

BIG-BUCK BOOKS: PULP FICTION IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

Helena Goscilo

"It is easy to brush aside best-seller charts as the product of hype and habit, but they are a real presence in the land of letters, generating as much interest as they reflect. And if they do, to an extent, represent the lowest common denominator of the print culture, this only strengthens our need to pay attention, since where else is that culture common to all?"

Anthony Lane, "The Top Ten"

"It's [...hard] to compete with the pulp fiction that's printed in hundreds of thousands of copies these days. So I'm [...] pleased that I'm able to compete with those trashy writers."

Viktor Pelevin, Interview with Sally Laird

"It's better, I believe, to have a couple of million readers than a dozen of the most respected critics."

Eduard Topol', introduction to *Novaia Rossiia v posteli (The New Russia in Bed)*

The Textual Fall

By now the wholesale visualization of contemporary culture, which transpired in the West during the 1980s, has fully entrenched itself in the urban centers of the former Soviet Union. Yet Russians arguably continue to be, as the self-congratulatory Soviet cliché insisted, "the most readerly nation in the world" ("samyi chitaiushchii narod v mire"). Indeed, Valentin Ovchinnikov, the director of Biblio-Globus, one of Moscow's largest bookstores, prides himself and his domain on that distinction: "As before, we remain the greatest country of readers in the world" ("My po-prezhnemu ostaemsia samoi chitaiushchei stranoi v mire") (Ul'chenko).¹ Addicted to

My warm gratitude to those friends and colleagues who in various ways have aided and abetted my Marinina mania: Donald Raleigh, Nadezhda Azhgikhina, Sasha Prokhorov, Seth Graham, Mark Altshuller, Elena Dryzhakova, David Lowe, Mark Lipovetsky, Tania Mikhailova, Anja Grothe, Julia Sagaidak, Gerald Janacek, Jehanne Gheith, and Tolia and Marat, the Gaulois-loving, leather-jacketed duo in Kiev with original insights into crime and Liube.

1. Biblio-Globus on Miasnitskaia (former Kirov) Street is the former Soviet Knizhnyi mir, established more than forty years ago, renamed in 1992 and now hawking not only literature, art books, travel guides, and pulp fiction, but also jewelry, objets d'art, cards, posters, video and audio cassettes, computers and technical paraphernalia. In recent years it has yielded the offshoot of a

the printed word Russians may be, but their dose has shrunk since the Soviet era² and their fix no longer consists of undiluted political pabulum, *kirpichi*³ or prestige-conferring forbidden fruit by Mandelshtam and Solzhenitsyn.

As a visit to any general bookstore or even a cursory glance at *Ex libris NG* and *Book Review (Knizhnoe obozrenie)* reveals,⁴ popular fiction has overrun the book market, forcing High-Culture texts out of the limelight and off the shelves. While prophets of cultural doom downplay the current explosion in

Cultural Center, overseen by Pavel Vorontsov, and has adopted the PR custom of "presentations" and meetings with authors, who sign copies of books purchased by customers. On the history and current profile of the store, see Ul'chenko.

2. According to G. Matriukhin, deputy chairman of the Russian Knizhnaia Palata (Book Chamber), whereas in 1991 Russians purchased 10.9 books and monographs per capita, in 1995 that index dropped to 3.2 (1940 levels) and in 1996 even further, to below 3 volumes per capita (Ivanov 21).

3. Literally, "bricks," an ironic term for fat novels churned out during the Soviet era, when the government rewarded writers for length, not quality.

4. Whereas *Knizhnoe obozrenie* used to provide solid data, with statistics, about publishing and reading patterns, since 1998 *Ex Libris NG* has surpassed it in virtually all respects as a source of information about current publications and as a serious, thoughtful review.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

book production,⁵ the Book Chamber (Knizhnaia palata), which tracks publishing developments, reports 33,623 titles released in 1995, approximately 36,000 in 1996 (Hoffman), and over 43,000 in 1997 and 1998.⁶ In terms of gross sales, publishing is the second largest industry in Russia today, surpassed only by vodka (Ivanov 16). And since books, unlike the eighty-proof panacea, typically circulate among multiple borrowers, publication numbers reflect only a fraction of *de facto* readership. "Dissidence via literature has evaporated," however (Ivanov 17), turning formerly "sacred" texts and authors into objects of indifference and reconstituting the nature of Russian readership. Runs of prize-winning writers like Liudmila Petrushevskaiia, Viktor Pelevin, and Vladimir Makanin rarely exceed 11,000 copies,⁷ and many volumes, especially of poetry, appear in even smaller printings of five hundred to a thousand copies. That applies even to books nominated for prestigious prizes, such as Dina Rubina's *Escort-Angel* (*Angel konvoinyi*, 1997), a contender for the ARSS award.⁸ By eloquent contrast, murder mysteries are routinely reissued in paperback to the tune of 100,000 copies, once the hardcover editions have become bestsellers.

Similarly, whereas subscriptions to thick journals have plummeted so drastically as to imperil their survival,⁹ some of the new glossy magazines that hit the stalls in the 1990s flourish and multiply at a prodigious rate: *Ptiuch*, *Matador*, *Imperial*, *Kul't lichnostei*, *Cosmopolitan/Kosmopoliten*, *Voiazh*, *Domovoi*, *Medved'*, *Playboy*, *Domashnii ochag*, *Penthouse*, *Liza*, and a glut of other special-interest fare on furniture, cars, travel, videos, sports, computers, film, fashion,

health, children, business, and so forth.¹⁰ While today's "great Russian writers" ("velikie russkie pisateli"), to invoke the Soviet cliché for gray eminences of the literary canon, live off foreign grants, overseas royalties, and a clutch of recently established, often controversial, awards,¹¹ as a salable commodity pulp fiction surpasses tampons, cigarette lighters, and pirozhki.

Victor Neuburg has defined popular literature elastically as "what the unsophisticated reader has chosen for pleasure" (12), but John Fiske, borrowing from Roland Barthes, has added precision to a similar definition without loss of flexibility. Fiske's formulation triangulates Barthes's useful distinction between readerly and writerly tendencies in texts and "the reading practices they invite" (Fiske 103). Whereas a readerly text is relatively closed and undemanding, and solicits an essentially "passive, receptive, disciplined reader who tends to accept its meanings as already made," a writerly text challenges the reader "constantly to rewrite it, make sense of it" in a construction of meaning. The first type of text therefore is popular, the second has only minority appeal—constituting what we might call Literature. The producerly text, in Fisk's perceptive synthesis, has

5. By comparison with the 230 or so publishing houses that existed in the USSR, approximately 10,000 are now registered in Russia alone (Ivanov 17). Korobov bemoans the fact that the market is oversaturated, but only with "trash" (Korobov 86).

6. Information obtained from Knizhnaia palata via telephone during August 1999 in Moscow.

7. In 1997 OLMA publishers brought out a volume of Tatyana Tolstaya's complete works in an edition of 15,000 copies, but this year an almost identical collection by Tolstaya appeared in a print run of 5,000. Yet when Tolstaya first debuted with 'Na zolotom kryl'tse sideli...' in 1987, the entire run of 65,000 copies sold out immediately.

8. It appeared in only 1000 copies.

9. *Novyi mir's* 1992 circulation of 2.75 million has fallen to 21,000 subscribers. Its editor, Sergei Zalygin, notes that in 1997 a subscription cost 76,000 rubles, but with delivery leaped to 230,000 rubles—the equivalent of a monthly pension (Ivanov 18).

10. For a glance at these new glossies, see Viacheslav Kuritsyn, "Novye tolstye," and Goschilo, "S[t]imulating Chic." A key figure in the rise of glossies is the Dutchman Derk Sauer, with his partner Annemarie van Gaal, who introduced eighteen new, independent, private publications to post-Soviet Russia, including the papers *Moscow Times* (since Oct. 1992) and *St. Petersburg Times* (since April 1996); the magazines *Cosmopolitan* (since April 1994), whose circulation in four years has increased from 60,000 to 400,000 per month; *Kapital* (since May 1995); *Domashnii Ochag* (since May 1995), which sells more than 300,000 per month; *Playboy* (since June 1995), which targets male readers 25-35 years of age and has a circulation of 140,000 per month; *Russia Review* (since 1995); *Harper's Bazaar* (since 1996); and, since December 1997, *Men's Health*.

11. In addition to the formerly British-funded (and now Smirnoff-financed!) Booker Prize, which originated in 1992 and spawned the Anti-Booker (inaugurated in 1995 by the newspaper *Nezavisimaia gazeta*), there are the State Prize, the Pushkin Prize (dating from 1989 and funded by Germans), Triumph (administered through Zoia Boguslavskaiia, and financed by the mogul Boris Berezovsky), the Apollon Grigor'ev Prize (awarded by the recently constituted ARSS [Akademiia Russkoi Sovremennoi Slovesnosti], orchestrated by Aleksandr Arkhangel'skii and underwritten by Uneximbank), and the \$25,000 Solzhenitsyn Prize (announced in 1997), which draws on the royalties of \$350,000 that annually accrue from the international publications of the writer's *Gulag Archipelago*. For more information on the various prizes, see *Buker v Rossii*.



Iurii Bashmet, Violinist Extraordinaire: *Cult of Personalities*, no. 1 (May/June) 1998.

the accessibility of the readerly one, "and can theoretically be read in that easy way by those readers who are comfortably accommodated within the dominant ideology," but also possesses the openness of the writerly without *requiring* this writerly activity (104). Hence Fiske's insistence that analyzing popular texts requires a double focus (105) and his astute insight that "the combination of widespread consumption with widespread critical disapproval is a fairly certain sign that a cultural commodity or practice is popular" (106).¹²

Disposable, one-time narratives following established formulas for entertainment and steeped in values that subliminally appeal to the majority have taken Russia by storm. As might be expected, they have provoked indignant condemnation among "writerly" intelligentsia readers. That group's rejection of money-making ephemera springs partly from resentment at personal and social usurpation, partly

12. The category of producerly texts need not limit itself to literature. The pop'n'rock group Liube from the outset attracted me through its ironic, intertextual performativity, while both Liube's nationalist fans and its young detractors hear their lyrics as avowals of traditional Soviet allegiances. See Goscilo, "Record Raunch."

from condescending rejection of an alien, inadequately elitist, aesthetic. Pavel Basinskii's truculent protest against both the creation in 1998 of the Popular Literature Association (Assosiatziia Massovoi Literatry) and the roundtable devoted to A. Marinina's prose symptomatizes the most conservative High Culture response to toppled deities and their replacements (Basinskii 10). At the other end of the critical spectrum is the issue of the *New Literary Review* (*Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*) devoted primarily to popular literature (2 [1996]).¹³ *Pace* the maverick, Western-indebted *New Literary Review*, the majority of the Russian intelligentsia in the post-Soviet era views the commercial success of a book as its strongest indictment against literary quality (Dudovitz 20).

