semiotics," in which the subject responded to the external restrictions with acts of self-censorship and self-cannibalization. She juxtaposes Lidiia Ginzburg's writings with the medical literature about dystrophy, whose completely alienated language codifies the same starving blockade subject Ginzburg so sensitively probes. In line with her metaphorical treatment of the "blockade in the word," Sandomirskaia boldly uses the notion of semiotic dystrophy to interpret Ginzburg's prewar, wartime, and postwar writings. She reads the famous ending to *Notes of a Blockade Person* pessimistically, noting that "to draw [*opisyvat'*] a circle means, after all, to go along it. Language itself performs a mocking charade for the dystrophic" (264). And yet, the fact that Sandomirskaia builds her rich analysis of the Soviet literary environment on Ginzburg's own observations suggests that the desk-drawer writer achieved contact with reality, even during the blockade itself.

Chapter 4 contains excellent close readings of Anna Akhmatova's later works. Sandomirskaia argues that the poet's long period of "muteness" (1925–40) resulted from the need to find a new relationship to history. Akhmatova emerged with a lyrical, subjective view of history that involved myths, mystifications, the grotesque, and codes. Her concept of "secret writing" (*tainopis'*) corresponds with Benjamin's view that one can reconstruct historical truth by using one's sense of the present "to read what was never written."

The descent into silence that Benjamin foresaw in 1920s Moscow culminated in late Stalinism and the leader's own work "Marxism and the Problems of Linguistics" (1950), in which Stalin no longer saw language as base or superstructure but rather as directly related to the national factor. He therefore expanded the discipline of linguistics and disciplined it, introducing the form of the "academic debate" to the purges by writing his treatise as a Socratic dialogue. He accused Nikolai Marr and his followers of concealing language's transparency and declared that language is simply an unambivalent means of communication and that all truths are complete and universally present, changing by self-perfection rather than revolution.

OBERIU aesthetics, which privileged incomprehensibility and touch over the spoken word, so opposed the notion of language as transparent ice structure that they ended up functioning surprisingly well in the "blockade in language." Nikolai Zabolotskii's 1948 poem "Reading Poetry" ("Chitaia stikhi"), a "hypercorrect" demonstration of loyalty to Stalin's language policies even before their publication, is interpreted to be in line with these aesthetics, "not only reaching out to touch the world with its hand but meeting its blow with the whole of its verbal body" (351).

Blokada v slove deserves to be read by literary scholars, historians, and anthropologists of Stalinism and the Soviet period more generally, as well as those working on Vaginov, Bakhtin, Zabolotskii, Akhmatova, and Ginzburg. Specialists on Benjamin will appreciate how his philosophies of language and history are productively paired with Russian texts.

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The End of Russian Philosophy: Tradition and Transition at the Turn of the 21st Century. By Alyssa DeBlasio. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. xii, 220 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. $95.00, hard bound.

Rumors of Russian philosophy's demise, suggested in the title of Alyssa DeBlasio's new book, may be premature. At the outset, DeBlasio makes the crucial distinction

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between "Russian philosophy" and "philosophy in Russia" (5). The first she presents as nationalist, exceptionalist philosophizing that separates Russia from the rest of the world of philosophy. This writing and thinking has been criticized as serving "internal" audiences only and walling Russian thought off from the rest of the world through "myths and messianism" (153). The second concept offers a more capacious view, including all sorts of philosophical directions in the academy. It is the death of Russian philosophy, understood as the first definition, that DeBlasio hopes to witness.

The End of Russian Philosophy deals with an interesting, if vexed, period in the history of Russian philosophy—the almost twenty-five years since the end of the Soviet regime. It could not have been easy to write this book, in part because we are in what DeBlasio calls a time of "epistemic disorder" (100). There are few heroes—philosophers with genuinely new approaches to answering ancient philosophical questions—and a great deal of muddled philosophical thinking, contradictory historiography, squabbling, and disappointed expectations. The 1990s started with bright hopes of somehow rejoining the lively "Russian renaissance" of philosophy and religious thought of the early twentieth century. Reprints of works by Vladimir Solov'ev, Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Berdiaev, Lev Shestov, and many other outstanding thinkers of the turn of the century found an ecstatic audience. Their expectations have met with disappointment, however, devolving into a dogmatic ideology of the "Russian idea" and vacuous arguments about who has written the correct history of Russian philosophy.

This book does a fine job showing the weaknesses of Russian philosophy, so construed, and delineating some examples of relatively fresh philosophical thinking. "Russian philosophy" is the result of psychological pain, perhaps even what one could call a deep inferiority complex. As DeBlasio argues, only intellectual cultures and academic systems that doubt the originality of their thought, such as Russia's, tend to insist on a special national path. After 70 years of dogmatic Marxism-Leninism, academic philosophers, many of whom were trained in the 1970s at the height of re-Stalinization, have replaced one dogma with another—this time, a nationalist, Orthodox, even Byzantine one.

