

**A ‘dreadful predilection’: The Gothic-  
Fantastic in Soviet Socialist Realist  
Literature**

## **Introduction: A Soviet Ghost Story**

Moscow, circa 1920. The social and economic aftermath of two wars and a revolution has shattered the city's infrastructure; the stringency of War Communism has not yet relaxed into Lenin's New Economic Policy. Disease and hardship are decimating the urban poor. Dr Snegirev is not, therefore, surprised to receive a visit from a young girl in a pink dress, claiming that her mother is very sick and needs a doctor urgently. He agrees to call, but as soon as the girl leaves he realizes he should ask her more questions. He tells his secretary to fetch her back. The secretary denies seeing any girl; so does the doorman. Baffled, Dr Snegirev hurries to the address the girl gave him, where he finds a seriously ill woman. She wonders how the doctor found her address. 'Your daughter told me', the doctor explains. The woman begins to cry and explains through her tears that her daughter died three days ago: the body is still lying in the next room because she lacks the strength to bury it. Entering the room, the doctor sees, stretched on the table, the same girl in the pink dress who had visited his surgery.<sup>1</sup>

The girl in the pink dress belongs to a distinguished tradition of revelatory revenants, or ghosts with a message, including Hamlet's father's ghost, Mrs Veal in Daniel Defoe's *The Apparition of Mrs Veal* (1706), and Alexander Pushkin's Countess in *The Queen of Spades* (1833). She also represents a unique example of that rarest of fabulae: a Soviet ghost story, told by a Soviet writer, in a Soviet setting. Russia's Communist government prided itself on the reorganisation and standardization of fiction under the banner of 'Socialist Realism', a literary programme officially inaugurated at the first All-Russian Soviet Writers' Union Congress of 1934. A closely regulated system of rewards, privileges and internal censorship ensured that the majority of published writers adhered to the aesthetics of so-called 'revolutionary romanticism', including mandatory optimism, patriotism, and ideological correctness. An inevitable coda of Socialist Realism was the extirpation of ghost stories, and

the gradual exclusion of all forms of the fantastic, from national literature. This occultation of Gothic-fantastic writing gradually intensified during the 1920s; by 1934 the future Writers' Union Secretary Konstantin Fedin felt able to announce publicly that the Russian fantastic novel had “died and was shut in its tomb”.<sup>2</sup>

Fedin's choice of a strikingly Gothic phrase to announce the death of Gothic-fantastic prose betrays an innate inconsistency in the Soviet rejection of this mode. His choice of words (and the example of Madeline Usher, with whose fate Fedin may well have been familiar)<sup>3</sup> implied the possibility that Russian Gothic-fantastic literature would not rest quietly in its tomb. This article will examine the survival of Gothic-fantastic writing in Russia during the early Soviet period, placing so-called 'Soviet Gothic' in the context of the pre-existing Russian Gothic tradition. My definition of 'Gothic-fantastic' is predicated on the same paradigm successfully deployed by critics such as Neil Cornwell and Claire Whitehead in regard to nineteenth-century Russian fiction: that is, a Todorovian interpretative ambiguity between realism and unreality in the portrayal of the supernatural. Elsewhere, referring specifically to Russian literature, Cornwell defines 'the fantastic Gothic' as writing 'characterized by hesitation over the supernatural'. I qualify this basic definition of the Gothic-fantastic with the necessary inclusion of one or more motifs and narrative devices characteristic of the canonical Gothic novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including death, decay, insanity, haunted castles, captive maidens, nefarious tyrants and Byzantine secrecy.<sup>4</sup>

A minority of dissident or, at least, unorthodox Russian writers sustained this nineteenth-century Gothic-fantastic mode, under Communism and in exile. The most significant of these are listed briefly below. The aim of this article, however, is to explore how ostensibly *conformist* Soviet writers used, manipulated, and distorted their nation's Gothic literary heritage, and how in so doing, they reached unexpected and often ominous

conclusions about the Soviet cultural project. To demonstrate this process, I have selected three fictions which deliberately exploited the Gothic-fantastic mode within otherwise conventional narrative structures. Taken together, these three texts – Fedor Gladkov’s *Cement* (1925), Vladimir Zazubrin’s *The Chip* (1923), and Nikolai Ognev’s *The Diary of Kostia Riabtsev* (1927) – demonstrate both the advantages and the contradictions contingent on mingling Soviet ideology with Gothic allegory. The section entitled ‘Cement Gothic’ examines how the novel *Cement* by Fedor Gladkov – one of the architects of Socialist Realist aesthetics – reinvented the chronotope of the Gothic castle as a derelict cement factory in a provincial Russian city, in a successful attempt to associate capitalist production policies with corruption and decay. ‘Cheka Gothic’ discusses Zazubrin’s novella, in which a senior agent of Lenin’s secret police – the feared Cheka – becomes obsessed with a sensual female demon personifying the gravid Soviet state, while struggling to intellectually justify the mass executions authorized by that same state. Finally, Nikolai Ognev’s incorrigible resuscitation of Gothic motifs in his fiction, long after Soviet authors were meant to have assimilated socialist aesthetics, hints that Communist self-identity is already irredeemably compromised. All three of these works are available in English translation.<sup>5</sup>