State publishing houses such as *Sovetskii pisatel'* have ceded to such enormous and enormously successful private conglomerates as Eksmo, which, with a staff of sixty to seventy, releases forty to seventy new titles per month. Eksmo handles a vast array of audience-targeted series: "The Black Cat" ("Chernaia koshka"—a line of original Russian *detektivny*, *boeviki*, and police novels established in 1994); "The Black Kitten" ("Chernyi kotenok"—an analogous line for children); and lines in war adventures, spy and crime novels, stories about the activities of Russian and foreign special forces, fantasy (*fëntezi*), historical novels, historical adventure, culinary books, illustrated children's works, historical romances, romances penned by such immortals as Danielle Steel and Justine Scott, as well as Russian originals, contemporary women's novels, and "Voice of the Heart" ("Golos serdtsa"), yet another series in women's fiction, recently inaugurated by translations of four Danielle Steel masterpieces (*Knizhnoe obozrenie* 3 [20 January 1998]: 25). The unabating proliferation of new lines has caused Aleksandr Voznesenskii, a savvy observer of publication patterns, to speak of Eksmo's "total diversification" and determination to leave no bookselling possibilities unexplored ("Total'naia..." 5). As Eksmo's general director, Oleg Novikov, acknowledges, TV and newspaper advertisements, the facilitation of mail orders, and a packaging that ensures instant recognizability for each series have proved

13. The issue contains, inter alia, articles on pulp fiction in general (J.D. Gudkov), murder mysteries (Nataliia Zorkaia), the "shoot-'em-up" action novel (Boris Dubin), and romances (Oksana Bocharova, Ol'ga Vainshtein).

effective marketing strategies (Gnezdilova 6) borrowed from long-standing Western practice. Formation of book clubs, likewise masterminded by publishing series catering to readers' tastes, have also enhanced sales. Book covers and contents that adhere to the familiar tried and true seem to guarantee success.¹⁴ In short, Russian book business in the 1990s operates with different publishers, books, readers, and modes of distribution from those of the Soviet era.

Though genuinely popular fiction steadily infiltrated Russia during perestroika, the process accelerated sharply after the official demise of the Soviet regime.¹⁵ In the first flush of de-Sovietization, when the mania for all things Western knew no bounds, translations, chiefly from English and normally pirated,¹⁶ dominated the scene: Harold Robbins, Ken Follett, Stephen King, Sidney Sheldon, John Grisham, Michael Crichton, et al.

The watershed year of 1995, however, witnessed the onset of nostalgia and patriotism, which now grip the country.¹⁷ This retro-trend led to a measured reduction in translations and a commensurate increase in domestic page-turners, while the publication of

highbrow texts moved in the opposite direction.¹⁸ Not only favorite genres, but homegrown Russian authors now rule pulp.

"Detektivy"

The unchallenged champion among competing pulp genres today is the *detektiv*, which, contrary to John Cawelti's and Julian Symons's painstaking typological differentiation (among detective story, police novel, crime novel, and others), loosely encompasses murder mysteries, thrillers (alternatively called *trillery*), and tales of crime.¹⁹ In 1996 *detektivy*, both original and translated, cornered thirty-eight percent of the entire market in Russian fiction (Ivanov 17) and at least one commentator contends that today the genre accounts for forty percent of all books published in Russia (Williams). The five best-selling authors of *detektivy* in 1996 were, in descending order, Nikolai Leonov, Daniil Koretskii, Eduard Topol, Viktor Pronin, and Viktor Dotsenko. All five subscribe to the comic book philosophy of "a man's gotta do what he's gotta do" and its attendant implications. This gendered imperative reduces, in praxis, to repeated demonstrations of physical prowess (i.e., bedding women and pulverizing men), plus occasional flashes of extraordinary mental acumen, against a backdrop of violence, corruption, power games, shady business deals, sleazy nightclubs and strip joints, fast cars, guns, explosives, mobs and bodyguards, hookers and heels, gallons of spilled blood and semen—in short, everyday contemporary Russian life in the city. To differentiate among the high priests of this macho crime cult may challenge the neophyte, but a seasoned consumer easily distinguishes among them on the basis of style, emphases, and protagonists.

Eduard Topol, who emigrated to the United States in 1978, made his biggest splash with the international hit about Soviet corruption titled *Red Square (Krasnaia ploshchad'*, 1983), and, more recently, with *China Lane (Kitaiskii proezd*, 1997), a thriller touted as the Russian

14. Aleksandr Voznesenskii notes, for instance, that the series "My XX Century" published by Vagrius, "Woman-Myth" ("Zhenshchina-Mif"), and "Home Library of Poetry" ("Domashniaia biblioteka poezii," also by Vagrius) all operate on the principle of instant recognizability and sell extremely well. Voznesenskii, "Garantirovannyi...", 1.

15. Translated sporadically during the Soviet era, Agatha Christie was a firm favorite, especially with the intelligentsia. So was Julia Chmielewska, the Polish writer whose "ironic *detektivy*" [sic] in Russian translation (as Khmelevskaia) are sufficiently popular today to periodically appear on bestseller lists. For a clear discussion of *detektivy* during the Soviet era and perestroika, see Nepomnyashchy.

16. The single most notorious case of copyright infringement involved *Scarlett*. While Khudozhestvennaia literatura was negotiating for legal rights to the media-hyped sequel, black marketeers peddled eight different illegal versions of the Russian translation (Ivanov 17; Lowe *passim*).

17. Symptoms of this nostalgia include the establishment of Russkoe Bistro, the sudden popularity of Russkoe Radio, the profound concern with the purity of the Russian language, Russian brands (e.g., of quality cigarettes, such as Petr pervyi and Zolotaia iava; of butter, such as Derevenskoe maslo, advertised as a national "bogaty" product), a search for the Russian national idea, and so forth. For a summary of cultural phenomena evidencing the current retro movement, see Goscilo, "Record Raunch...."

18. The number of English-language bookstores stocked with "respectable" texts increased in Moscow throughout the 1990s. Aleksandr Ivanov, the editor of the small but successful publishing house Ad Marginem, which specializes in translations of Western theory, is co-owner with the American academic Mary Duncan of Shakespeare and Co., an anglophone bookstore that, with the aid of *Glas* editor Natasha Perova, until 1999 orchestrated discussions in English of recent publications for expatriates residing in Moscow.

19. For a brisk, readable commentary on the genre, see Nepomnyashchy and Borden.



Covers of male-authored *detektiv*: Nikolai Leonov's *Foul Cop*, Leonid Slovin's *When They're Shooting at Us*, and Viktor Dotsenko's *Beshnyi's Return*.

Primary Colors.²⁰ Transposed to a "mythical" China, this *roman à clef* about Russia's 1996 presidential election exposes the collusion of money and corruption in politics. In lurid technicolor Topol' traces the Byzantine campaign machinations of "corrupt mob-tied government officials and political advisers, ruthless Russian and American businessmen" (Stanley) and such transparently masked characters as President Yel Tsin, his daughter Tan Yel (Tat'iana D'iachenko), the Communist candidate Zyu Gan, Prime Minister Cher Myr Din, the millionaire Boris Bere of Beria Bank, and so forth. Topol's prose evokes writing by numbers keyed to a black-and-white moral code accessible to the average eight-year-old. Seduced by its deluge of scandalous revelations, Russian readers lapped it up as one might savor a particularly juicy morsel of *kompromat*²¹ or gossip about the famous that has it both ways: it voyeuristically titillates, yet leaves one

feeling (presumably, like the author) morally superior.²² The book placed #2 in the bestseller charts during May of 1997.

Topol's most recent publication takes a detour of sorts, into the crime-related area of sex-service. *The New Russia in Bed, on the Beat, and in Love* (*Novaia Rossiia v posteli, na paneli i v liubvi*, 1999),²³ subtitled *Sex During the Transition from Communism to Capitalism* (*Seks pri perekhode ot kommunizma k kapitalizmu*), claims to be a "documentary-belletristic novel in three parts and two interludes" ("dokumental'no-khudozhestvennyi roman v trekh chastiakh i dvukh antraktakh"). With undisguised relish Topol interviews the madam of a whorehouse, sex-workers in night clubs, and random representatives

20. In June 1994 Topol's signally titled *Kikelover* (*Liubozhid*, Elita Pub.) occupied the #10 slot on the bestseller list.

21. Compromising material. This genre has acquired such widespread popularity that the Marat Gel'man Gallery devoted an entire exhibit to the art of *kompromat*.

22. The barrage of scandal sheets and gossipy items in the post-Soviet press attests to Russians' appetite for sensationalist reporting, especially about "big names." Polina Dashkova, one of the latest in a series of successful female authors of "detektiv," has added her voice to the chorus complaining about post-Soviet Russia's passion for yellow journalism (see "Moia mama ubila Ivana!").

23. The twenty thousand paperback copies comprising the first non-hardcover edition of this edifying work were printed, improbably enough, by the Moscow publishing company ACT.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

of the New Russia who participated in the Sauna Seminars Topol arranged as a venue for swapping personal stories about sexual experiences. In this catalogue of others' self-revelations, Topol subordinates illegality to illicitness as he interrogates the perpetrators of sexual acts that might shock or disgust the fastidious reader, but would leave a devotee of MTV unstirred.