The great contribution of *The End of Russian Philosophy* is its introduction of leading Russian names in contemporary philosophy and the main lines of philosophical debate since the end of the USSR. DeBlasio presents sources and voices that are generally unknown among today's Slavists. The book lays to rest the by-now philosophically unproductive "Russian idea" and the chauvinist Orthodox identity that undergirds it. In the context of debate about suppressed Russian philosophy and newer European (mainly French) poststructuralist thought, DeBlasio introduces two leading philosophers whose work rises above the general murkiness, Sergei Khoruzhii and Valerii Podoroga, whose methods she compares by juxtaposing their treatments of Fedor Dostoevskii's *Brothers Karamazov*. While at opposite ends of the Orthodox/religious-versus-western/secular spectrum, surprisingly, both of these thinkers share some basic assumptions. Both are fundamentally concerned with raising the level of scholarly rigor in Russian academic discourse. Each thinker in his own way rejects the untested "essences" and "substances" that the promoters of the ill-defined Russian idea support. Each employs a methodology he calls "anthropological," by which is meant some form of outward-reaching focus on human experience. Khoruzhii is interested in an ancient gnostic idea of "energy" and the Byzantine practice of Hesychasm, or inner stillness, as a philosophical basis for conceptualizing the human condition. Podoroga, in contrast, builds on poststructuralist French thought to focus on the human body and the five senses, particularly the sense of touch, to convey a

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decentered concept of human nature. Both Khoruzhii and Podoroga investigate the borders between entities, edges of the self, and liminal spaces.

Reading this book with great interest, I found myself wondering what in contemporary Russian philosophical culture is really new. To that point, why is there almost no discussion of Merab Mamardashvili, Mikhail Ryklin, and Elena Petrovskaia, all genuinely fresh thinkers? Efforts at professionalizing, and even defining, the practice of philosophy seem hampered in so many ways—institutionally, ideologically, discursively. How has that deep-seated Russian relationship between philosophy and literature grown beyond past traditions? How have even the best minds on the current scene superseded the likes of Aleksei Losev or Mikhail Bakhtin? Now, as in earlier periods, we encounter that same Russian habit of fencing philosophical discourse within the area of literary and artistic texts as a replacement for a broader contemplation of humanity in personal lived life (for example, Socrates, Friedrich Nietzsche) or in public life (for example, Jürgen Habermas). DeBlasio ends her book with advice from one of the founders of the nascent professional philosophical culture of the prerevolutionary decades, Nikolai Grot: "If we want to do something all our own, something new and valuable, we must first understand, take in, and interpret or refute what others have done" (153).

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Funeral Games in Honor of Arthur Vincent Lourié. Ed. Klára Móricz and Simon Morrison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xii, 303 pp. Appendix. Notes. Index. Photographs. Tables. Musical Examples. $78.00, hard bound.

This book on the life and work of Russian émigré composer Arthur Lourié (Artur Lur′e, 1892–66) is a dialogue-in-essays between distinguished contributors—Klára Móricz (Amherst College), Simon Morrison (Princeton), Richard Taruskin (University of California, Berkeley), Olyesa Bobrik (Moscow Conservatory), and Caryl Emerson (Princeton)—who provide different lenses through which to view his work and thought.

Bobrik's essay, translated by Móricz and Morrison, outlines Lourié's life. Born in what is now Belarus, he studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and by 1913 had become a leader among the city's musical futurists, briefly advocating for quartertone music. Close friends with Silver Age Russian poets, Lourié was appointed in 1918 to head the Music Division of Narkompros, where he reportedly served incompetently, using his position to promote his own compositions. He resigned under pressure in 1921 and by 1924 had settled in Paris, where he became Igor Stravinsky's assistant and friend, also receiving a stipend from émigré conductor Serge Koussevitzky, for whom he ghostwrote speeches, articles, and a book-length biography (published in English as *Koussevitzky and His Epoch* [1931]). While in Paris, he associated with members of the Eurasianist movement and also befriended the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), maintaining that friendship for nearly half a decade, even after immigrating to the United States in 1940. Although the essayists in *Funeral Games in Honor of Arthur Vincent Lourié* describe Lourié as obscure, Taruskin has also described him as "one of the most interesting forgotten composers of the twentieth century" (*Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through "Mavra,"* vol. 2 [1996], 1585). A dandy and trickster who viewed beliefs and friendships opportunistically, he was also—paradoxically—a fervent Catholic who insisted

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