Soviet writers confined their use of the Gothic-fantastic mode to thematic or situational devices, or to the depiction of a single character: rather than one Gothic novel, Soviet fiction features multiple Gothic vignettes. Precisely because of its ideological conservatism, the Gothic mode enabled authors to tap a ready-made narrative template or exploit an associative chain, often with the intention of smearing a pre-selected political or social category (as Nikolai Ognev’s short fiction invokes monstrous Gothic stereotypes to characterize landowning peasants and Orthodox priests).<sup>6</sup> Like Foucault’s Panopticon, Gothic fiction has traditionally emphasized ‘stone walls, darkness, hideouts and dungeons’ while actually delimiting and enclosing this dangerous space. Although predicated on chaos and

obscurity, Gothic texts serve ‘to paradoxically create a space of exact legibility’.<sup>7</sup> In the Soviet context, Gothic caricatures of bourgeois convention formed a dark background against which the evolving Soviet state contrasted favourably. However, over the course of the Soviet Union’s first decade, increasing seepage from the externalized Gothic-fantastic into the inner structure of Soviet literary forms is discernible – shown here in the writing of Zazubrin and Ognev. By choosing to write in the Gothic mode, these authors, apparently inadvertently, invited its inherent ambiguity into their own fiction. As Fred Botting notes, Gothic may begin by challenging limits and hierarchies, but ends by confirming them.<sup>8</sup> Rosemary Jackson alleges that nineteenth-century Gothic fiction ‘in many ways reinforces a bourgeois ideology’.<sup>9</sup> By using Gothic allegory to frame Communist aspirations, Soviet authors inevitably contaminated their newborn state’s inheritance with the threat of Gothic decadence and ruin.

In view of such pervasive generic fluidity during the 1920s, perhaps the single most surprising aspect of Soviet Gothic is critics’ refusal to admit its existence. Studies of Russian Gothic-fantastic literature invariably end, at the latest, with the pre-revolutionary Symbolist poets, or the first wave of émigré writers.<sup>10</sup> Few, if any, critics acknowledge that a Gothic tradition could survive within the monolithic culture of Stalinist Russia. An apparent exception is the concept of ‘NEP Gothic’, coined by the cultural historian Eric Naiman to describe the deliberate use of Gothic language and imagery in political and journalistic discourse during the decade of the New Economic Policy.<sup>11</sup> Naiman suggests that the traditional Gothic novel and Soviet political discourse shared common fears of the immediate historical past and of sexuality. Gothic metaphor and imagery thus became the logical mode to express the newly created Soviet state’s historical and sexual insecurities, forming the ‘chief generic influence on and vehicle for NEP discourse’ (151). Fear of illegitimacy and contamination, whether sexual or political, permeated both print media and ideological

propaganda. NEP Gothic thus, arguably, became both the defining ambience of the 1920s and a form of political spin. Naiman's analysis, while original and useful, does not dwell on Soviet literary fiction.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, it fails to explain the persistence of Gothic-fantastic motifs well into the 1930s and beyond. Like previous critics, Naiman accepts the fallacy that Soviet Russia and Gothic literature are mutually exclusive concepts – a fallacy belying the deep roots of the Russian Gothic-fantastic tradition.