In contrast to Topol, who prefers non-committal geographical titles, Nikolai Leonov opts for melodramatic ones to hook the thrill-seeking reader: *Narco-Mafia* (*Narkomafiia*, 1994), *Hired Killer* (*Naëmnyi ubiitsa*), *Scarlet Blood* (*Krov' alaia*—#4, then #2 bestseller in January 1994), *No Hold Barred* (*Bespredel*, which leaped from #10 to #3 in December 1997), and *Egyptian Vultures* (*Sterviatniki*, #7 in December 1997, but moving to #2 in January 1998). By early 1995 Leonov had sold 1,360,000 copies of twenty-one editions and ranked third in the list of top-selling writers for 1994 (Stakhov 54).²⁴

An old hand at the crime genre, which he has practiced for approximately a quarter-century, Leonov, born in 1933, has a law degree and ten years of professional police experience. The "Black Cat" series recently issued his *Complete Works* in fifteen volumes. His novels regularly feature the protagonist Lev Gurov, a sophisticated police colonel of impeccable integrity and fashion sense—described by Leonov's publishers as "charming, paradoxical, clever, and intrepid" ("obaiatel'nyi, paradoksal'nyi, umnyi i besstrashnyi")—who battles organized crime, whether via penetration into a computer data bank (*Foul Cop* [*Ment poganyi*]) or by protecting a millionaire banker's drug-addicted daughter in the midst of a planned presidential assassination (*Jackals* [*Shakaly*]). Leonov interfuses his narratives with topical issues (New Russians, drug peddling, political elections, the war in Chechnia [*Gurov's Defense*/*Zashchita Gurova*]) and anchors crime in the drive for money and power. Rather than wallowing in slow-motion depiction of seediness or sexual congress, he often privileges mind over muscle, spotlighting the methodical professionalism and thought processes of his stalwart protagonist. By avoiding facile shock effects, purple patches, and mythological aggrandizement of

stereotypical macho routines, Leonov achieves a kind of reassuring stolidity in his mysteries that may ultimately disappoint and bore fans of the genre's "wild side."

The disenchanting would find ample compensation in Viktor Dotsenko's action-packed series of adventures about Afghan war veteran Savelii Beshenyi (Rabid), the Russian Rambo. His *Beshenyi's Return* (*Vozvrashchenie Beshenogo*) ranked #1 among January 1995 hardcover bestsellers, as did his *Beshenyi's Hunt* (*Okhota Beshenogo*) in hardcover sales for January 1998.²⁵ By early 1996 Dotsenko had sold 2 1/2 million books and the following year Vagrius issued his *Complete Works* in seven volumes (Shevelev 68). Clearly an aficionado of the picaresque mode, Dotsenko strings together incidents that showcase his hero's unparalleled command of the martial arts, his fluent English, and his sex appeal. These assets are tethered to what Dotsenko fondly believes is a form of Eastern mysticism that propounds discipline and moral purity in the midst of carnage. Accordingly, as Beshenyi (also known, regally, as Rex) sends men flying through the air and crashing to the pavement, he mentally engages in "lofty metaphysical" debates with his Master, the weightiness of whose dicta Dotsenko signals via the artless device of non-stop capitalization.

The crudest and most hapless of the *detektivny* gurus, Dotsenko (who spent three weeks as a journalist in Afghanistan [Shevelev 68]) alternates pages of "profound philosophical dialogues" and cliché-studded ruminations on deplorable changes in the New Russia with set sequences of random violence and unwittingly hilarious descriptions of supposedly daring sex (woman on top, fellatio in public, group sex, deflowering of [Asian] minors), all couched in a stunningly impoverished vocabulary.²⁶ According to Dotsenko, he dislikes Russian Literature, can write one of his "novels" in approximately two months, and finds his

24. The two top niches were occupied by authors of Russian "historical novels": Valentin Pikul (2,325,000 copies and 24 editions) and Dmitrii Balashov (1,620,000 copies and 14 editions) (Stakhov 54).

25. According to the cover of the pocketbook edition of *Vozvrashchenie Beshenogo* (Vagrius, 1996), by 1996 Dotsenko's series had sold 3,500,000 copies. These included *Srok dlia Beshenogo*, *Komanda Beshenogo*, *Mest' Beshenogo*, *Zoloto Beshenogo*, and *Nagrada Beshenogo*. By mid-1997 Dotsenko's total sales exceeded 5 million copies of seven novels (Stanley). During January 1998 his latest Beshenyi saga climbed from second to top place in hardcover fiction (*Knizhnoe obozrenie* [6 July 1998: 7] [20 January 1998: 7]).

26. For Dotsenko's convictions about writing style, see Shevelev 70.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

six-year-old son's love for Beshenyi flattering.²⁷ His prose testifies to the veracity of these claims. Indeed, the magnitude of Dotsenko's pretensions is at such odds with his scant verbal resources that his prose constantly verges on camp, hence appealing to six-year-old adults.

In the first thirty-five pages of *Beshenyi's Return*, Leshka-Shkaf, the boss of a Moscow mafia mob, wins the heart and other bodily parts of Lolita (aka Ilona), a leggy twenty-year-old beauty from the Harlequin nightclub, by finding and enabling her to wreak vengeance on her rapist. Using the fabled Bobbitt technique, Lolita deprives the marauder of his "weapon": "she seized his member ... and abruptly cut it with the knife" ("ona ukhvatila ego za chlen ... i rezko chirknula po nemu nozhom," 27). After witnessing this decapitation, the suitably impressed Leshka quickly couples with her,²⁸ gives her clothes, money and a bodyguard, and orders the organless rapist's death. Theirs, obviously, is a true love match, a "real man's" version of a Harlequin romance.

Macho heroics and lip-smacking sleaze suffered a blow in 1997, with the meteoric rise of Aleksandra Marinina, who has outpaced her male counterparts, to become the ruling queen of *detektivny*.²⁹ A lieutenant colonel of police at the Moscow Law Institute in the MVD (Ministry of Interior) until her resignation in February 1998,³⁰ the now 42-year-old Marina Alekseeva qua Marinina made her solo debut in the genre with the murder mystery *Combination of Circumstances* (*Stechenie obsto-*

iatel'stv) in 1993.³¹ Her output since then totals twenty-one novels, which have sold over 15 million copies.³² She topped the charts in hardcover sales for 1997, and during that year granted what must be a record number of interviews to journalists intrigued by a woman's unprecedented success in a heavily masculinized genre. Eksmo/"Black Cat" published her *Complete Works* (subsequently rendered incomplete by her recent mysteries); in the first half of 1998 she reportedly signed a \$2 million contract with Henry Holt publishers and Owl Books, as well as with Argon Verlag and Fischer Verlag in Germany and with publishers in France, Spain, Italy, China, Sweden, Latvia, Japan, and Korea (Azhgikhina; Williams). Currently in production at NTV is a sixteen-part TV mini-series titled "Kamenskaia," based on eight of Marinina's novels, starring the quasi-nubile Elena Iakovleva of *Interdevochka* fame as Marinina's detective heroine, Anastasiia Kamenskaia.³³ In short, Marinina has attained cult status, and, predictably, was featured as one of three women among Russia's top twenty-five personalities in the inaugural issue of the slick *People* magazine clone, *Cult of Personalities* (*Kul't lichnosti*, May/June 1998). In fact, she verges on becoming a mainstay of publications addicted to featuring the best-known "names" in the country, who, as Andy Warhol might say, are known for being known.³⁴

Mis dubbed the Russian Agatha Christie (and accused by detractors of aping Western models [Karsanova 12]), Marinina focuses on moral dilemmas and especially the psychological aspects of criminality. Analysis and revelatory background material on characters therefore abound in her mysteries, of which human relationships, obsessive passions, and love ties form the thematic and structural backbone. *The Illusion*

27. Such, at least, was the case in 1996 (Shevelev 68).

28. In the inadvertently comic description of this "heave and toss" interlude, as in others, "moshchnaia grud" and "plot" become leitmotifs (see 28 and passim).

29. During three weeks in August 1997 and again in January 1998, each time I rode the metro (from two to six times daily), at least one person in the traincar and often as many as three were engrossed in one of Marinina's works (either in paperback, at approximately \$1 each, or in hardcover, which on average cost \$2.75). In 1996 Dotsenko held third place among best-selling authors, with 740,000 [hardcover?] copies of books published; Marinina trailed behind him in fifth place with 525,000 copies (*Moscow Times* [30 November 1996]: 21). By the end of 1997, however, Marinina had gained the position of premier writer in the category of hardcover fiction (*Moscow Times* [10 January 1998: 15]).

30. According to some sources (e.g., Daniel Williams), Marinina retired in March 1998, but in fact she received official confirmation of her resignation a month earlier.

31. She had been writing since 1991. For more information about her earlier efforts, see Williams and the Marinina web site at <www.marinina.ru>, as well as Nepomnyashchy.

32. The twenty-one titles, in alphabetical order, are: *Chernyi spisok*, *Chuzhaia maska*, *Ia umer vchera*, *Igra na chuzhom pole*, *Illuziia grekha*, *Imia poterpevshego: Nikto*, *Muzhskie igry*, *Ne meshate palachu*, *Posmertnyi obraz*, *Prizrak muzyki*, *Rekviem*, *Sed'maia zhertva*, *Shesterki umiraiut pervymi*, *Smert' i nemnogo liubvi*, *Smert' radi smerti*, *Stechenie obstoiatel'stv*, *Stilist*, *Svetlyi lik smerti*, *Ubiitsa ponevole*, *Ukradennyi son*, and *Za vse nado platiit'*.

33. The series will be shown by the end of 1999 or in the beginning of 2000, when videos of the serial will go on sale. See Voznesenskii, "Total'naia...", 5.

34. The other two were the fabledly ageless pop singer Alla Pugacheva and Yeltsin's daughter, Tat'iana D'iachenko.

of *Sin (Illuziia grekha)*, *Death's Radiant Face (Svetlyi lik smerti)*, *Everything Has a Price (Za vsë nado platit')*, *Death for Death's Sake (Smert' radi smerti)*, *The Stylist (Stilist)*, and most of her other narratives consistently reveal Marinina's distrust of unmonitored medical and scientific experimentation and professional privilege, her preoccupation with justice, and, above all, her attachment to intelligentsia values.

The linchpin in Marinina's novels is her alter-ego protagonist, the lieutenant colonel of police Anastasiia (Nastia) Kamenskaia, whose chief assets as an investigator are a superb memory and brilliant logical analysis, buttressed by computer expertise. A workaholic obsessed with solving crime, Kamenskaia in several key respects incarnates feminist principles (professional dedication, superior reasoning skills, and indifference to marriage, domesticity, and her own physical allure), and without mounting soapboxes dispassionately dissects the misogynistic essentialist assumptions underlying conventional Russian thought and structuring Russian society.³⁵ Ironically, enervated sexist formulas are the resort of Marinina's major publisher, Eksmo, which advertises Kamenskaia as a "vulnerable and beautiful woman" ("khrupkaia i krasivaia zhenshchina"), despite Marinina's determination to counter such gendered banalities by spotlighting her protagonist's brains and professionalism.

