

Soviet 'occult revival' tend to see it as a new religious movement . . . rather than as a cultural response to political pressures and historical memory" (645) for the latter interpretation is precisely the one I have advanced.

The influence that the distorted memory of Stalinism exercises on post-Soviet culture and society, central both to my work and to Etkind's, clearly has broader theoretical and social importance. I therefore sympathize with his complaint that fictional monsters have "barely been noticed by critics and scholars" (644–45), even though my work appears in his *Slavic Review* article only once in a late footnote (650n57). Perhaps if he had addressed the themes that I raised in my work more directly, however, his article would have better advanced the discussion.

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Dr. Etkind responds:

I am surprised that Dina Khapaeva feels a lack of appreciation of her work in my article. As a quick search demonstrates, I mention her name five times in my essay, second only to Walter Benjamin's. A year ago, Khapaeva expressed a similar dissatisfaction in a letter to *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* that addressed a different publication of mine, a dialogue with Mark Lipovetsky on post-Soviet prose. Lipovetsky and I responded to that letter in detail and all three letters were published in *NLO*, no. 98 (2009). Even earlier, Khapaeva criticized me in her book, *Gertsogi respubliki* (Moscow: NLO, 2005), which proclaimed the end of humanities and social sciences on a worldwide scale; I was guilty of trying to perpetuate the dying tradition. I did not respond to that claim.

The polemics in *NLO* were substantial and I think that the readers actually benefited from a demonstration of the polar difference between Khapaeva's views and mine on the theme of post-Soviet memory. In her current letter, however, Khapaeva employs those very ideas that she had attacked in her letter to *NLO*. Her central statement in the current letter, that "In *Goticheskoe obshchestvo* [she] suggested that post-Soviet fictional monsters reflect, in a specific way, the memory of Stalinism" is wrong. She did not suggest that. When discussing post-Soviet fictional monsters, she invariably emphasized moral issues of global import, such as disappointment in humanity, the crisis of rationality, and the confusion between good and evil. In her book and elsewhere she denied the connection between literary monsters and the memory of the Soviet past. Moreover, her work indicates that she does not believe in the existence of this memory. I cannot agree more with her current statement that "fiction, despite its fantasy motifs, could be used as a source for understanding post-Soviet historical memory." She did not say anything close to that in her book, however, and she did not use fiction as a source for this purpose.

Khapaeva accuses me of having failed to acknowledge the use of her book, *Goticheskoe obshchestvo. Morfologiya koshmara* (Moscow: NLO, 2007). This slim book leaps from one astonishing statement to another. Khapaeva claims that J. R. R. Tolkien was "the founder of the gothic aesthetic," as she understands it. Then she says that this gothic aesthetic "floods our life," "generates the new, gothic morality," and also lays the "social foundation of the gothic society" (all from 13). From Tolkien, Khapaeva moves to the Russian film and novel by Sergei Luk'ianenko, *Nochnoi dozor* (Night Watch). We do overlap in our interest in this cultural product, but I am glad to confirm that Khapaeva's reading is the opposite of mine. While I interpret certain vampires in this film as remembrances of the Soviet past, Khapaeva states that its "nightmare is not in the vampires" but "in the collapse of the distinction between good and evil" (38). Khapaeva then goes on to speculate about astrophysical black holes and the nature of time (48–76). Next, Khapaeva makes some observations about post-Soviet memory. Reasonably, she argues that the propaganda surrounding the victory in World War II figures as a myth that blocks a broader awareness of the Soviet past (86–87). But she also blames the intelligentsia for the "massive idealization of the west" which somehow (I did not understand the logic) leads to the same historical amnesia (89–91). She mentions some classical studies of cultural memory in Germany and France to conclude that "these attempts . . . have not given astonishing results and interest in them

is declining" (103). She seems to reject any idea of cultural memory and instead stresses "the individual personal memory of the millions" (107–9). Later, in the sections "Gothic Morality," "Gothic Society," and "The Gothic University," she presents observations about moral decay in contemporary Russia and elsewhere.

Having read her book for the second time, I reiterate that my characterization of Khapaeva's book, "a gothic reading of current Russian politics" (650*n*57), is correct. As I see it, the parallels between our formulations do not go beyond generalities. The theoretical ideas, interpretative operations, and textual evidence in our works are different or the opposite. Khapaeva's use of the concept of the gothic, a respectable concept with a rich scholarly tradition both in English and in Russian, is surprisingly uninformed. I illustrated this point at length in my response in *NLO* and will not repeat it here.

Khapaeva expressed doubts about the consistency of my use of the concept "magical historicism," which I have used since 2001. Actually, its meaning has not changed; for example, in my essay, "Hard and Soft in Cultural Memory: Political Mourning in Russia and Germany," *Grey Room*, no. 16 (Summer 2004): 43–44, I used the notion of magical historicism "to connote those bizarre manipulations of history that are designed by the authors" of Soviet and post-Soviet prose. This is exactly the meaning of this notion that I used in my recent essay.

I have discussed with Khapaeva our common interests and differences many times, for example, at two conferences in Cambridge, England, in 2005 and 2008, to which I invited her. There is no reference to my work on memory in Khapaeva's publications, which is fine. No cultural critic can claim ownership of classical concepts, such as the gothic; of phenomena of popular culture, such as the film *Night Watch*; or of products of someone else's imagination, such as monsters.

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