### **The Russian Gothic tradition**

The first Gothic novels came to Russia via French translations (often questionably accurate) at the turn of the eighteenth century, stimulating a so-called 'Gothic wave' of imitations.<sup>13</sup> Radcliffe, Walpole, M. R. Lewis and lesser-known writers such as Francis Lathom achieved immediate and lasting popularity. The first significant native addition to the Gothic canon is probably Nikolai Karamzin's short story 'The Island of Bornholm' (1793), which combined a typical setting – a ruined castle on an island – with the familiar motifs of a captive maiden and an incest drama. The European explosion of Gothic coincided with the growth of literary fiction in Russia: newly founded journals published a wide range of sensational literature on werewolves, vampires, witches, and other monsters. Pushkin's 'The Queen of Spades' and Nikolai Gogol's 'The Overcoat' (1842) are two of the most enigmatic and influential ghost stories ever written, and yet each represents only a fragment of its author's Gothic-fantastic repertoire. Every major Russian writer of the nineteenth century, including Mikhail Lermontov, Vladimir Odoevskii, and Anton Chekhov, interpreted the Gothic-fantastic tradition after his own fashion.<sup>14</sup> Dostoievskii's fiction pioneered Gothic realism, that is, psychological *noir* studies set against an immanently haunted urban background. The Devil, often in disguise, is ubiquitous in Russian Gothic-fantastic writing, resurfacing in the twentieth century in Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* (finished 1939). This pre-eminence of supernatural and satanic elements probably derives

from three major German influences: Goethe's *Faust*, E. T. A. Hoffmann's stories and novels, and Schelling's transcendental philosophy. This triad of influences produced a literary culture predisposed to relish the bizarre, the grotesque, and the unpredictable.

That culture's direct linear descendants in the twentieth century are the stories and novels of Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940), Aleksandr Chaianov (1888-1937) and Sigizmund Krzhizhanovskii (1887- 1950), who all lived and wrote (but generally failed to publish) under the Soviet regime. Of these three, Mikhail Bulgakov, whose works were widely circulated in *samizdat* (manuscript copies) and eventually published after his death by his widow, is the best-known outside Russia. *The Master and Margarita*, a Gothic-fantastic romp through Soviet Moscow complete with vampires, demons and mass haunting, has achieved cult status. His other fictions tap a Gogolian vein of grotesque humour, combining social satire with Gothic motifs (such as *Heart of a Dog* (1925), in which a Frankenstein-like scientist inadvertently creates a new human being after transplanting organs from a dead man into a live dog). Alexander Chaianov, an agronomist by training, was a man of exceptional learning and culture. During the 1920s he published a science-fiction novella and five Gothic-fantastic short stories, deliberately written in the style of Gogol and Hoffmann, under the pen-name of Botanist X. Unfortunately, as a result of his opposition to Stalin's plan of agricultural collectivization, Chaianov was arrested in 1931, exiled, and eventually shot. Sigizmund Krzhizhanovskii, whom modern critics have compared to Borges and Beckett, published almost nothing in his own lifetime. Repeatedly rejected by publishers, Krzhizhanovskii scraped a living through editing, journalism, and screenwriting. His immense archive of five novels and numerous short stories was accidentally rediscovered in 1978. His fictions, such as the wonderful 'Quadraturin' (1926), use both Gothic and fantastic motifs to examine existential dilemmas and the nature of creativity.<sup>15</sup>

These three writers are unique in their explicit emulation of Russia's Gothic-fantastic heritage. A range of other dissident or émigré writers also borrowed Gothic-fantastic motifs to make political or ideological points, such as Daniil Kharms, whose terrifying 'The Old Woman' (1939), the story of a corpse that refuses to die, attacks the poverty and paranoia of life in Stalin's Russia. Émigré authors such as Boris Zaitsev or Georgii Peskov (the pseudonym of Elena Deisha) wrote about the privations Russia's exiled or reduced gentry suffered post- 1917, usually in indirectly spectral rather than explicitly Gothic terms. A blatantly biased example of émigré Gothic-fantastic is the novel *The Brotherhood of Vii* (1925) by the émigré writer Pavel Perov, which accuses the Bolshevik élite of stealing souls and creating zombies as part of their plan for world domination. I have discussed this type of anti-Soviet (and therefore necessarily peripheral) Gothic literature more fully elsewhere;<sup>16</sup> the remainder of this article will analyse Gothic-fantastic fiction that emerged under the auspices of Socialist Realism.

### **Cement Gothic**

Socialist Realism is one of the twentieth century's least critically regarded genres. Its archetypal plot has been memorably reduced to the formula 'boy gets tractor'. However, as Katerina Clark has shown in her survey of the genre, the Socialist Realist plot was in fact considerably more inclusive, nuanced and even dialogic with culture past and present than critics wish to admit.<sup>17</sup> Clark demonstrates that the hero of Fedor Gladkov's *Cement*, one of the genre's archetypal novels, is derived from two major Gothic-fantastic precedents, Alexander Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman* (1833) and Andrei Bely's *Petersburg* (1916). Like the Bronze Horseman – a supernatural statue allegorising both the dynamism and the tyranny of Russia's autocracy – haunting both works, the hero is endowed with emphatically metallic qualities of strength, charisma and endurance. By displacing the trope of the metal man into the ranks of the Revolution, *Cement* subverts a supernatural cliché to support the



new, collectivist Soviet ethos. In addition to this native-grown ambiguity between the real strongman and the marvellous statue, a specifically Gothic set-piece appears in *Cement*: the haunted castle.