Invariably set in contemporary Moscow, Marinina's novels focus not on "who," but on "why"—on the psychological motivation behind crimes and on the complex personal and professional dynamics among members of Kamenskaia's team of investigators. These dynamics recall such American TV shows as "NYPD," and the evolution of relationships between individuals within this relatively stable set of characters constitutes part of each novel's appeal.³⁶ Eschewing the gore,

35. See Marinina's comments on feminism in the interview with Azhikhina; Goscilo, "Feminist Pulp Fiction"; and Marinina's *Igra na chuzhom pole* (188-93) and *Muzhskie igry* (228, 293). As Klein sensibly maintains, "[w]hereas radical or socialist feminism demands sweeping social re-creation, liberal and revisionist feminism suggest that although the current, patriarchal organization of society is flawed, women should work through existing systems to effect change and to expand women's opportunities" (200). The moderate feminism of Kamenskaia and her author is piecemeal and intermittent, operating within the parameters of a changing but established system.

36. Nepomnyashchy's contention that Kamenskaia tends to be rescued by her "protective male collective" (174) ignores the fact that all core members of that collective react "protectively" when



Queen of Fictional Crime: Aleksandra Marinina

relentless physical brutality, and graphic sex scenes that proliferate in Dotsenko's tales, she integrates current social issues and post-Soviet phenomena (e.g., New Russians, mafia, sexual permissiveness) into crime detection in such diverse milieux as research institutes, film studios, publishing houses, hospitals, and so on.

A unique element in Marinina's prose is the frequency of meta-commentary: various of her characters' penchant for gauging people by their choice of reading matter allows her to pass implicit judgment on other contemporary writers. For instance, an educated female character in Marinina's *The Small Fry Die First (Shestërki umiraiut pervymi)* waxes incredulously indignant when her lover mentions Topol': "'What, you're reading Topol'? [...] But I forbade you to read his books. They're cheap trash, faddish slime and porn'" ("Ty chto, Topolia chitaesh'? [...] Ia zhe zapretila tebe chitat' ego knigi. Eto deshëvka, eto kon'iunkturnaia chernukha-pornukha" [29-30]). In the same novel, that lover questions a woman's maturity because he finds Dean Koontz³⁷

danger threatens one of them, irrespective of gender.

37. Why Koontz, the best-selling author of *Dragon Tears*, *Phantoms*, *The Mask*, *The Servants of Twilight*, *Dark Rivers of the Heart*, and more than twenty additional thrillers, strikes Marinina

among such presumably more acceptable authors on her shelf as Sidney Sheldon and Jackie Collins (!): "He himself didn't read Koontz, and only knew that it was mysticism, fantasy, and other such horrors, but his thirteen-year-old son was hooked on those books" ("Sam on Kuintza ne chital, znal tol'ko, chto eto mistika, fantastika, i prochaia 'zhut', no knigami etimi zachityvalsia ego trinadtsatiletnii syn" [179]). The absence of romances among the selections, however, reassures him. Marinina's narratively mediated enmity to romances and sci-fi seems to confirm W.H. Auden's disputable generalization that "the detective story [...] makes its greatest appeal precisely to those classes of people who are most immune to other forms of daydream literature" (Auden 157).³⁸

Unlike in the West, *detektivny* in Russia attract predominantly male readers (Hoffman) and, until recently, exclusively male authors (men reportedly comprise seventy percent of mystery readers, though the same percentage of all Russian readership is female [Landsberg]).³⁹ Women consuming this traditionally gendered genre largely confine themselves to Marinina and the swelling contingent of successful female practitioners of the genre, many of whom build their narratives around romance.

Tat'iana Poliakova's short, breezy narratives, now regularly found on the bestseller list, revolve around first-person female protagonists who at work's end bask not only in facile solutions but also in the passionate avowals of the dashing romantic heroes they

conveniently encounter along their bullet-strewn way.⁴⁰ Marital discord or alienation is a staple of Poliakova's prose, which smacks of a "tough girl" mentality (e.g., *The Cruel World of Men* [*Zhestokii mir muzhchin*, 1998]). Marinina's pale reflection Polina Dashkova—a graduate of Moscow's Literary Institute and pseudonymous author of six *detektivny* that over two years sold more than half a million copies ["Moia mama"]—varies her protagonists with each novel, tackles contemporary events and issues, and strives for a refined style, which teeters on blandness. Both she and Marinina avoid not only scenes of prolonged violence,⁴¹ but also explicit detailing of sexual activity and the kind of euphemized yet crude sexual servicing that Dotsenko in particular savors, mating soft-porn hymns to harmony via hymens with unadorned factual reporting of, for instance, a witless moll masturbating to climax with a banana while giving a mob boss head (*Beshenyi's Return* 426).⁴²

The genre of *detektivny* has proved a veritable boon for Russian women authors,⁴³ its remarkably successful representatives including not only Marinina, Dashkova, and Poliakova, but also Elena Iakovleva, Natal'ia Kornilova, Anna Malysheva, Viktoriia Platova, Marina Serova. By and large, their works (and especially Marinina's) corroborate the hypothesis that female authors of crime fiction are "at the forefront of pulling [...] this] fiction away from the predictable and towards a more psychological and social exploration of crime" (Coward and Semple 54). Exceptions are writers like Irina L'vova, whose series of pseudo-*detektivny* about the two sisters Rita and Stella (!) uses the pair's involvement in crime among the rich and mafioso'ed as

as inferior to Collins and Sheldon defies all conjecture. Eksmo has released translations of Koontz's major works in the "Kholodnyi ogon'" line (*Edinstvennyi vyzhivshii, Ocharovannyi krov'iu, Gibloe mesto, Molniia*, all in 1997).

38. My operating assumption here—confirmed by interviews with her—is that Marinina *reads* detective fiction, as well as authoring it.

39. In striking contrast to England, where the most skillful and renowned contemporary authors of murder mysteries have been women (Christie, Sayers, Rendell, James), Soviet Russia published only male crime fiction, centered on official police investigation rather than the clever sleuthing of private detectives—a circumstance directly related to the empiric absence of private eyes under the socialist regime. Furthermore, crime fiction in Russia lacked the enormous readership it enjoyed and continues to enjoy in the West, as was implicitly recognized in Symons' remark that crime literature during the 1970s was "almost certainly more widely read than any other class of fiction in the United States, the United Kingdom and many other countries *not under Communist rule*" (17, emphasis added).

40. Poliakova's *Sharp Cookie* (*Tonkaia shuckha*) placed #2 in the paperback bestseller list for January 1998.

41. Poliakova does not flinch from violence, but attempts to gain distance from it through a forced lightness, a kind of "tough girl" humor that seems intended to display sophistication.

42. Dotsenko's limp renditions of sexual activity tirelessly invoke the same lexicon: "vozbuzhdennaia plot'," "kamennaia plot'," "zhazhduishchee veshchestvo" for erection, "iziashchnaia popochka" [203-204], "bezvol'naia plot'," "otverdevshaia plot'," "nizhnie gubki" [425, 257-58, 426]). The elimination of the word "plot" from the Russian language would plunge Dotsenko's purple passion prose into crisis.

43. Female authors of *detektivny*, unlike their male counterparts, have a penchant for articulating gender differences that imply or explicitly refer to questionable aspects of men's behavior, to which their titles advert (e.g., Marinina's *Muzhskie igry*, Poliakova's *Zhestokii mir muzhchin* [1998], Malysheva's *Moi muzh—man'iak?* [1998], Platova's *Kukolka dlia monstra* [1999]).



Covers of female-authored *detektiv*: Aleksandra Marinina's *Death's Bright Face*, Marinina's *Everything Has a Price*, Tat'iana Poliakova's *Sharp Cookie*, and Marinina's *Stolen Sleep*.

a transparent excuse for drooling over *la dolce vita*: anorexic on plot and wholly indifferent to structure, the unforgettably titled *Stella Tempts Fate* (*Stella iskushaet sud'bu*, 1999), *Stella Makes a Choice* (*Stella delaet vybor*, 1999), and *Stella Cheats Death* (*Stella obmanyaet smert'*, 1999) amply display a "material girl's" appreciation of fabulous furs, jewels, exotic foods, yachts, luxury apartments, the world's hot spots, and men's eternal devotion (Azhgikhina, "Sladkaia zhizn'," 6). Stunningly vulgar in their obsessive consumerism and juvenile in their notion of what makes for a "cool" heroine,⁴⁴ these extraordinary narratives evoke a dimestore female James Bond whose conception, as one astute critic contends, seems to spring from a psychological problem that this writing apparently alleviates ("Sladkaia zhizn'"). In her reliance on authoring as psychotherapy, L'vova most blatantly resembles Dotsenko and, to a lesser degree, Topol.

What explains the current supremacy of the *detektiv* as a genre? First, the widespread criminalization of Russian society that accompanied the lurch to a market

44. For a sharp glance at the newly-emerged superwoman in today's pulp fiction, see Azhgikhina, "Supersledovatel' i superagent," 6.

economy renders the *detektiv* a narrative of everyday life (*bytopisanie*) often indistinguishable from newspaper accounts of daily shootouts and murders that leave the police confounded.⁴⁵ John Cawelti contends that formulaic literature affirms "existing interests and attitudes by presenting an imaginary world that is aligned" with them, resolves "tensions and ambiguities resulting from the conflicting interests of different groups within the culture," and assists the "process of assimilating changes to traditional imaginative constructs" (35-36). However simplistically, *detektiv*y partially reflect contemporary reality, but simultaneously reassure readers, for on their pages crimes tend to be solved and their perpetrators apprehended and punished.⁴⁶ Second, the hyperbolic derring-do of cardboard heroes feeds male fantasies, thereby serving a compensatory function at a time when impotence, alcoholism, and an average life expectancy of fifty-eight years blight the image of Russian virility. Third, the *detektiv* is the sole pulp fiction genre tolerated by the intelligentsia, which comprises a sizable percentage of Russia's readership.⁴⁷ Although *intelligent*y criticize the stylistic flaws and linguistic solecisms of individual authors, both the potential for cerebral analysis in *detektiv*y (which, *mutatis mutandis*, mirrors the literary critic's task) and the Formalist engagement with the genre lend it a touch of respectability even among hardcore intellectuals, who may occasionally slum without losing face or incurring a mental hangover.⁴⁸

That especially obtains in the case of Marinina, whom *intelligent*y generally deem a cut above her male competitors, though at least one critic has singled her

45. Among the rash of unsolved murders of public figures in politics, media, and business, those that have generated the greatest speculation are the deaths of the American businessman Tatum, the Ostankino journalist List'ev, the "mastermind" behind the new macho magazine *Medved'*, and the much admired anthropologist/politician Galina Starovoitova. For a brief survey of current detective fiction, with conclusions that partly coincide with mine, see Nepomnyashchy and Borden.

