

Summary

“The Same and Different”: In Honor of Alexandre Kojève’s 120th Birthday

Guest Editor: Dmitry Tokarev

In his article “Concept of Resurrection in Kojève’s Philosophy” **Nicolas Rambert** starts from Kojève’s Russian manuscript known as “Sofia: Philo-sophy and Phenomenology” and wishes to interrogate Kojève’s assertion that “the only theistic error of Christianity is resurrection”. In order to understand Kojève’s condemnation, the author goes through the philosophy of Soloviev and Fyodorov. Indeed, Soloviev supports, on the one hand, the thesis of a transcendent resurrection, while Fyodorov supports, on the other, the thesis of an immanent resuscitation. In both cases, however, according to Kojève, far from being the condition of possibility of history (as Soloviev and Fyodorov thought), resurrection denies freedom, individuality and alienates human transcendence. How can we understand human freedom? What difference is there between immortality and resurrection? What is the difference between resurrection and resuscitation? What meaning can be given to history? How is individuality possible? These are the questions to which this article is devoted.

The famous footnotes on the end of history and post-historical existence have long remained a revolving door in various critical attempts to read Kojève and his intellectual legacy. However, a more attentive approach to his systematic philosophy reveals his concern with “bad infinity” rather than with the crafting of “grand narratives”. The question therefore

is not only about how and why history ends, but also and perhaps more importantly about why history may never end. Aiming to direct critical attention to this important and yet overlooked aspect of the Kojevian system, the article “‘Supposing That Truth Is a Woman’: Kojève’s Conceptual Characters and Their Role in His System of Knowledge” by **Hager Weslati** follows the road less travelled of misrecognition and its philosophical dramatization in the three conceptual characters of the (successful) tyrant, the (wise) philosopher, and feminine individuality. What brings these three characters together? Why does the philosopher’s success depend on the difficult conditions they set for the success of the tyrant and woman? The development of these questions puts into focus “Kojève” as a conceptual character cast in his misrecognised system of knowledge.

Dmitry Tokarev’s article “The Photography by/in Alexandre Kojève: Some Reflections” critically addresses Boris Groys’ interpretation of the photographs by Alexandre Kojève. In 2012, Groys organized the exhibition *After History: Alexandre Kojève as a Photographer*, which intended to demonstrate the “posthistorical” dimension in Kojève’s artistic output. The article questions the adequacy of that perspective, given the somewhat tendentious curatorial presentation of the photos as showing an empty, dehumanized world. Considering the aesthetic and ontological aspects of

the analysis of visual images that were central to Kojève's brief account of his 1920 visit to the Borghese Gallery in Rome and to his 1936 article on Kandinsky, Groys' reading of Kojève's photo-

graphic stance is subject to revision. The notion of aura, as proposed by Walter Benjamin, is operative in a comparative treatment of the photos by Kojève and E. Atget.

Cultural Studies of Readership and Viewership

Public Readings as a New Media Practice

Guest Editor: Yana Agafonova

Raffaella Vassena's article "Public Literary Readings as a Manifestation of the Culture of the Era of the Great Reforms" examines the history of public literary readings in Russia as a characteristic phenomenon of the era of the Great Reforms, from their origins in the early 1860s to their evolution in the 1870s—1880s. Employing different sources, including archival materials, letters, and remembrances, the author reconstructs aspects related to their organization, execution, critical debate in the press, audience composition, and public's reaction. The second part of the article focuses on repertoires and elocutionary techniques, following the example of two eminent readers, Ivan Turgenev and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

The article "Literature for the People and the Central Auditorium for Public Readings as a State Educational Project in the Second Half of the 19th Century" by **Yana Agafonova** discusses the details of a state project of public education ini-

tiated by the Commission for the Arrangement of Public Readings, held under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Education. The publication of education literature and plans for the construction of central auditoriums for public reading made it possible to identify a shared value system, in accordance with which it was required to transform the body of the people, as well as early mechanisms of indirect state control over the semi-literate mass of people.

The idea of **Anna Kotomina's** article "Enthusiastic Artists' and State Interests: The First Decade of Public Readings with Projection in Russia" is to trace how static projection technology, which was already relatively well known in Europe at the time, was adopted in Russia in 1870s and 1870s. The focus is on the material component of this technology and the people, groups, and institutions that were involved in its invention, promotion, improvement, and implementation.