The Gothic castle paradigm appears in the earliest Gothic novels, such as Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Clara Reeve's slightly later *The Old English Baron* (1777), where a castle ghost is instrumental in restoring the family estate to the dispossessed heir. Modern examples of this kind of fiction include the Polish author Witold Gombrowicz' *The Secret of Myslotch* (1939), the Hungarian novelist Antal Szerb's *The Pendragon Legend* (1934), and the American writer Richard Brautigan's *The Hawkline Monster* (1974). Most modern Gothic novels, however, update the physical form of the Gothic castle to avoid cultural anachronism.<sup>18</sup> American Gothic writers, for example, lacking 'any handy ruined castles or monasteries',<sup>19</sup> located creative substitutes such as Hawthorne's eponymous *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Gatsby's oversized palace in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and even the Overlook Hotel in King's *The Shining* (1977). In *Cement*, the role of the Gothic castle is fulfilled by the derelict cement factory in the home town of the hero, Gleb, who returns from the Civil War to find former factory colleagues living off petty capitalism, making and trading cigarette lighters.

The opening chapters of Gladkov's novel emphasize the dilapidation of the cement factory. Successive chapter titles signify the factory's preeminent narrative role: 'The Empty Factory', 'The Lifeless Hearth', 'The Hidden Room', and so on. Like a crumbling medieval castle, the factory is virtually ruined; revolution and civil war have banished the owners and foremen, but the proletariat have failed to exploit their absence. At several stages throughout the novel, the factory is compared to a 'tomb' or 'cemetery'. This metaphor is historically justified when Gleb discovers that during the Civil War the factory functioned as a White

Army barracks and a holding cell for prisoners. Horrified, Gleb contrasts the factory's glorious past with its ruinous present:

Завод грохотал огненным адом. Дрожала земля от бешенства машин, а воздух горящими стружками брызгал от пламенных окон [...] Это было в прошлом. А теперь – тишина и великое кладбище. Травой заросли бремсберги, стальные пути и дороги к заводу. Ржа покрыла коростой метал, и упругие железобетонные стены здания изранены проломали и размывами горных потоков.<sup>20</sup>

[The factory had roared with the fires of hell. The earth had trembled from the fury of the machines, and the air had been split by scorching streams from the fiery windows. [...] That lay in the past. Now there was silence, a vast cemetery. Grass grew over the ramps, the steel rails and the roads to the factory. The metal was scabbed over with rust, and the sturdy reinforced concrete walls of the building were wounded and broken down by the washing of mountain streams.]

The cement factory thus possesses all the key attributes of a Gothic castle: dereliction, underground tombs (the prisoners' barracks are described as 'nightmarish coffins' (18)), a wicked guardian (the German chief engineer), and even a collection of captive virgins. The latter are the machines in the main hall, unused but maintained in working order by Brynza the mechanic, who calls them his 'clean-fleshed maidens' (20). The inevitable Gothic villain is the foreign engineer, German Germannovich Kleist, who shares a forename with the antihero of Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades* and a surname with the German Romantic author. Formerly Gleb's bitter enemy, a ruthless functionary who had usurped the workers' rights to the factory on behalf of unseen capitalist bosses, Kleist now hides in the 'hidden room', a tiny, cobweb-covered office in the administration building. Kleist built the machines and structures of the factory, and therefore empathizes with these 'iron and concrete giants' (87).

But, excluded by the new co-operative economic system, he is now as much prisoner as guardian of the factory: ‘The old specialist Engineer Kleist... had become the captive of his creations’.<sup>21</sup> In a symbolic scene, Gleb invades Kleist’s office and strips the cobwebs from the windows, letting in light. The final confrontation between the two men takes place, appropriately, at twilight on a tower above the central shaft of the deserted factory. Expecting Gleb to kill him, Kleist blames the Bolsheviks for the factory’s decline: ‘We built for decades – powerfully and rationally. And you have turned everything into chaos and destruction’. Gleb inverts this diagnosis, blaming Kleist’s bosses for the situation: because the factory was designed as an ‘impervious fortress’ to exclude the proletariat, it failed to withstand social change. However, where Kleist sees nothing but destruction – his own and the machines’ – Gleb envisions potential for restoration. He is determined to resurrect the dead factory: ‘bring this cemetery back to life... to light a fire and strike up music on all the pipes and cables’ (92).