46. Within the framework of Auden's scheme, this process entails the restoration of a state of grace.

47. The intelligentsia finds science fiction acceptable only if it has elevated pretensions, such as the Strugatsky brothers', and thus may be subsumed under Literature.

48. See the article by Viktor Shklovskii titled "Novella tain," devoted primarily to Arthur Conan Doyle's series of Sherlock Holmes mysteries, which analogizes the popular genre's device of building suspense through retardation with techniques favored by E.T.A. Hoffmann and Charles Dickens, as well as Dostoevsky.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

out as an exceptionally dreadful writer (Karsanova 12). One could, in fact, argue that numerous specific references in her work to elitist cultural forms (e.g., Japanese literature [*Stylist*], Mozart's music, operas and international operatic singers such as Caruso, Caballé, Carreras, and Domingo [*Posthumous Image/ Posmertnyi obraz* 42-43]) betray her pretensions to "transcending" the limitations of pulp fiction.⁴⁹ Yet, perhaps paradoxically, in one of her best-known novels she embeds a defense of pop culture genres as a means of inculcating ethical values. When a murder suspect dismisses a TV serial as nonsense, his wife retorts, "Well, of course, it's not high art, no one's arguing that. But such films teach people how to act right in situations that are complicated from a moral and ethical point of view. They teach a simple truth: if you love someone, don't consider your beloved worse or stupider than yourself" ("Eto, konechno zhe, ne vysokoe iskusstvo, kto sporit. No takie fil'my uchat liudei, kak pravil'no postupat' v slozhnykh s moral'no-eticheskoi tochki zreniia situatsiakh. Oni uchat prostoi istine: esli liubish', ne schitaj svoego liubimogo khuzhe ili glupee sebja" [*Combination of Circumstances (Stechenie obstoiatel'stv* 218)]).

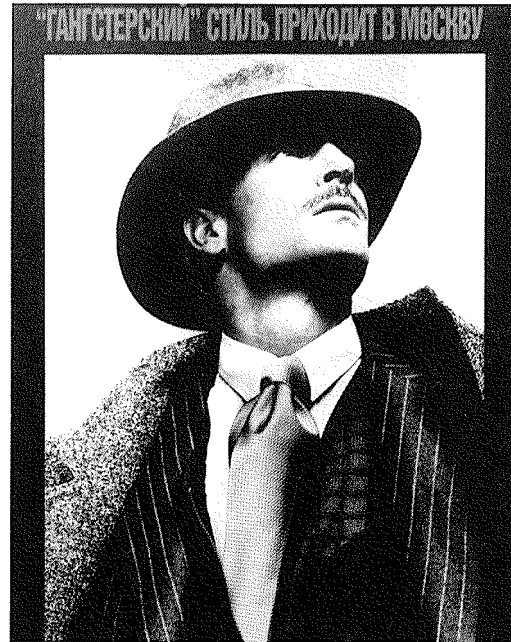
Russian *detektivy*, then, show more variation than one might suppose on the basis of their uniformly tawdry, single-style covers. And the readership, likewise, encompasses diverse classes and levels of education.

Sci-fi and Mysticism

Second in popularity after *detektivy* in 1996 was the peculiarly double-barreled category of "science fiction and mysticism," accounting for twenty-six percent of all fiction sales that year (Ivanov 18). The fantasy that produces these narratives is inseparable from the irrationalism and faith in mysterious forces that characterize Russia in the 1990s. This retro trend ranges from a revival of religious Orthodoxy, rediscovery of Madame Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner, and Nikolai Roerich, republication of dozens of related sources, the infiltration of the occult into literary texts by Zufar Gareev, Aleksandr Borodynia, Marina Palei, Mark Kharitonov, and Aleksandr Vernikov (Brougher, *passim*), and the fad for sundry strands of Eastern thought (witness the "philosophical" flirtations of Boris

Grebenshchikov, Viktor Pelevin, Dotsenko), to the craze for astrology, hypnosis, tarot cards, dream interpretation, homeopathic medicine, pseudo-scientific treatises, and, in rural areas, the manifestation of pagan superstitions.⁵⁰

Last year in the remote village of Valiuki within



Ubiquity of Crime: "The Gangster Style Comes to Moscow," the verbal text of an ad for sophisticated male fashion wear, reproduced in various glossy magazines.

Russia's farming community, for instance, two men wielding hammers, who had consulted a local spiritual faith-healer experienced in warding off the "evil eye," burst into a woman's hut and proceeded to kill her mother and injure her and her siblings because they were convinced that she had placed a curse on them (Beeston). Similar witch hunts have been reported elsewhere, often abetted by proclaimed mystics and soothsayers credited with supernatural, magical powers. This atmosphere of visions and voodoo partly explains the prominence of Mikhail Andreev and Pavel Globa. Andreev is president of the Association of White Magicians and host of the NTV weekly program

49. According to a recent article in *Vanity Fair*, Marinina harbors a fondness for opera libretti.

50. Indeed, in 1996, religion and the occult led the market in non-fiction, accounting for twenty-six percent of all sales. "How-to" books came second, representing eighteen percent of the market (Ivanov 18).

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

"Third Eye" ("Tretii glaz"), which conducts enlightening interviews with witches and wizards and counsels viewers on effective sorcery. An astrologer and author of thirty books, Globa hosts his own paronomastically titled TV show, *Global Advice*, claims that astrology is scientific and mathematical, and advises celebrities and State Duma deputies, who presumably make decisions on the basis of his predictions (Allen). Until 1996, General Georgii Rogozin headed a team of Kremlin staff astrologers whose sole job was to aid Yeltsin in his policy-making (Spector). Nancy Reagan, in short, has more in common with the Russian administration than she ever suspected.

An ineradicable belief in occult forces has propelled into the spotlight such people as Liliانا Filonova, star of the show *Help Me, Lilianna (Pomogi mne, Lilianna)*,⁵¹ who for more than three years has operated the First All-Russian Academy of Practical Magic and Hypnosis [sic]. This dubious institution schedules courses in techniques of hypnosis and seances empowering one to combat the evil eye, alcoholism, tobacco dependency, allergies, excessive aggression, fatigue, failure in business and trade, difficult family relations, weak will, excess weight, and specifically female dilemmas (*Strength of Spirit [Sila dukha]*).⁵² Her illustrated brochure advertises Filonova as a psychotherapist, pedagogue, and magician (*mag*), and dispenses sage counsel that would chill the blood of any transvestite or shopper at used-clothes outlets: "Never wear someone else's clothes. They can influence your fate. It's very dangerous" ("Nikogda ne odevaite chuzhuiu odezhdu. Ona mozhet povliiat' na vashu sud'bu. Eto ochen' opasno"). She and others purportedly blessed with ESP speak in the Russian equivalent of America's psycho-babble, and their huge followings testify to Russians' incessantly invoked penchant for the irrational or fantastic. The continuity between this quotidian (often pragmatic) quasi-spirituality, on the one hand, and attraction to genres grounded in fantasy, on the other, is self-evident.

Although males predominate among readers and authors of science fiction, the prolific Mariia Semenova, a computer specialist with a higher education, has caused a minor sensation with such

works as *Wolfhound (Volkodav [1995])*, which sold more than 250,000 copies in a year. Semenova leaves few fantasy and sci-fi paradigms unturned, writing of werewolves ("Hunter" ["Okhotnik"], "Darling"), time travel (*Sign of the Elect [Znak izbrannika]*), extraterrestrial conflict (*Iern Wolves [Iernskie volki]*),⁵³ and, in *Wolfhound*, whose eponymous superhero improbably combines Viking warriors with Conan the Barbarian, timeless tribal warfare.⁵⁴ Alla Latynina's daughter, Iuliia Latynina, when not penning articles on political economics for sundry papers or trying her hand at *detektiv*,⁵⁵ also turns out fantastic stories of essentially moral conflicts set in temporally and geographically imaginary realms, not unlike the Strugatsky brothers' narratives, which continue being reprinted. Translations of Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke, C.S. Lewis, Tolkien, and their like, which initially captured public imagination, have been partially replaced by a steady outpouring of domestic narratives in which borders between fantasy and sci-fi typically blur.

Cycles figure substantially in the area of fantasy, with the line "Zvezdnyi labirint" ("Astral Labyrinth") publishing Sergei Luk'ianenko's *Stars Are Cold Toys (Zvezdy—kholodnye igrushki)* and *The Earth Is Paradise (Zemlia—eto rai)* and Ol'ga Larionovna's *Kreg's Gospel (Evangelie ot Krega)*, the latest in her cycle, which began with *Chakra Kentavra* and *Della Uella* (Kur'er SF). Technical breakthroughs and the universal preoccupation with virtual reality have incubated an updated, computer-inspired version of fantasy, exemplified in such fundamentally dissimilar novels as Boris Shtern's *Ethiopian (Efiop [1997])*, Mikhail Uspenskiĭ's *Time It (Vremia Ono [1997])*, and Iulii Burkin, and Konstantin Fadeev's *Fragments of Heaven, or The Real Story of the Beatles (Oskolki neba, ili Podlinnaia istoriia "Bitlz" [1997])*.⁵⁶ The reliance of this and other pulp fiction genres on readers'

51. The show is broadcast on two channels, 3 and 61.

52. For more personalities who have acquired fame through the fad for things occult, see "TV 666."

53. These stories, novel, and novella are collected in her 400-page anthology *Znak izbrannika* (Eksmo, 1997), issued in the "Absolutnoe oruzhie" line.

