

# Summary

## **Avant-Garde Organization of Life: From Aesthetic Project to Social Breakthrough**

In the article “Debating Theoretical and Political Aspects of Modernist Economy of Culture: Life-creation/life-building and Beyond” **Dennis Ioffe** analyzes various aspects of theory and history of early Soviet modernism and avant-garde debated sub specie comprehension of complex mechanisms of late-industrial economy of culture and its fundamental institutions. Particular emphasis is placed on theoretical pragmatics of international modernism and early Soviet “life-building” envisaged through the perspective of the new suggestive regime of experimental social environment.

In the article “From Word-making to Word-production: Vinokur, Platonov, and Tretyakov in the Discursive Infrastructure of the Avant-Garde” **Pavel Arsenev** discusses how Russian futurism got the chance to test the formula of “revolution of language” on an industrial scale, shifting from hand-crafted word creation to large-scale word production. This article analyzes the relationship of the Soviet literary avant-garde to the material and technical infrastructure of newspapers. It analyzes the texts of linguistic technicians (Grigory Vinokur), theorists of literary technology (Andrei Platonov), and bearers of practical knowledge of working on a periodical publication (Sergei Tretyakov), who drafted, conceptualized, and delivered apologies to the shift happening in the literary system of the 1920s in the areas of language, speech genres, and the temporality of the nature of what was happening the 1920s.

The article “The Linguistic Social Engineering of the 1920s Avant-Garde: Nikolai Evreinov’s *The Storming of the Winter Palace* and Gabriele D’Annunzio’s Free State of Fiume” by **Olga Sokolova** examines Nikolai Chuzhak’s strategy of “art-as-life-building” and similar concepts of the early Soviet avant-garde. The fundamental positions of the project of life-building are analyzed from the point of view of semiotic organization, performativity, and subjectivation. Key postulates of the organization of life of the life-building program are applied in the analysis of two projects from the 1920s formed according to the model of “mass theater,” but resulting in different forms of implementation in Russia and Italy. The features of temporality, verbal and non-verbal forms of expression, and communicative structure allow for conclusions to be drawn about the similarity of two life-organizations models, which had different focuses in the artistic and political practices of the Russian and European avant-garde and modernism of the time.

The article “Wings of Freedom: Petr Miturich and Aeroconstructivism” by **John E. Bowlit** focuses on the aerodynamic experiments of Petr Miturich, in particular his so-called *Letun*. Miturich became interested in flight during the First World War, elaborating his first flying apparatus in 1918 before constructing a prototype and undertaking a test flight on 27 December, 1921 — which might be described as an example of Russian *Aeroconstructivism*. Miturich’s basic

deduction was that modern man must travel not by horse and cart, but with the aid of a new, ecological apparatus — the *undulator*. The article delineates the general context of Miturich’s experiments, for example, his acquaintance with the ideas of Tatlin and Velemir Khlebnikov as well as the inventions of Igor’ Sikorsky, Fridrikh Tsander, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky and other scientists.

**Larisa Piskunova** and **Igor Yankov’s** article “Avant-Garde on Ural: Idea and Landmark” studies the specifics of the constructivist architecture of Ekaterinburg/Sverdlovsk as an element of the

avant-garde legacy. The relationship of the city atmosphere to the phenomenon of the avant-garde is analyzed, revealed to be a unique emanation of the avant-garde idea in the Urals due to the discrepancy of its basic principles and their real implementation. The transformation of the constructivist legacy into a monument to the avant-garde is retrospective and internally complex due to the contradiction between the ideology of the avant-garde, which is directed forward, and the phenomenon of the monument, which is by its nature retrospective and selected.

## Addressing the Stalinist Past in USSR

In the article “Foil and Mirrors: The Soviet Intelligentsia and German Atonement” **Mischa Gabowitsch** discusses how references to a supposedly exemplary German model of atonement for National Socialism became a staple of Soviet and post-Soviet debates about Stalinist terror even though the details of the German experience remain unknown. In the 1960s, early West German publications about the Nazi past indirectly

influenced Soviet Aesopian narratives that hinted at similarities between fascism and communism, such as the documentary film *Ordinary Fascism* and the Hitler biography *Criminal Number One*. The idea of successful German atonement was introduced in dissident samizdat debates in the 1970s as a foil for Russia’s own moral failures and has been used in similar comparative fashion ever since.

## Home Intellectual Gatherings of the Late Soviet Era

The article “Home Gatherings, Social Networks, and Biographical Strategies of Ariadna Gromova (1916—1981)” by **Maxim Lukin** reconstructs for the first time the biography of Ariadna Gromova, a Soviet science fiction writer, literary critic and translator. Gromova’s case serves as material for analysis of the interaction between official literary institutions and the informal social networks

and communicative spaces widespread in the late USSR. In Gromova’s social surroundings, networks of poets from Kiev, science fiction writers, and Western scholars and critics interested in Soviet science fiction have been identified. The author emphasizes that Gromova’s ability to be a cultural manager and intermediary agent who connected different social networks contributed to

the success of her literary career and the development of “sociophilosophical” movement in Soviet science fiction.

