writers themselves. In Robinette's analysis, George Lamming's *The Emigrants* expresses newly arrived Caribbean immigrants' unstable and constantly shifting diasporic subjectivities and class positions through a protean and fragmentary style that nonetheless gestures toward recognizable social and geopolitical problematics of the post-imperial world. Moving from diaspora to dictatorship, Robinette traces numerous linguistic interruptions and irruptions in Farah's *Sweet and Sour Milk* to show how this lack of discursive lucidity and refusal of transparent representation may be considered a feature of peripheral realist style because clarity and transparency cannot be easily achieved or performed under the socio-political conditions of dictatorial rule in Somalia. Wicomb's *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* offers brief, momentary glimpses of a transparent state and utopian society by combining details of everyday life in South Africa with a self-reflexive language consciousness in a configuration that Robinette (quoting Jacques Ranciere) calls an accompaniment that introduces a new historical dialectic.

Although Robinette's writing is engaging and accessible, there are a few points he could have elaborated or clarified a bit more. First, by his own admission, the three literary texts examined are all examples of the writers' early work. Does the peripheral realism of the earlier period persist throughout the writers' careers, and what significance does recognition of earlier realist strategies have on our critical assessment of later texts such as Lamming's *Water with Berries* or Wicomb's *Playing in the Light*? Second, given the different permutations of peripheral realism that are examined throughout the book, it is sometimes confusing when certain adjectival forms—such as experimental realism, interrupted realism, or epistemological realism—occur without enough contextualization or explanation. Third, although Robinette does quote from and discuss the three writers' remarks about realism at the beginning of each chapter, it might have been helpful to inductively frame a theory of realist form based on the writers' essays or comments in a separate chapter or in the introduction. It is possible that the constraints of Palgrave's Pivot series (with a maximum of fifty thousand words per book) might have prevented these elaborations, but the concerns mentioned here do not detract from what is, overall, a thought-provoking and compelling argument.

WEIHSIN GUI
University of California, Riverside
weihsin.gui@ucr.edu

Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration
By DAVID SCHIMMELPENNINCK VAN DER OYE
Yale University Press, 2010. xi + 298 pp.
doi:10.1017/pli.2016.6

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye's declared intention is to write a history of Russian Orientalism understood in the pre-Saidean way. He starts with a mention of the two-

and-a-half-centuries-long Mongol rule over Muscovy, but devotes little attention to the possible influence of this rule on the future Russian empire. He then turns to the times of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, and describes translators and scholars at Kazan University and, later, at St. Petersburg University, to which Kazan scholars were forcibly transferred. The remainder of the book is dedicated to Oriental motifs in Russian painting, literature, and music. He insists that Russia is, politically and culturally, a European country, and the first few pages of his book name the "villains" who thought otherwise, from Shakespeare to Adolphe de Custine. A slap is given to the Poles who "did their best to blacken their foe" (2). I looked up the footnote to this last statement and found Ekkehart Klug's article on Russia in *Historische Zeitschrift*.

The author demonstrates familiarity with contemporary Russian and Western scholarship on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russia, and his text is generously annotated. His writing style is clear and unambiguous, and he eschews theoretical issues that postcolonial scholars often introduce copiously into their texts. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye's book can serve as a source of information about the little-known individuals whose labors enabled the Russian empire to be effective in its dealings with Asia in particular. The book details the biographies of men (many of them foreigners) who studied the languages of Siberia, Central Asia, and other territories, and who advised tsarist officials on how to proceed, while at the same time compiling dictionaries and writing descriptions of the lands they visited. Some of them produced works of lasting usefulness, such as the Russian-Mongolian-French dictionary compiled in 1844–1849, but there was little continuity or, if there was, the author did not succeed in showing any. *Russian Orientalism* reads like a collection of notes that have not been properly integrated. For instance, on the same page (64), we read of Pushkin's black ancestry, Victor Hugo's classification of Spain, Peter's caprices, Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum—all of this in a chapter that begins with Napoleon's venture into Egypt. The chapter on Aleksandr Pushkin's poetry and Vasilii Vereshchagin's paintings likewise abounds in irrelevant details while omitting relevant information that Pushkin's patronizing texts about the Caucasus and Vereshchagin's presentations of Asian cruelty were created when Russia engaged in a scorched-earth conquest of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

All too often, the choice of terminology reveals the author's biases. He does not hesitate to note "cruelty, corruption, ands vast disparities in wealth" (116) in China, but he does not record the same features in the Russian empire. Peter was a "Promethean tsar" (43) and Catherine the Great a "mighty monarch" (44) and "*imperatrice conquerante*" (45) who ushered in "Catherinian culture" (54). The Crimean Tatars staged "destructive raids into the Russian heartland" (46), whereas Catherine's genocidal cleansing of the territory near the Black Sea was mere "conquest" (46). The Crimean peninsula, we are told, was transformed by Russians into "a peaceful garden of vineyards and orchards." The ferocious invasions of the Caucasus in the 1830s and 1840s are described as "Shamyl's lengthy resistance against tsarist rule" (127). We hear of Catherine's "long and prosperous reign" without a mention that prosperity was achieved through plunder of annexed territory. The author's description of Catherine's and her companions' lodging in the palace of the khans in a triumphant way does not produce a reflection that this kind of rejoicing over the enemy's corpse and sleeping in his bed are remnants of the Mongol style of conquest that aimed not only to overcome but also to humiliate the victim.

https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2016.6 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The book is sprinkled with little mistakes indicating that the author has little knowledge of, and possibly no interest in, anything except Russia and Germany. Józef Kowalewski was not sent to study languages at Kazan, as the author erroneously states (112); as a political prisoner, he was *exiled* to Kazan, and later *permitted* to study languages. Although the names of Germans who served the Russian empire are quoted in their correct form in Latin script (*Frähn* rather than *Frein*), no such courtesy is afforded to Poles whose names and surnames are distorted by transliteration from the Cyrillic (*Osip Kovalevskii* instead of *Józef Kowalewski*). The very first footnote has two spelling mistakes: the name of the philosopher *Jan z Głogowa* appears as *Janusz Glogowa*.

This book, although replete with encyclopedic details concerning the lives of scholars whom the tsar moved from location to location at his will, is itself an example of the approach Edward Said so passionately argued against. The rule of *audiatur et altera pars* is repeatedly violated. There is no bibliography. This is more of a panegyric than a critical study.

EWA M. THOMPSON
Rice University
ethomp@rice.edu

https://doi.org/10.1017/pli.2016.6 Published online by Cambridge University Press