54. Like Dotsenko, Semenova also resorts to the artless device of capitalizing "significant" passages.

55. Although a fine analyst of Russia's current economic situation, in *The Hunt for Iziubr' (Okhota na Iziubria, 1999)* Latynina overly displays her financial expertise in financial matters, writing an unutterably dull pseudo-*detektiv* glutted with endless conversations about financial schemes and woefully lacking the suspense and above all fast action so prized by Dotsenko.

56. For a survey of this tendency, see Baskakov.

addictive impulses or loyalty to a given series or persona accounts for the proliferation of cycles and series, which in a sense parallel TV serials.

Beneath the ostensible diversity in this category lurks a soporific sameness. The majority of forays into fantasy, whether scientific or "free style," suffer from not only a dearth of genuine inventiveness but also a debilitating dependency on primitively conceived moral conflicts articulated with pompous verbal flatulence. Balanced uneasily between pretension and musty entertainment formulas, this category would benefit from following the genuinely extravagant, credulity-defying flights of imagination fueling, for example, the everyday behavior and pronouncements of Vladimir Zhirinovsky and Eduard Limonov.

Romances, or Eternal Love, Western Style

Romances came third in the pulp pantheon of 1996, comprising seventeen percent of the market (Ivanov 18), but since then have surged ahead to compete for second place, catering to a huge, exclusively female, audience. Russians have dubbed these gendered fantasies "love burgers," for they bear the stigma/ta of fast-food production. Ranging from contemporary love stories to pseudo-historical narratives and bodice rippers, they are churned out by the thousands according to a single, basic recipe susceptible to limited variations. Marinina, with characteristic down-to-earthness, registers contemptuous bewilderment at women's insatiable enthusiasm for the sob, throb, and live-happily-ever-after format, and ventriloquizes her alienation from it through a male character in one of her *detektivy*,⁵⁷ who reads romances to fathom the fabled mystery of the "female mind" and deconstructs the genre paradigm as

dreams of an unearthly love with a gorgeous millionaire-prince who must have dark hair and blue eyes, a firm mouth, and a masculine chin.... In these romances [...] the man with the blue eyes and masculine chin behaves cruelly toward the girl, who suspects nothing; he either ignores her or ridicules her, or does something else from which one may deduce that he has negative feelings toward her. Later

57. Marinina's animus against this wholly feminized genre crops up in several of her works. See also *Muzhskie igry*.

it suddenly transpires that he loves her madly; she, naturally, also loves *him*, and they start making love, in the course of which the man with blue eyes busies himself for a long time with his partner's breasts and nipples, which gives the female author the chance to enjoy a detailed description of this refined occupation for a page and a half or two.

mechty o nezemnoi liubvi s prekrasnym printsem-millionerom, u kotorogo obiazatel'no temnye volosy i sinie glaza, tverdyi rot i muzhestvennyi podborodok... [V] etikh romanakh [...] muzhchina s sinimi glazami i muzhestvennym podborodkom vedet sebja zhestoko po otnosheniiu k nichego ne podozrevaiushchei devushke, libo ignoriruet ee, libo izdevaetsia, libo eshche chto-nibud', iz chego mozhno sdelat' vyvod, chto on plokh k nei otноситsia. Potom vdrug okazivaetsia, chto on ee bezumno liubit, ona, estestvenno, ego tozhe liubit, oni nachinaiut zanimat'sia liubov'iu, i pri etom muzhchina s sinimi glazami dolgo i nudno zanimaetsia grud'iu i soskami svoei partnershi, davaia vozmozhnost' pisatel'nitse naslazhdat'sia detal'nym opisaniem etogo izyskannogo zaniatiiia stranitsy na poltory-dve.
(*Shestërki umiraiut pervymi* 179-80)

Clearly, elaborate foreplay does not figure among Marinina's enthusiasms. The accuracy of her formulation aside,⁵⁸ romances in the Western sense were thoroughly alien to Soviet readers. And, in fact, today the foremost stars in the genre are foreign authors in translation, led by Barbara Cartland, nicknamed Baba Katia by the salesmen on Kuznetskii Most, a prime venue for mobile bookpeddlers (Ivanov 18).⁵⁹ The near-total identification of romances with overseas provenance has prompted the few Russian authors,

58. Although Harlequins are insistently formulaic, the physical appearance of the hero varies much more than Marinina recognizes, and the foreplay that she finds so puzzling and tedious has become de rigueur only in the last decade or so.

59. Bibliopolis in St. Petersburg, which in 1994 released Pushkin's *Collected Works* in five volumes, publishes Cartland's frothy pseudo-historical fantasies, as well as the incomparably better written, witty Regency romances of Georgette Heyer.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

assaying the genre to adopt Western pseudonyms so as to certify the authenticity of their page-turners.

The premier purveyor of romances in Russia is the pioneering publisher Harlequin. In 1992 Harlequin implemented its standard ploy for gauging sales potential by testing the waters with translations of six rather tame, older selections from its Harlequin Romance series, printed by its Russian partner, Raduga Press, in a run of 100,000 copies each to launch the "liubovnyi roman" line.⁶⁰ By December 1997, more than 160 Harlequin paperbacks had been translated and tagged numerically within the series, as *vypusk* 1, 2, etc. (Hoffman).⁶¹ This undifferentiated numbers approach, which evokes assembly-line production, reached absurd heights in mid-1999. Acclaimed as the premier best-selling series of 1998, with a total run approximating 70 million copies, Raduga/Harlequin in the July press release announcing its 300th *vypusk* offered a prize for the lucky reader in possession of all previous 299 titles. In tacit acknowledgement of the generic nature of these page-turners, it did not bother to mention, however, author or title of its "milestone" *vypusk* (Voznesenskii, "Garantirovannyi..." 1).

Although visually Harlequin covers fully correspond to their anglophone originals, sales charts refer to Harlequins not as Arlekiny, but as "liubovnyi roman." Strictly speaking, it and the less successful "iskushenie" (Harlequin Temptation) are lines *within* the series, against which compete "panorama romanov o liubvi" and "seriia romanov o liubvi," which have brought the palpating amorous insights of Virginia Holt, Carole Mortimer, Emilie Loring, and Mary Burchell to eager Russian fans. In contrast to the low-key, virgin-obsessed narratives that ushered in the genre (Janet Dailey, Betty Neels, and Emma Darcy), the latest offerings draw on more recent, racier Harlequins, which extend the boundaries into the

60. Inside the paperback cover of *la vse snesu* (a translation of Janet Dailey's *No Quarter Asked* [1974]), the publisher blatantly finetunes the blurb to Russian specifications: "V romane zalozheno sil'noe dukhovnoe, zhizneutverzhdaiushchee nachalo, eto gimn bol'shomu, instinnomu chuvstvu, dobrote, vole k zhizni."

Two of the other four pioneering Harlequins released in Russia that year were Emma Darcy's *Pattern of Deceit* (translated as *Zhenshchina v serom kostiume*) and Anne Mather's *The Judas Trap* (*Lovushka ludy*).

61. Before the economic meltdown of August 1998 Harlequin paperbacks cost 60 to 70 cents, depending on the store or kiosk. Since then, that price has not significantly altered.

markedly more heated realms of soft porn (Susan Napier, Charlotte Lamb).

Whereas in the United States authors of Harlequins (e.g., Janet Dailey, Penny Jordan) had to break out into the larger arena of novels before making the *New York Times Book Review* bestseller list, in Russia, Harlequin romances themselves can actually confer that status: in the first month of 1998, both Betty Neels's *Beatrice's Marriage* and Jessica Steele's *With His Ring* were included in the top ten, as *Zamuzhestvo Beatris* and *Brilliantovoe kol'tso*, respectively. And in September of 1995 romances accounted for half of the top ten paperback bestsellers.

Today romances occupy entire walls of such thriving bookstores as Biblio-Globus, off the Lubianka, and Molodaia Gvardiia, on Bol'shaia Polianka. Given Russian women's seemingly unquenchable thirst for these tireless reworkings of the Cinderella plot, what explains Russians' inability to pen domestic versions, which leaves this lucrative segment of the book market in Western hands? Several factors account for the lacuna. First, Russia lacks a love-story tradition as a foundation to build on. Crime narratives comprised a solid part of Soviet mass literature, as evidenced by the popularity of the Vainer brothers and Iulian Semenov. Thus for such veterans of *detektivy* as Leonov and Leonid Slovin,⁶² with twenty-plus years in the genre's trenches, the contemporary variant of the form merely calls for an adjustment to current tastes and possibilities. Nothing even remotely resembling Western romances existed during the Soviet era, which makes the genre a genuine, exotic newcomer to the Russian cultural scene. Second, the very discourse of romance is alien to conventions of Soviet Russian fiction: for decades one passionately—and purely—loved Lenin, Stalin, the Komsomol, the Party, and one's Motherland, but not a private individual of the opposite sex to the virtual exclusion of everything and everyone else. Consequently, a convincing Russian equivalent for the language of impassioned declarations and euphemized periphrasis for consumerism and sexuality that are endemic to Western romances has yet to be forged. Moreover, as at least one Russian commentator has cogently argued, today's Russia lacks a real-life model that could be hyperbolized into the

62. Slovin is the Jack Webb of *detektivy*, giving "the facts, ma'am, just the facts," in a prose that approximates zero style.



The Heart Is Increasingly Where the Body May Be Bared: Translations of Romances, from the early Roberta Leigh and Emma Darcy narratives (top), to the soft-port, pectoral passions exposed by J. Merritt and A. Major (bottom).

masculine ideal of the Romantic hero crucial to the genre:

According to Western tradition, he must be, first of all, sexual (consequently, a southerner), and, secondly, rich. If we try to translate these indisputable virtues into our native equivalents, then the best we can come up with is a New Russian, and, moreover, ethnically speaking, probably from the Caucasus. Such a hero certainly isn't going to appeal to all of our women readers. And, in general, how would we depict the "ideal world" [of romances] in which one wants to believe, and make it credible?

