Ludmila Ulitskaya and the Art of Tolerance. By Elizabeth A. Skomp and Benjamin M. Sutcliffe. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015. xxx, 251 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. $55.00, hard bound.

A timely and praiseworthy work, this volume is a substantive and illuminating study of Liudmila Ulitskaia, a major figure in contemporary Russian literature. Her work to-date, which includes prose, plays, and non-fiction, continues to be in the "not to be missed" category for many readers. Presenting a totalizing view of Ulitskaia's writing, the book continues recent explorations of this prominent writer's aesthetics, themes, and verbal art, simultaneously expanding its focus to analyze her place within the Russian literary tradition: her relationship to nineteenth-century classics, the writers of the 1960s, and post-Soviet women's prose. The critics do this with stylistic clarity, exhaustive analyses of a variety of texts, and with discussions consistently informed by the latest in textual scholarship.

This volume opens with an excellent Foreword by Helena Goscilo, a well-known scholar of contemporary Russian literature, whose insightful analysis of Ulitskaia's writing provides a fresh interpretive platform for her narratives. It is followed by an informative Introduction that seeks to validate Ulitskaia's influence in the post-Soviet era, identifies her as a leading voice of the liberal intellectuals and offers the reader ways of contextualizing Ulitskaia's work.

The critics have chosen a fitting title for their volume, wherein they consider how the intelligentsia message of tolerance consistently infuses the fabric of Ulitskaia's writing and prove that an awareness of this perspective is fundamental to understanding the essence of her aesthetics. They begin by stating that, a post-1991 author, Ulitskaia writes mostly about the Soviet era, showing how the intellectuals' humane values contrast with the brutality of Soviet history. This statement supplies a good entry into their discussion of Ulitskaia's pluralistic approach to gender and physicality. What the authors help us see is the process by which Ulitskaia humanizes the physical form and calls for tolerance, directing attention to the fundamental role of the flesh and guiding readers to recognize "how deteriorating, imperfect, or sexually 'deviant' corporeality forges ties between people as it elicits compassion and models humility.'" (67)

Chapter 2 continues the study of moral and ethical aspects of Ulitskaia's work, this time through the lens of kinship. Creating an alternative to the mythologized Great Family that dominated the Soviet era, Ulitskaia urges readers to seek understanding and tolerance in ideas, faith and ethnicity, and form families of affinity, based on shared convictions and equality, rather than on hierarchy and oppression. The critics invite us to speculate along these lines when they observe that Ulitskaia's fictional metaphor of the family calls into question the recent authoritarian turn of Putin's Russia. Further, they argue that Ulitskaia appropriates Old Testament narratives to exemplify the values linked to kinship and an inclusive and diverse human family. In one of their most interesting assertions, the critics suggest that "religious allusions . . . imply the ties that bind Jews and Christians, two groups Ulitskaia hopes to reconcile by emphasizing their shared theological ancestry" (94).

Chapter 3 argues for the historical dimension of Ulitskaia's work. The critics show how Ulitskaia, in reassessing the past, chronicles history as people experience it. Ulitskaia's intellectuals, the critics affirm, are portrayed as "moral arbiters of the embattled national past" (107); joined by ethics, education, and righteous conduct in difficult times, they seek to make sense of Russia's violent legacy. Ulitskaia posits that the intelligentsia has an equally important mandate of enlightening the population and preserving Russian culture.

Chapter 4 contributes to our understanding of Ulitskaia's religious and philo-

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sophical positions. The authors are at their most perceptive when they offer enlightening discussions of fictional engagement with Christianity, underscoring Ulitskaia's conviction that Christianity must instill tolerance. Surveying Ulitskaia's corpus as an effort to achieve a more inclusive society, united by faith, tolerance, and togetherness, the critics show it to reveal an optimistic viewpoint about the potential for change and unity.

Of special interest is the Conclusion that examines Ulitskaia's memoirs and explores her public visibility. The authors applaud Ulitskaia for her charitable projects and her public support of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and other critics of authoritarianism.

The book is logically organized and includes extensive commentaries; the references alone are enough to keep readers and scholars scrambling to the interlibrary loan desk for years. With this admirable achievement, Skomp and Sutcliffe have performed a commendable service to all Ulitskaia fans, students and scholars of Russian literature, something for which we should be grateful.

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Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus: The Other Europes. By Stephen White and Valentina Feklyunina. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. x, 368 pp. Notes. Index. Figures. Tables. $105.00, hard bound.

"What is Europe?" is a perennial question, often answered differently in the west and east of the continent. "What are the limits of European integration?" is a more concrete application of this question in the post-Cold War era. These questions are not just philosophical but have become acute political issues because of the Ukrainian crisis. These are the questions that Stephen White and Valentina Feklyunina address in their book.

The book has two outstanding strengths. First, methodologically it presents a comprehensive review of the identity discourses in the three Slavic republics of the former Soviet Union: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The book relies not only on elite discourses in newspapers and other media, but also on public opinion surveys and ethnographic focus group interviews. Second, the tripartite conceptual framework of separating three—or in some visual presentations four—different kinds of discourses is clearly an advantage over too dichotomous approaches to identity questions. This allows to regard a mixed European and post-Soviet position as an identity construction in its own right.

With regard to Russia, White and Feklyunina differentiate three basic identity discourses: "Russia as Europe," "Russia as part of greater Europe," and "Russia as an alternative Europe." The first discourse sees Russia as part of Europe as defined by the west, the second sees Russia as an equal and constituent part of an EU-centric Europe, the third Russia's normative superiority vis-à-vis the EU-centric Europe. The first discourse dominated in the early 1990s, but the second became the mainstream way of constructing identity. The third discourse about Russia as an 'alternative Europe' has been more marginal but it has been in ascendancy recently as Russia is promoted as the protector of true European (Christian, conservative) values against western decadence.

In Ukraine, the discourse "Ukraine as Europe" took distance from Moscow and regarded Ukraine as part of Europe defined by the EU. "Ukraine as an alternative Europe" discourse stressed Ukraine's common identity with Russia and regarded the west as hostile. "Ukraine as part of greater Europe," in turn, constructed Ukraine

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