researcher;  
Candidate of Sciences in  
Philology  
vmilchina@gmail.com.

### **Fedor Nikolai**

HSE University (Moscow);  
Professor; PhD  
fvnik@list.ru.

### **Aleksei Porvin**

Poet, critic  
sensus.interni@gmail.com.

### **Nikolai Poselyagin**

HSE University (Moscow);  
associate professor; Moscow  
School of Social and Econo-  
mic Sciences; associate pro-  
fessor; Candidate of Sciences  
in Philology  
poselyagin@gmail.com.

### **Li Qin.**

Associate Professor at the  
Institute of Foreign Languages,  
Southeast University (Nanjing);  
associate Professor at the  
Center for Area Studies,  
Southeast University. Asso-  
ciate Doctor of Philological  
Sciences  
chineseli@mail.ru.

### **Anna Razuvalova**

HSE University (Saint-Peters-  
burg); Associate Professor;  
PhD  
arazuvalova@hse.ru.

### **Polina Rybina**

Moscow State University;  
senior lecturer; Candidate  
of Sciences in Philology  
rybina\_polina@mail.ru.

**Evgeny Savitsky**

Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Senior Research Fellow; PhD  
e\_savitski@mail.ru.

**Dina Shulyatyeva**

HSE University (Moscow); Associate Professor; PhD  
dshulyatyeva@hse.ru.

**Danil Shved**

Student, HSE University at St. Petersburg  
shved-da@yandex.ru.

**Daria Strizhkova**

HSE University (Moscow); Junior Research Fellow  
strizhkova.2003@mail.ru.

**Sergei Tashkenov**

Independent researcher (Moscow); Candidate of Sciences in Philology  
sergey.tashkenov@gmail.com.

**Aleksandr Ulanov**

Samara State Aerospace University; associate professor; Doctor of Engineering  
alexulanov@mail.ru.

**Alexey Vdovin,**

HSE University (Moscow); Professor; PhD, Dr. Habil  
avdovin@hse.ru.

**Valery Vyugin**

Head Research Fellow, Center for Literary Theory and Interdisciplinary Research, Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences; Professor, Department of the History of Russian Literature, St. Petersburg State University; Dr. habil  
valeryvyugin@gmail.com.

**Sun Xiaoli**

Senior Lecturer at Southeast University (Nanjing), PhD  
sunxiaoli\_smile@163.com.

**Tao Yuan**

Professor, Head of European Language Department, Southeast University (Nanjing); PhD  
tao1973@mail.ru.

**Dmitriy Zernov**

Lobachevsky University (Nizhny Novgorod); associate Professor; PhD in political science  
zerdv@mail.ru.

**Aleksandr Zhitnev**

Voronezh State University; professor; Doctor of Philology  
zhitnev@phil.vsu.ru.

**Daria Zhurkova**

State Institute for Art Studies, Senior Research Fellow; PhD  
jdacha@mail.ru.

## Editorial board

- Irina Prokhorova** PhD (founder and establisher of journal)
- Tatiana Weiser** PhD (editor-in-chief)
- Arseniy Kumankov** PhD (theory)
- Kirill Zubkov** PhD (history)
- Alexander Skidan** (practice)
- Abram Reitblat** PhD (bibliography)
- Vladislav Tretyakov** PhD (bibliography)
- Nikolai Nakhshunov** M.A. (chronicle of scholarly life)
- Valerii Otiakovskii** PhD (executive editor)

## Advisory board

**Konstantin Azadovsky**  
PhD

**Henryk Baran**  
PhD, State University of New York at Albany, professor

**Evgeny Dobrenko**  
PhD, Università Ca'Foscari Venezia, professor

**Tatiana Venediktova**  
Dr. habil. Lomonosov Moscow State University, professor

**Elena Vishlenkova**  
Dr. habil. HSE University, professor

**Tomáš Glanc**  
PhD, University of Zurich, professor / Charles University in Prague, professor

**Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht**  
PhD, Stanford University, professor

**Alexander Zholkovsky**  
PhD, University of South Carolina, professor

**Andrey Zorin**  
Dr. habil. Oxford University, professor / The Moscow school of social and economic sciences, professor

**Boris Kolonitskii**  
Dr. habil. European University at Saint Petersburg, professor / Saint Petersburg Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences, leading researcher

**Alexander Lavrov**  
Dr. habil. Full member of Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Russian Literature (the Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences, leading researcher

**Mark Lipovetsky**  
Dr. habil. Columbia University, professor

**John Malmstad**  
PhD, Harvard University, professor

**Alexander Ospovat**  
University of California, Los Angeles; Research Professor

**Pekka Pesonen**  
PhD, University of Helsinki, professor emeritus

**Oleg Proskurin**  
PhD, Emory University, professor

**Roman Timenchik**  
PhD, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, professor

**Pavel Uvarov**  
Dr. habil. Corresponding member of Russian Academy of Sciences. Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, research professor / HSE University, professor

**Alexander Etkind\***  
European University Institute (Florence)

**Mikhail Yampolsky**  
Dr. habil. New York University, professor

\* Включен Минюстом РФ в реестр иностранных агентов.