Po zapadnoi traditsii on dolzhen byt', vopervykh, seksualen (stalo byt', iuzhanin), a v-torykh, bogat. Pri popytke perevesti eti nesomnennnye dostoinstva na "iazuk rodneykh osin" vykhodit v luchshem sluchae "novyi russkii", k tomu zhe naverniaka etnicheskii kavkazets. Ne vsiakoi nashei chitatel'nitse takoi geroi pridetsia po dushe. [...] Da i kakim

voobshche dolzhen byt' tot "ideal'nyi mir", v kotoryi možno i khochetsia verit'? (Fal'kovskii 5)

While the improbable synthesis of sexual irresistibility, physical perfection, economic power, and peerless sophistication personified in the maximally virile hero of romance likewise has no counterpart in Western "real life," the socio-economic instability in Russia makes this composite fantasy figure not only absurd but ethnically and morally problematic. As a group, affluent Russian businessmen have a reputation for treating women as exchangeable and disposable goods. Few are the individuals capable of extravagant romantic gestures betokening their monogamous passion for "the one and only woman"—and, moreover, one they marry. The attention accorded a wealthy businessman's public gesture when he plastered the message "I love you" to his ex-model wife on numerous Moscow billboards featuring her face in close-up indicates the exceptional nature of such avowals in the Russian context. And the brutality and instrumentalization that underpin relations between the two sexes in general hardly conduce to Cinderella or Romeo and Juliet scenarios.⁶³ If *detektivy* provide psychological compensation for embattled manhood, romances fulfill the same function for overburdened, disillusioned women—or, as an advertisement in *The Book Review* dated 7 February 1995 promises, "novels about love help to distract one from daily cares and to have a psychological rest [literally, rest for one's soul]" ("romany o liubvi pomogaiut otvlech'sia ot povesdnevnykh zabor i otdokhnut' dushoi," *Knizhnoe obozrenie* 6 [7 Feb. 1995]: 9). The foreign origins of romances, however, imply that both "eternal love" and economic security may be attained only outside Russia. In that sense the remoteness and hyperbole of the romantic universe analogize the genre with science fiction and fantasy.

Pulp Paradise and Literature Lost

As this highly condensed and partial survey indicates, book business in Russia is booming. Such mainstream stores as Dom knigi, Molodaia gvardiia, Biblio-Globus, and the colossal bookmarket at the

63. A recent screen treatment of the deathless Cinderella plot, Villen Novak's *Printsessa na bobakh* (*Princess on a Hill of Beans*, 1997), cast a New Russian in the unlikely role of prince. For the prevalence of the Cinderella story in Russian film, see Stishova.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

Olympic Stadium carry everything from Bibles, chic art books, and esoteric scholarly tomes to anthologies of *anekdoty*, anglophone rock magazines, and manuals on make-up, exercise, and bee-keeping. Moreover, virtually every underground passageway and metro station boasts at least one book stall (*lotok*) loaded with pulp fiction in both hardcover and paperback.

As a cultural form that during Soviet times absorbed philosophy and political commentary to an extraordinary degree and constituted the pride and joy of Russia's intelligentsia, upper-case Literature, however, has tumbled from its pedestal. Such bookstores as 19-oe oktiabria, U Sytina, and Eidos, which purveyed exclusively High Culture texts, have closed, and Gileia, which likewise caters solely to refined, minority tastes, has experienced financial difficulties that have necessitated relocation to a rather obscure spot off the Ring Road and that eventually may prove insuperable.⁶⁴

Partly to compensate for the lack of a supportive infrastructure and an acquisitive, broad-based readership, the primarily photo-op genre of presentations still flourishes, and literary prizes proliferate. These publicized symbolic rituals, however, cannot disguise the dispiriting fact that subscriptions to literary journals have dwindled, runs of texts have drastically shrunk, and countless writers are moonlighting in the sphere of popular culture: for instance, Irina Polianskaia writes romances under a pseudonym, and Larisa Vasil'eva has abandoned poetry altogether to pen semi-scandalous biographies. Even comparatively successful authors, such as Mark Kharitonov, Valeriia Narbikova, Marina Palei, Vladimir Sorokin, and Liudmila Ulitskaia, rely financially on foreign contracts and subsidies, as well as residencies abroad. At the International Moscow Book Fair in mid-1997, former literary idols (e.g., Valentin Rasputin) attracted a sparse crowd of admirers (Zolotov). And the once sanctified Solzhenitsyn resembles an ambulatory anachronism, less relevant than Stalin to current cultural activities.⁶⁵

It makes financial sense, then, that popular culture has started seeping into the formerly inviolable temple of Literature. Currently, the favorite genre is the

memoir—as evidenced by recent volumes authored by Bella Akhmadulina, Andrei Bitov, Andrei Voznesensky, El'dar Riazanov, and a plethora of lesser names—and the related genre of biography (those of Lazar Kaganovich, Brigitte Bardot, and a host of homegrown entertainers, most notably Alla Pugacheva, whose two-volume life story was one of the two top bestsellers of 1997).⁶⁶ One may partially ascribe the public's enthusiasm for these genres to the media's influence on tastes in various spheres and to the perennial fascination with "the rich and famous." Not unlike America's Entertainment channel, Voznesensky's thick volume of reminiscences titled *In a Virtual Wind* (*Na virtual'nom vetru*, Vagrius, 1998) allots a chapter each to the author's meetings with celebrities: Picasso, Solzhenitsyn, Lili Brik, Vysotsky, Pasternak, Aleksandr Kerensky, Sartre, Henry Moore, and Bob Dylan. The innumerable photographs show a self-satisfied Voznesensky being famous alongside even more famous personalities. Vitalii Amurskii's *Recorded Voices* (*Zapechatlennye golosa*, 1998) consists of conversations with celebrated Russian authors, including Joseph Brodsky, Bulat Okudzhava, and Bitov. The journalist Sergei Romanov's *Tales of...* (*Baiki pro...*, 1998) integrates his short sketches into a contemporary memoir of Moscow and its inhabitants (Zakharov, 1998). Such projects border on expansions of items one encounters in *People*.

Not accidentally, the reigning stars in "intellectual" creative prose today are the two Viktors—Pelevin and Yerofeyev, whose works show receptivity to popular currents. Whereas Yerofeyev's fiction (*Russian Beauty* [*Russkaia krasavitsa*], *Final Judgment* [*Strashnyi sud*]) usually explores existential dilemmas in a self-consciously erotic mode calculated to shock, his recent book, *Muzhchiny* (1997), offers a socio-philosophical meditation on Russian manhood and its identity. Yerofeyev concludes that Russian males, historically mired in falsehood and drinking, have mutated into pseudo-men with a paralyzed will and a complete absence of the aggression that Yerofeyev deems men's defining trait (Selivanova). Like virtually all of Yerofeyev's works, *Muzhchiny* sparked impassioned controversy, the first edition quickly selling out, with a second one following in 1998. Yerofeyev's rather jejune and willfully myopic lament for the loss of

64. By contrast, Grafoman and Ad Marginem seem to suffer no fiscal stress.

65. That holds true for his writings but not, of course, for the literary prize he has underwritten, for money speaks more eloquently than words in post-Soviet Russia.

66. The other was the memoirs of A. Korzhakov, Yeltsin's bodyguard, which suggests that gossip in printed form draws Russia's current readers.

macho quintessence illuminates in part the success of pulp fiction, which typically restores hyperbolic virility to its fantasy protagonists. The dust jacket of his latest publication, *Five Rivers* (*Piat' rek*, 1999), captures the peripatetic, "spiritual" Yerofeyev in a "native garb" vaguely redolent of Eastern mysticism—a photo-op identity that allies him not only with Richard Gere, but also with Pelevin and the most successful of Russia's answers to Paul McCartney, Boris Grebenshchikov (known to the faithful as simply BG).

This fledgling symbiosis between popular forms and High Culture in post-Soviet Russia likewise expresses itself in Pelevin's fiction, specifically in the saliency of computers, games, and a pseudo-Buddhist mysticism to the worldview inscribed in his texts. Yet, as Pelevin's possibly sincere interview with Sally Laird reveals,⁶⁷ his unabashed foraging in pop culture should not be misconstrued as a strategic crossover to the "trashy writers" of pulp fiction. Like most authors of both pulp and High Literature, Pelevin perceives himself as uniquely outside the mainstream (Laird 185) and above the coarse buck-chasing agendas of pop gurus.

The relative popularity of individual writers such as Yerofeyev and Pelevin notwithstanding, ultimately, Russia's open cultural market has demoted Literature to the status of pulp fiction's poor cousin. For better or worse, the patterns in Russian reading mirror those in the U.S.: a miniscule percentage of the population—and, moreover, that segment whose purchasing capacity has eroded dramatically—invests in texts conceived and perceived as immortal contributions to the treasure trove of World Literature. The vast majority's seemingly unappeasable hunger for page-turners, by contrast, guarantees huge sales and substantial returns for those hawking what one may finally call genuine mass literature in Russia. Whatever the shambles of post-Soviet Russia's economy and politics, *vox populi* calls the shots in the production and sales of fiction. Ironically, what traditionally has carried the stigma of *chtivo* ("pulp" or "trash") now qualifies as that rare phenomenon in the new Russia—a genuine instance of democracy in a society riven by old habits of political privilege and new capacities for arbitrary empowerment through wealth. During the tumultuous 1990s, pulp fiction authentically reflects

"the people's choice" among the "most readerly nation in the world."

Helena Gosילו, Professor of Slavic Languages at The University of Pittsburgh, is the author of "The Explosive World of Tatyana N. Tolstaya's Fiction" (M.E. Sharpe, 1996) and co-editor and translator, with Beth Holmgren, of Anastasya Verbitskaya's "Keys to Happiness" (Indiana University Press, 1999).