Soviet Cinema Viewer and the New Cinema History

Guest Editor: Kristina Tanis

In the 1920s, there existed a conception of new proletarian viewers who needed

a different kind of cinemas and leisure than the pre-revolutionary public. The

article “Cinema Theatres for the ‘New Man’: Leisure and Cinema in the USSR in the 1920s” by **Elizaveta Zhdankova** is devoted to the image of the “new Soviet viewer” in the wider context of a utopian project about the “new man” and the “new everyday life”. It considers a correlation between the “new viewers” imagined by ideologists and the interests attributed to them and the demands of the real audience of the city cinemas of the NEP period. The conceptual gap between the project of Soviet cinema as part of the Cultural Revolution and the leisure practices of the first post-revolutionary decade is highlighted through the prism of this ideological construct.

Georgii Sherstnev’s article “From Symbolism to Kulturfilm: On Attempts to Create Film Art’s Spectator in the USSR in the Late 1920s” discusses difficulties that Soviet film culture of the late 1920s faced, in attempt to conceptualize the consumer and consuming of film art. The requirement of accessibility of Soviet cinema “language” contradicted cinema’s ambition to become a full-fledged art. The attempts of making oversimplified film production a model for Soviet films were rejected. On the contrary, the pedagogic model, that sought to transform not the cinema itself but the way of watching it and attitude toward it in film culture and consequently, film spectator.

The article “POPSTAT and Film-Programming in Moscow Cinema Theaters (1947—1950)” by **Kristina Tanis** and **Anastasiia Balykova** publishes data obtained during the research of the Moscow film distribution from 1947 to 1950. Counting screening days by the method POPSTAT, this paper reflects the practices of film exhibition in postwar Moscow. The article consists of the description of collecting and processing quantitative data, publication of the results, and concluding remarks.

Irina Tcherneva’s article “‘Cinema Service’ Through the Lens of Foreign Experience: Modernization of the Soviet Cinema Network (1954—1970)” examines the reforms of the cinema network initiated in the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev period. It uncovers foreign data and innovations as a source of inspiration for the State film administration, but also for scientific and film actors involved. Positioning in a history of international circulations the models (financial and architectural) borrowed by the USSR, the article insists on the processes of their adaptation to the Soviet context, of their re-invention. These discrepancies are at the core of a new sense of the traditional Soviet term “cine-service”, which experienced limits during its introduction in the Soviet territories.

Archaeology of the Soviet

“Backstage Improvisation: Social Cooperation, Circumvention of the Rules, and Processes of Cultural Production in the Late USSR” by **Ilya Kukulin**, **Maria Maiofis**, and **Maria Chetverikova** is the second of two articles on the study of how the “unwritten rules” worked in the late-Soviet (1950s—1980s)

literary publishing process. The concept offered here is based on the idea of “backstage” — a special kind of communicative episodes, during which participants would discuss the norms of the functioning of the literary community and its institutions and the possibility of changing or circumventing these norms.

This article uncovers the fundamental social functions of the backstage, the reasons it has been systematically forgotten, and the place that it occupied in reality in late-Soviet communication, as well as the significance of the concept we have proposed for the understanding

of processes of late-Soviet cultural production as a whole. The article is accompanied by a rich discussion that includes responses by **Evgeny Dobrenko**, **Igor Narskij**, **Anna Razuvaeva** and **Alexander Dmitriev**.

Bunin Revisited

This section includes **Evgeny Ponomarev**'s article "The Posthumous Works of Ivan Bunin: Publishers' Mistakes and Restored Texts" on 14 stories by Bunin that were published after his death by his descendants from the 1950s through the 1980s. The publications were carried out without researching the text and without analyzing the editing and different versions. Sometimes an intermediate version became the main text at the request of the publisher. In a number of cases, publishers misread Bunin's text. The article's author reports on the results of his research on the texts, as well as and the specifics of those 14 texts that require republication based on his research. The article precedes the academic republication of 14 stories by **Ivan Bunin** prepared by the article's author.

The article "*Fa(u)sti*: The Conceptual Structure of Ivan Bunin's Works" by **Maria Dmitrovskaya** features a reconstruction of a number of key elements of the conceptual system that lay at the heart of Bunin's works written from 1889 on. Bunin's system combines cosmogony and eschatology in general and in a specific dimension: all living beings are subjected to death and to subsequent rebirth. The basic means of deploying the system include dual concepts of *fasti* and *Faust*. The principle of mirror reflection is aimed at the creation of parts identical to each other and to the Whole. The principle of metamorphosis, which is key in the Bunin's system, is also directed towards the achievement of this same effect. The significance of the threshold temporal passage in Bunin is considered. The central place of the writer himself in the system he created is shown.