Gleb offers Kleist forgiveness if he agrees to join the workers’ collective. Kleist realizes that Gleb’s ‘terrifying hands, sated with death, had coarsely and firmly dragged him [Kleist] back to life’ (93). The former Gothic villain Engineer Kleist is re-imagined as ‘Comrade Technician’, the workers’ friend. Gleb’s generous offer, crowned by Kleist’s cautious acceptance, breaks the Gothic cycle of retribution and transforms *Cement* from an incipiently Gothic novel into an optimistic fable of Soviet labour. Gladkov claimed that his plot was inspired by the sight of workers enthusiastically labouring on weekends to restore a cement factory in Novorossisk.<sup>22</sup> Whatever *Cement*’s real-life inspiration, Gladkov certainly tapped Gothic metaphor to establish a terrifyingly dystopian alternative to the workers’ paradise: Gleb’s original vision of the factory as prison and grave. By developing correspondences between the traditional Gothic castle and the abandoned factory, Gladkov emphasizes the villainy of capitalist bosses and sadistic White Army officers as pseudo-

Gothic usurpers. Since the Communist workforce play the role of the caste/factory's rightful heirs, Gothic plot mechanics entitle them to a happy ending, with the factory reinvented as a symbol of harmony and optimism between all factions. However, were the novel read from an even slightly skewed perspective – with Kleist or his masters interpreted as the unjustly dispossessed, and Communists like Gleb as the usurpers – the latter would be doomed by the same Gothic determinism to dispossession in their turn. In the texts by Zazubrin and Ognev examined below, this blindly retributive mechanism of Gothic justice works against the Soviet characters, despite their ideological probity. Gladkov's affinity with Gothic metaphor in an otherwise positivist novel no doubt contributed to the critical sniping which forced him to rewrite *Cement* many times between 1925 and 1941.<sup>23</sup>

### **Cheka Gothic**

In the following extract from Vladimir Zazubrin's novella *The Chip*, the HQ of the Cheka – Lenin's infamous secret police – is grotesquely personified:

Ночами белый каменный трехэтажный дом с красивым флагом на крыше, с красной вывеской на стене, с красными звездами на шапках часовых  
вглядывался в город голодными блестящими четырехугольными глазами окон, щерил заледеневшие зубы чугунных решетчатых ворот, хватал, жевал охапками арестованных, глотал их каменными глотками подвалов, переваривал в каменном брюхе и мокротой, слюной, потом, экскрементами выплевывал, выхаркивал, выбрасывал на улицу. И к рассвету усталый, позевывая со скрипом чугунных зубов и челюстей, высовывал из подворотни красные языки крови.<sup>24</sup>

[By night, the white three-storey building with the handsome flag on its roof, with a red placard on the wall, with red stars on the guards' caps, fixed upon the town the shining gaze of its four-cornered window-eyes, bared like icy teeth the iron grilles of its doors, bit, chewed mouthfuls of arrested men, swallowed them down the stone

throats of its cellars, digested them with wet slobber in its stone belly and then, spitting experimentally, spewed them out, hurling them onto the street. Towards dawn it grew tired, yawning until its iron teeth and jaws creaked, dribbling red tongues of blood from its gateway.]

The windows of this archetypically Soviet building are glaring orbs, its gates grind like teeth, and its hungry jaws devour and spit out hapless prisoners for interrogation and execution. All this activity is framed by infernal crimson tongues of fire against a nocturnal background, the traditional setting for supernatural mischief. Zazubrin's metaphor exemplifies the possession – or gothicization – of Soviet space by supernatural forces created within Soviet society. Between 1917 and 1922, the Cheka, staffed primarily by young, careerist Marxists, were empowered to seize and execute individuals suspected of treason or sedition. As this category could be interpreted to include virtually any member of the bourgeoisie or the clergy, Red Army deserters as well as anyone who had fought on the losing side in the Civil War, as well as the family or associates of the above, the Cheka rapidly acquired their own myth of omnipotence and cruelty. This leads me to label a group of novels and short stories from the 1920s as 'Cheka Gothic'. These works, which exploit Gothic narrative patterns to explore the morally troubled operations of the Cheka, include Ilia Ehrenburg's *Life and Death of Nikolai Kurbov* (1923), Mikhail Slonimskii's "The Emery Machine" (1924), Aleksandr Tarasov-Rodionov's *Chocolate* (1922) and Vladimir Zazubrin's *The Pale Truth* (1923) and *The Chip* (1923). In these stories, Cheka officers and so-called heroes of the revolution gradually discover their own guilt and regret for the atrocities they have helped to perpetrate. Haunted by madness, phantoms and hallucinations, they are either destroyed by their self-knowledge or – ironically – sacrificed by their peers to conceal the moral vacuity of Cheka justice.