Works Cited

- "Aleksandra Marinina: 'S militseiskoi tochki zreniia moi proizvedeniia professional'ny.'" *Literaturnye vedomosti* 3 (6-20 November 1997): 21. [Interview]
- Allen, Nick. "Astrologer Gives Top Events for New Year." *Moscow Times* (24 December 1997).
- AP, Reuters. "Pasternak Letters Fail to Sell at Auction." *Moscow Times* (28 November 1996): 5.
- Auden, W.H. "The Guilty Vicarage." *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*. NY: Vintage Books/Random House, Inc. 1948/1968.
- Azhgikhina, Nadezhda. "Missis Dzhelik i missis Khaid." *Ex libris NG* (14 January 1988): 7.
- _____. "Sladkaia zhizn': Pisanie romanov kak vid psikhoterapii." *Ex libris NG* (1 July 1999): 6.
- _____. "Supersledovatel' i superagent: Novaia geroinia sovremennogo chtiva." *Ex libris NG* (25 February 1999): 6.
- Basinskii, Pavel. "Aleksandra Marinina kak sluchai elitarnoi kul'tury." *Literaturnaia gazeta* (16 September 1998): 10.
- Baskakov, Mikhail. "Igra v real'nost'. Al'ternativnaia istoriia ili vymyshlennaia deistvitel'nost'?" *Ex libris NG* (14 Jan. 1998): 7.
- Beeston, Richard. "Black magic puts spell on rural Russia." *The Times* (4 April 1997).
- Bocharova, Oksana. "Formula zhenskogo schast'ia." *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 22 (1996): 292-302.
- Brougher, Valentina G. "The Occult in Russian Literature of the 1990s." *The Russian Review* 56 (January 1997): 110-24.
- Buker v Rossii*. M. Izd. im. Sabashnikovoykh, 1997.
- Cawelti, J.G. *Adventure, Mystery and Romance. Formula Stories as Art and Popular Fiction*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1976.
- Chalandzia, Eteri. "Russia Trades Thick Journal for Glamour." *Moscow Times* (7 December 1996: 8).
- Coward, Rosalind and Linda Semple. "Tracking Down the Past: Women and Detective Fiction." In *From My Guy to Sci-fi*. Ed. Helen Carr. London: Pandora Press, 1989: 39-57.
- Daigle, Katy. "Astrologer Offers End to Doubt." *Moscow Times* (31 October 1997): 20.

67. Rightly or wrongly, Pelevin has a reputation for playing games not only in malls and arcades, but also with interviewers.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

- Denisova, Elina. "Aleksandra Marinina: Ia ne Agata Kristi!" *Novoe russkoe slovo* (11 February 1999): 21.
- Dotsenko, Viktor. *Vozvrashchenie Beshenogo*. M.: Vagrius, 1996.
- Dubin, Boris. "Ispytanie na sostoiatel'nost': k sotsiologicheskoi poetike russkogo romana-boevika." *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 22 (1996): 252-74.
- Dudovitz, Resa L. *The Myth of Superwoman: Women's Bestsellers in France and the United States*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Fal'kovskii, Il'ia. "Massovaia literatura." *Ex libris NG* (14 January 1998): 5.
- Filipov, David and Yelena Filipov. "Violent, Sinister and Believable." *Moscow Times* (18 October 1997): 13.
- Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. Boston/London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Fochkin, Oleg. "Legendy i byli podpolkovnika Marininoi." *Knizhnoe obozrenie* (14 October 1997): 6.
- Franceschini, Enrico. "Giallo a Mosca il delitto paga. Parla un'autrice da otto milioni di copie." *la Repubblica* (21 October 1997).
- Gnezdilova, Iu. and G. Nezhurin. "Formula uspekha. Oleg Novikov: V osnove nashei raboty—professionalizm i gibkost'." *Knizhnoe obozrenie* 21 (27 May 1997): 6.
- Goscilo, Helena. "Record Raunch: Macho Music in the 90s, or Pochemu liubim Liube?" Paper delivered at conference on "Pushkin to Pulp Fiction: New Readings of Russian Popular Culture." At UNC-Duke Center for SEES, 26 April 1997.
- _____. "S[t]imulating Chic: The Aestheticization of Post-Soviet Russia." *Essays in the Art and Theory of Translation*, ed. Lenore A. Grenoble and John M. Kopper. Lewiston/Queenston/ Lampere: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997: 35-58.
- _____. "Feminist Pulp Fiction: Detecting Murder and Aleksandra Marinina." *Women East-West* 50 (November 1997).
- Gudkov, L.D. "Massovaia literatura kak problema. Dlia kogo?" *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 22 (1996): 78-100.
- Hoffman, David. "It Isn't Tolstoy, but Russians Are Reading Up a Storm." *Washington Post* (5 July 1997). <http://www.marinina.ru/>
- Ivanov, Mikhail. "What Is Russia Reading?" *Russian Life* (July 1997): 16-21.
- Karsanova, Yekaterina. "Cop Thrillers, Russian Style." *Moscow News* (14-20 August 1997): 12.
- Khlebnikov, Boris. "Sekret bestsellerov." *Inostrannaia literatura* 7 (1994).
- Klein, Kathleen Gregory. *The Woman Detective: Gender & Genre*. Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1988.
- Knizhnoe obozrenie*. 1994 through January 1999.
- Korobov, Vladimir. "Knig mnogo—knig net, ili Novyi izdatel'skii krizis." *Literaturnaia gazeta* (3 August 1994): 5. Translated as "So Many Books, Yet So Few, or the New Publishing Crisis." *Russian Social Science Review* (January/February 1997): 82-89.
- Kostygova, Tat'iana. "Liubov' i detektiv, ili muzhskie igry Aleksandry Marininoi." *Knizhnoe obozrenie* (27 May 1997): 9.
- Kur'er SF. "'Fantasticheskie' proekty." *Ex libris NG* (14 January 1998): 7.
- Kuritsyn, Viacheslav. "Novye tolstye: K fenomenu gliantsevnykh oblozhek." *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (12 May 1996): 7.
- Laird, Sally. *Voices of Russian Literature: Interviews with Ten Contemporary Writers*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Landsberg, Mitchell. "Russian Crime Writer Reaps Renown." Associated Press (9 November 1997).
- Lane, Anthony. "The Top Ten." *The New Yorker* (June 27/July 4, 1994): 79-92.
- Leonov, Nikolai. *Ment poganyi*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Shakaly*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Zashchita Gurova*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- Lowe, David A. "The Book Business in Postcommunist Russia: Moscow, Year One (1992)." *The Harriman Institute Forum* 6, 5 (January 1993).
- Makarova, Ol'ga. "Vladimir Zharkov: 'Detskaia literatura' svoikh pozitsii v knizhnom mire Rossii ne sdast nikomy!'" *Knizhnoe obozrenie* 13 (28 March 1995): 11-12.
- Marinina, Aleksandra. *Igra na chuzhom pole*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Muzhskie igry*, 2 vols. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Posmertnyi obraz*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Shestërki umiraiut pervymi*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Stechenie obstoiatel'stv*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- _____. *Stilist*. M. EKSMO, 1997.
- "Moia mama ubila Ivana!" *Ogonek* 43 (October 1998): 32-37. [Interview with Polina Dashkova, conducted by Zoia Svetova and Konstantin Lykov]
- Morozova, Tat'iana. "Slezy, den'gi, erotika..." *Literaturnaia gazeta* 12 (20 March 1996): 4.
- _____. "Oni ne streliaut s kolena: Detektivnye romany o zhenshchinakh, napisannye zhenshchinami." *Ex libris NG* (25 February 1999): 6.
- Moscow Times*. 1996, 1998.
- Nepomnyashchy, Catharine Theimer. "Markets, Mirrors, and Mayhem: Aleksandra Marinina and the Rise of the New Russian *Detektiv*." In *Consuming Russia*. Ed. Adele Marie Barker. Durham: Duke UP, 1999: 161-91.
- Nepomnyashchy, Catharine and Richard Borden. "Pulp Fiction Helps Make Sense of Scary World." *Moscow Times* (April 15, 1998).
- Neuburg, Victor E. *Popular Literature: A History and Guide*. London: Penguin Books, 1977.
- Pruslin, Grigorii. "Aleksandra Marinina verit v sud'bu i streliaet raz v polgoda." *Gazeta dlia zhenshchin* 35-36 (1996): 3.
- Selivanova, Natal'ia. "Muzhchiny ili mutanty?" *Izvestiia* (10 October 1997). [Interview with Viktor Yerofeyev.]
- Semitsvetov, Igor'. "Aleksandra Marinina: 'Prestupnikov ia opisывaiu osobenno liubovno.'" *Ogonëk* 19 (May 1997): 48-50.

THE HARRIMAN REVIEW

- Shevelev, Igor. "Uspekh po proizvishchu Beshenyi." *Ogon'ek* 11 (March 1996): 68-70.
- "Sila dukha." 21/22, 2 (1997).
- Sirivlia, Natal'ia. "Aleksandra Marinina: 'Ia optimistka' (Interv'iu s pisatel'nitsei)." *Novoe russkoe slovo* (11 December 1998): 56.
- Sobolevskaia, Liubov'. "'Russkaia Agata Kristi' o svoikh knigakh, chitateliakh i o sebe." *Sputnik* 10 (1997): 53-58.
- Spector, Michael. "In Modern Russia, a Fatal Medieval Witch Hunt." *New York Times* (5 April 1997).
- Stakhov, Dmitrii. "Kakim ty budesh', miloe ditia? Pervye vpechatleniia ot russkogo bestsellera." *Novyi mir* 7 (1995): 225-31. Translated as "What Will You Be, Dear Child?" *Russian Studies in Literature* 33, 3 (Summer 1997): 49-61.
- Stanley, Alessandra. "What's Like *Primary Colors* and Read All Over?" *New York Times International* (14 May 1997).
- Symons, Julian. *Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel*. London: Penguin Books, 1972/1985.
- Topol', Eduard. *Kitaiskii proezd*. M. 1997.
- _____. *Novaia Rossiia v posteli*. Moscow: ACT/AST (?), 1999.
- "TV 666." *Moskovskii komsomolets* (22 May 1997).
- Ul'chenko, E. "Novaia filosofiiia 'Biblio-Globusa.'" *Knizhnoe obozrenie* 34 (26 August 1997): 10.
- Vainshtein, Ol'ga. "Rozovyi roman kak mashina zhelanii." *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 22 (1996): 303-30.
- Voznesenskii, Aleksandr. "Schet izdannomu, prodannomu i prochitannomu," *Ex libris NG* (21 January 1998): 1.
- _____. "Garantirovannyi uspekh knizhnoi serii: SPID, alkohol', kurenie, bol'shaia liubov' i schastlivyi brak." *Ex libris NG* 25 (1 July 1999): 1.
- _____. "Total'naiia diversifikatsiia proizvodstva v 'EKSMO.'" *Ex libris NG* 30 (5 August 1999): 5.
- Williams, Daniel. "Murder, She Wrote—And Even Men in Russia Are Reading Her." *The Washington Post* (April 5, 1998): A29.
- Zakharov, Igor. "Book bazaar." *Moscow Times* (4-10 March 1994): 10.
- _____. "Facts, Figures from 1997." *Moscow Times* (10 January 1998): 15.
- Zolotov, Jr., Andrei. "Booksellers Fight for Business at Fair." *Moscow Times* (4 September 1997).