In **Anna Pismanik’s** article “‘Lianozovo circle’ and the Invention of New Regimes of Publicity in USSR in the 1950s and 1960s” the *Lianozovo school* is conceptualized as an innovational project that has produced an alternative public sphere. The author attempts to construct a model of role of the *Lianozovo school* in the development of unofficial culture and the schools subsequent canonization, using a comparative analysis of *Lianozovo school* and other unofficial home salons of the early 1960-s, the reconstruction of the procedures of Lianozovo Sundays, and addressing the activity of Lianozovo members in the context of the socio-cultural tendencies of the Khrushchev Thaw.

The article “Mikhail Sheinker and Aleksandr Chachko’s Seminar and the Institution of Aesthetic Discussions in Unofficial Soviet Culture of the 1970s and 1980s” by **Antonina Belugina** examines the unofficial seminar, which was a place where people representing diverse generations and various communities of Soviet unofficial art — from Moscow and Leningrad — could cross each other’s paths. Thanks to the heterogeneity of the seminar participants and their orientation to the discussion of the latest art the seminar became a space within which new creative strategies, as well as analytical languages, were developed, which became an important part of the theoretical foundations of Russian postmodernism. The main sources of the article are interviews with figures of unofficial art.

## Literature of Limit-Experience

**Elena Mikhailik’s** article “Varlam Shalamov: The Ghosts in the Plot” attempts to reconstruct one of the ways Varlam Shalamov works with the context of culture. In particular, the author tries to show how Shalamov uses the diverging layers of the said context to generate alternative plotlines within the limits of a story (the choice between them is determined by the cultural background of the reader). Within the limits of a cycle as a whole, the same technique generates a kind of a background motif of a collapse of culture in its capacity as a personal and collective memory.

In the article “Mandelstam and the Baobab (*Etwas Ungereimetes*: On One Small Celan Absurdity),” **Mikhail Konovalenko** looks at Paul Celan’s poem “Afternoon of Circus and Citadel” in order to ruminate on the closeness of

Celan’s poetic strategy to Mandelstam’s. Through an analysis of only one word in the second stanza, the poem mentioned above reveals a Mandelstam subtext not in the system of images or references, but in the acoustic structure itself of the poem.

In his article “The Poetics of Ontology and Limit-Experience: On Olga Bergholz’s Poem ‘Your Way,’” **Grigory Benevich** looks at the poetics of the ontology in Olga Bergholz’s war poetry. The author defines this ontology as existential — passing through death and becoming “one’s own being” constitute the most important part of the mystery and storyline of “Your Way,” and has a direction relationship to what can be called the poetics of limit-experience. Bergholz’s experience in prison from 1938 to 1939 was no less of a limit-

experience. She frequently returned to it during the blockade as well, and both

are discussed in this article.

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## The Leningrad Underground Revisited: The Epistolary Novel

This section includes “Letters to Tatyana” by **Aleksandr Mironov**, a significant poet and prosaist. The biographical and (un)censored circumstances of the correspondence, which started in 1978, are established in detail by Mironov’s addressee, the poet and translator **Tatyana Retivova**. Her foreword, as well as the letters themselves, are

a priceless historical and literary document of the Leningrad underground. But at the same time, the letters are also an epistolary novel in a purely literary sense (with made up characters, adventurous twists and turns in the plot, religious and philosophical excursions, and metaliterary reflections).

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## Poetological Studies

In the article “Monostiches: ‘Pages’ in Gennady Aygi’s Manuscripts” **Aleksandr Zhitenev** examines the semantics of Gennady Aygi’s monostich poetry. A conclusion is drawn about the convertibility in drafts of minimal texts of various sizes (monostiches, two-line, three-line); on the poet’s perception of the monostich as a structure that can be used both as independent texts and as components of complex poetic compositions.

It is proposed to correlate minimal texts with two opposing genres: “notes” and “pages.” While “notes” are more discursive, philosophical, and open for refining and rewriting, “pages” are emotional, oriented toward concrete events, and connected with the problematization of the boundaries of the verbal and the visual, the expressed and the unexpressed, and the real and the imaginary.

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## Readings

**Evgeny Soshkin**’s article “The Law of the Left Cheek: On Involuntary Conjectures while Quoting from Memory in Light of Statistical Analysis” examples the typical mistakes in paraphrases from the Sermon on the Mount in texts by Russian authors of the 19<sup>th</sup>—21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In around 50% of cases, the call to turn the other cheek towards someone who

hit you on your right cheek is reproduced mixing up the right and left cheeks. With the help of an electronic database (the National Corpus of the Russian Language and the National Electronic Library), a conclusion is drawn about the probable non-random nature of the studied typical error, and hypothesis is put forward about its probable cause.