Vladimir Zazubrin's novella *The Chip* (the title refers to a chip of wood burning in a bonfire, one of Zazubrin's favourite metaphors for the role of individuals in the Revolution) is a particularly apt example of Cheka Gothic, owing to curious correspondences with M.R. Lewis' *The Monk* (1796). It is unlikely that Zazubrin (1895-1938), a self-taught writer from a peasant family in Penza, western Russia, had any knowledge of the novel whose scenes of 'graphic violence' and grotesque sexuality originated the British 'horror Gothic' tradition.<sup>25</sup> Although *The Monk* had been available in Russian translation since the early nineteenth century, Zazubrin was very much a self-taught, uncultured writer; in the words of one critic, 'he belonged to that numerous cohort of writers, who owed their birth to the October Revolution'.<sup>26</sup> The experience of revolution and Civil War provided Zazubrin with both the material and the impulse to write. In 1923 Zazubrin became secretary, later editor, of the Irkutsk-based literary journal *Siberian Fires*. Later in his career, however, Zazubrin struggled to reconcile Communist sympathies with searching questions about the ethics of Soviet justice. Rejected by the Soviet literary establishment, he died in prison (probably shot) in Moscow. *The Chip*, like its sister novella *The Pale Truth*, were both rejected for publication because of their strong criticism of the internal workings of the Soviet state, and did not emerge into print until the late 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

*The Chip* and *The Monk* share an important narrative strategy: the representation of the Gothic villain as tragic hero. Both stories trace the self-destruction of an essentially noble character. Both stories use hallucinatory images which, read literally, must be ascribed to supernatural agency. The hero of each is a highly principled young man, undermined by a series of moral compromises made with the best of intentions. In each story, the hero is corrupted by a demonic female figure who symbolizes his deepest desires. Ambrosio the monk and Srubov the Cheka officer are simultaneously heroes and villains of plots which transform each man 'from a figure who wields sublime power into one who falls victim to

it'.<sup>28</sup> In *The Monk*, the Gothic villain is an exceptionally righteous young monk, Ambrosio, lured into perdition by a female demon, Matilda, who initially pretends to be a young seminarian. She secretly reveals herself as a woman to Ambrosio, begs him to keep her secret and eventually seduces him. From this point Ambrosio's descent into a multiple murderer, rapist and apostate is rapid. The girl he violates, Antonia, turns out to be his sister: to facilitate the rape, he murdered their mother. The novel ends with Satan brutally killing and dismembering Ambrosio.

*The Chip*, like Lewis's novel, opens with its hero in a position of exceptional moral responsibility. As a senior Cheka officer, Srubov is responsible for compiling reports on suspects and for supervising the execution of traitors. The first scenes harrowingly portray a Cheka execution squad at work in the cellars under the police building. Afterwards, the Cheka load the still-bleeding corpses of their victims into carts and bury them at a secret location. Srubov controls his emotions during the executions by forcing himself to compare the victims to pastry figures baked by his mother: 'A man is no more than dough' (202). However, even atrocities must conform to regulations. He disciplines an officer who attempts to rape a female suspect with the reprimand: "No, not everything is permitted. Only what is permitted can be permitted" (240).

Srubov is firmly committed to the Revolution, which he secretly anthropomorphizes as a "a wide-arsed, pregnant, Russian woman, in a torn, patched, dirty dress, stitched with canvas. And I love Her thus, for what she is, sincere, living, not a figment" (214). His love for the Revolution exceeds any personal affections. In order that the Revolution can bear her 'child' – the future socialist utopia – Srubov will commission as many murders as necessary. In fact, Srubov visualizes his relationship with 'Her' – as he thinks of the Revolution – in sexual terms. One incident in the Cheka cellars illustrates this. Srubov's men hesitate to shoot

a beautiful blonde, blue-eyed woman who begs for her life. Srubov is also tempted to spare her, but, after seeing a second vision of ‘Her’, shoots the blonde himself:

Но Та, которую любил Срубов, которой сулил, была здесь же. (Хотя, конечно, какое бы то ни было противопоставление, сравнение Ее с синеглазой немислимо, абсурдно.) (209)

[But she, whom Srubov loved, to whom he was promised, was also here. (Although, of course, how unimaginable and absurd any contrast, any comparison between Her and this blue-eyed creature would be).]

