

Douglas Clayton (ed.), *La Russie et le monde francophone* (Ottawa: Gres, 2007), 305 pp.

Cultural channels have played a particularly important role through which French–Russian relations have developed over the past few centuries. Without being limited to the studies of Russia in the French-speaking world, as its title may suggest, this trilingual volume, *La Russie et le monde francophone*, explores the broader topic of how France and Russia shaped their impressions of each other and reflected them through cultural, mainly literary, discourse. The papers in this volume were originally presented at an eponymous conference in Canada in 2006, and their authors, from Russia, France, Canada, Switzerland, UK, USA and Argentina, discuss the transfer of knowledge between France and Russia. As a result, the reader forms a mosaic-like impression of this process over a period that extends from the eighteenth century until the post-Soviet era.

The volume opens with an outstanding syllabo-tonic translation of *The End of Casanova* by André Markowicz, a piece that faithfully echoes the dynamism and the music of Tsvetaeva's original. It is followed by academic studies of French and Russian literary texts and translations, epistolary and philosophical writings, memoirs and diaries by authors including luminaries such as Rousseau and Pushkin, Tolstoy and Rolland, and also little known and unpublished writers. Most articles closely document the process of formation of attitudes and perceptions, collective and individual, positive and negative.

The reader of the volume will discover less known ways in which information about the other country was obtained, recorded and spread. Examples include the writings by French and Russian 'military tourists' – army officers at the time of the Napoleonic wars who recorded their impressions of the enemy territory as their armies in turn swept across Europe (Gubina). Other examples show how individuals promoted their native culture and literature in the west, for example, the eighteenth century Russian diplomat Beloselsky-Belozersky (Artem'yeva) and the talented nineteenth century girl from a noble family, Anastasia Klustina (Lim). Evidence that Russian literature was enthusiastically received in France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is supported by the fact that as many as fifteen translations of *Evgenii Onegin*, in both poetry and prose, were produced over that time, even though their strengths are debatable (Teplova). Another example of the literary influence by a Russian writer on a French one is the 'Russian'

story by Louis Viardot – possibly a result of his collaboration with Turgenev (Clayton). On the other hand, the prolific cultural import of French literary works to Russia was not without obstacles. Thus, Rousseau's *Emile*, *Confessions* and *Social Contract* were either banned or severely censored at different times, for reasons of religion, politics or morality (Zlatovol'skaya). An important twentieth century writer, Nathalie Sarraute, never enjoyed a warm reception in Russia by either publishers or readers (Kostanyan and Godeau).

Of particular interest are those papers that challenge our established views, for example that the Russian elite blindly emulated the French cultural model, adopting its language, customs and values. Some papers document the Russian writers' less flattering vision of the French, even Pushkin, for example, who portrayed the French as a flighty and superficial caricature-like stereotype (although towards the end of his life, he replaced it by a more sympathetic good-natured, *prostodushnyi*, character, Murav'yova). In the 1920s–30s, the Russian émigré writers Zaytsev, Remizov, Fel'zen and others presented a pessimistic vision of Paris as a place of decay, and disapproved of the current French literature, finding it insincere and going against Proust's tradition (Tassis, Rubins). The reader is left with an acute feeling that these writers' sense of otherness in France was most likely the result of their own condition at that time. In contrast, the French writings of Natalia Gorbanevskaya, the late twentieth century exiled Russian poet, show that she has embraced Paris organically as her own, without any trace of alienation (Reid).

Although a student of French–Russian relations will find most articles informative, the overall quality of the volume is uneven. A significant number of papers are too descriptive and rather unstimulating. A truly original and stimulating paper in this volume, that by the Argentinian-based intellectual historian Ezekiel Adamovsky, stands out by comparison. His article 'Russian culture under the French gaze: Stigma, Civilization and Violence' explores how the 'civilised nation' viewed Russia, as a result of which the Russians formed a self-deprecating perception of themselves, considering their own civilization backwards and barbaric. The author of this fascinating, even provocative article moves away from the traditional narratives of national histories and applies psychological analysis to posit a view that the (self-) perceptions of Russia as inferior and backwards were shaped by the west's 'stigmatising gaze' of it. Using the examples of nineteenth century French cultural output (*Prince Kamchaka*) and the writings of

Chaadaev, Karamzin, Pushkin, Turgenev and the young Tolstoy, the author argues that ‘cultural harassment’ by the west shaped the Russian national inferiority complex, to the point of self-hate.

The reader of this volume will be reminded that while French–Russian cultural relations have been much examined, scholarly interest in this area remains high, and many more questions remain to be raised and answered.

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Ingunn Lunde and Tine Roesen (eds.), *Landslide of the Norm: Language Culture in Post-Soviet Russia* (Bergen: University of Bergen, 2006), 318 pp.

This title, the sixth in the Slavica Bergensia series, is the first product of a research project on linguistic changes and literary development in Russia in the 1920s and 1990s which takes as its point de depart Roman Jakobson’s concept of ‘landslide of the norm’ (*Erdrutsch der Norm*) and Grigorii Vinokur’s notion of ‘language culture’ which was adumbrated in his seminal work *Kultura iazyka*. The editors have produced a collection of articles which seeks to ‘integrate linguistic and literary scholarship in order to study the language culture in post-perestroika Russia within a broad framework, including the development of the language in its socio-cultural context, the recent language debates and, above all, literature’s various responses to the contemporary linguistic situation’ (10). The book contains twelve articles, of which three are in Russian and the remainder in English, from contributors based in Norway, the United Kingdom and Russia. As the editors point out in their introduction, a combination of linguistic and literary approaches to the current situation is a relative rarity and marks a departure from the usual focus on neologisms in advertising and the media. This two-pronged approach gives rise to unexpected and productive synergies.

Michael Gorham’s article ‘Language Culture and National Identity in Post-Soviet Russia’ sets the scene for the later case studies. It charts the period of innovation and the subsequent move towards ‘a new linguistic reconciliation on the institutional level’ (11). His conclusion that the ‘language question will wither away along with the debate over a “Russian Idea”, each finding resolution in some amalgam of newly invented tradition and traditional embrace of change’