Simultaneously fecund temptress and supernatural crone, She invokes the Russian legend of the *rusalka* or water-nymph as well as the Gogolian myth of sexually avid witch-women:

Перед ним встала Она – любовница великая и жадная. Ей отдал лучшие годы жизни. Больше – жизнь целиком. Все взяла – душу, кровь и силы. [...] Ей, ненасытной, нравятся только молодые, здоровые, полнокровные. Лимон выжатый не нужен более. (254)

[She stood before him – a wondrous and greedy lover. He had given her the best years of his life. She had taken everything – his soul, his blood, his strength. [...] She was insatiable: only the young, healthy, and full-blooded pleased her. She had no more use for a squeezed-out lemon.]

‘She’ increasingly resembles Matilda in *The Monk*. Both women are passionate lovers who lure their paramours into crimes that estrange them from humanity. Despite Srubov’s obsession with the Revolution, he increasingly imagines ‘Her’ as a blood-spattered monster. Similarly, one critic of *The Monk* comments that ‘Matilda is such a frightening creature that she cannot be female, cannot even be male, but must be relegated to the world of demons’.<sup>29</sup> As Srubov’s perception of ‘Her’ alters from adoration to horror, his conception of the



Revolution becomes increasingly apocalyptic. Srubov's accommodation with daily atrocities necessitates detachment from reality. He experiences visions and nightmares. In his dreams, the Cheka executioners fell trees in a vast forest (a deformation of the wood-chip metaphor); he becomes afraid of the dark and of the execution cellar. He loses his capacity to rationalize police executions and their gruesome aftermath. Srubov takes compulsory leave from his position to undergo psychiatric examination; finally, his own colleagues arrest him. Srubov escapes before his interrogation can begin and drowns himself in the river, after a final terrifying, hallucinatory vision in which he sees former victims of executions floating on the water alongside mythological figures.

Туман зловонный над рекой. Нависли крутые каменным берега. Русалка с синими глазами, покачиваясь, плывет навстречу. На золотистых волосах у нее красная коралловая диадема. Ведьма лохматая, полногрудая, широкозадая с ней рядом. Леший толстый в черной шерсти по воде, как по земле, идет. Из воды руки, ноги, головы почерневшие, полуразложившиеся, как коряги, как пни, волосы женщин переплелись, как водоросли. Срубов бледнеет, глаза не закрываются от ужаса. (257)

[An evil-smelling fog lay on the river. The sharp stony banks hung down. A blue-eyed *rusalka* was swimming unsteadily towards him. There was a red coral tiara on her golden hair. Beside her was a disheveled, full-breasted, wide-assed witch. A fat, black-furred wood-demon walked on the water as though on the earth. From the water rose blackened, half-rotted hands, feet, heads, like dead wood; the hair of the women trailed out like seaweed. Srubov turned pale: his eyes were fixed open with horror.]

Srubov's descent into Hell's watery antechamber parallels Ambrosio's brutal final encounter with Satan. However, unlike Ambrosio, who consciously permits Satan's henchwoman to tempt him away from his vocation, Srubov finally realizes that both the

political cause he has espoused and its feminine personification are false idols. Horror teaches him, too late, that his true values are profoundly Christian ones, anathematic to Cheka protocol. *The Chip* makes Botting's point that Gothic's very excesses provoke aesthetic and moral retrenchment, ultimately reaffirming conservative values (as in *The Monk*, as in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), as in all of Radcliffe). But 'She', even though renounced by Srubov, outlives him. *The Chip* concludes with Efim Solomin, a former member of Srubov's execution detail, speaking at a Party meeting. Solomin has fallen into precisely the same ethical pitfall as Srubov; he sincerely upholds the moral difference between 'murder', which the law prohibits, and 'execution', which the law demands. Meanwhile, the symbol of the Revolution watches, 'stained with her own blood and the blood of enemies [...] ragged, in red and blue scraps, in a crudely stitched shirt, She stood tall in her bare feet on a great plain, looking upon the world with vigilant, raging eyes' (258). The cycle of bloodshed continues: 'She' awaits a fresh tide of victims.

Much of *The Chip* treads the same Todorovian line between madness and the supernatural Whitehead identifies in Maupassant's *The Horla* (1887) or Dostoevskii's *The Double* (1846): as in both these texts, the protagonist's madness fails to offer a definitive strategy of disambiguation between real and unreal.<sup>30</sup> Even given that Srubov's increasingly Hoffmannesque visions are hallucinations – his nightmares, his encounter with his own double, his final fugue – the initial factual account of Cheka execution squads and Srubov's perception (while still nominally sane) of 'She' as a distorted, blood-boltered avatar of Marianne, are sufficiently Gothic-fantastic to undermine any reductionist realist interpretation. The interfamilial betrayal characteristic of Gothic plot is here inverted: where in Walpole's *Otranto*, for example, fathers such as Manfred scheme against the next generation, Soviet sons retroactively disinherit their scions. Srubov allows his own father to be arrested and executed for alleged sedition (although his accuser is Srubov's best friend

from university) in the name of revolutionary probity. Ironically, as *The Chip* progresses and an increasingly confused Srubov struggles to redeem or at least extricate himself, the disintegration of his life and sanity is a corollary to his gradual disenchantment with 'Her'. Srubov dies as a nascent Gothic hero, upholding those humane and familial (but irredeemably bourgeois) loyalties that both he and Zazubrin set out to reject.

The seeds of *The Chip*'s Gothic horror lie in an aspect of Zazubrin's writing that is both strength and liability: his commitment to truth-telling. His first novel, *Two Worlds* (1921), a barely fictionalized description of White atrocities and Red heroism, was hailed by critics and fellow writers as the first Socialist Realist novel. Courtesy of the Communist Secretary for Culture, who called it 'exceptionally successful',<sup>31</sup> it found its way to Lenin's desk. Lenin apparently remarked that it was a 'truly horrifying, terrible book... but worthy and necessary'.<sup>32</sup> It was widely considered to be Soviet Russia's first ideologically authentic novel.<sup>33</sup> Younger writers expressed their intention to imitate Zazubrin's primitive but effective style.<sup>34</sup> However, just a decade later, Zazubrin was expelled from the Party and struggling to find editorial work in Moscow. In April 1928 a critic dismissed *Two Worlds* as 'bloody sausage-meat'; subsequently, Zazubrin was fired from the editorial board of *Siberian Fires* and excluded from the Siberian Union of Writers.<sup>35</sup> *Two Worlds* was not reprinted between 1936 and 1956.<sup>36</sup> This foundational novel in the canon of Soviet literature was systematically excluded from print. Zazubrin was eventually repressed in 1938.

Gothic is a revelatory mode: truth will always out. Zazubrin made no secret of his own commitment to truth, even quoting Lev Tolstoi's famous definition of art as truth to a young literary acquaintance.<sup>37</sup> At the beginning of his career, as he argued in the final scenes of *Two Worlds*, Zazubrin genuinely believed that the establishment of socialism necessitated the extermination of the bourgeois and aristocracy. Later, he evolved the metaphorical image of man as a 'chip' in the bonfire of the revolution to illustrate his argument that individuals

must suffer for universal good. This metaphor dominates *The Chip* as well as *The Pale Truth*, the story of a loyal Communist official tried and executed on false charges of corruption. Miscarriages of justice, individual sacrifice, Zazubrin insisted, are an inevitable part of the intoxicating, annihilating blaze of revolutionary transcendence.

The Gothic mode swiftly exposes this argument as fallacy. Zazubrin endlessly rewrote *The Chip* without creating a version that was both ideologically compatible and truthful.<sup>38</sup> ‘I will rewrite and expand my “Chip” as much as necessary [...] I hope you believe that I sincerely wanted to write a work that would be both revolutionary and useful to the revolution. If it failed in this, malicious intent is not to blame’.<sup>39</sup> Zazubrin failed to recognize that his determination to write the truth – while refusing to admit it – inevitably involved his novella in the matrix of Gothic plot. Srubov and *The Monk*’s Ambrosio are both well-meaning intellectuals seduced by supernatural forces – for Srubov, the Revolutionary ideal; for Ambrosio, the female demon Matilda. Both commit murder to achieve their ends. Srubov’s motives are self-sacrificing, whereas Ambrosio’s are selfish. However, at the end of each story both men are abandoned by their supernatural protectors, forced to acknowledge the human destruction they have caused, and finally destroyed. Both *The Chip* and Lewis’s novel use the shocking imagery of ‘Horror Gothic’ to render explicit the inescapability of consequences. One of the unchanging lessons of Gothic narrative is that there is no justification for doing evil; it is bitterly ironic that Zazubrin, like his hero Srubov, was unable to see this for himself before the mechanism of Soviet justice claimed him also.

### **Nikolai Ognev and the ‘dreadful predilection’**

The opening anecdote of the ghost in the pink dress is taken from *Kostia Riabtsev’s Diary*, an early Soviet propaganda classic by Nikolai Ognev, once widely known and translated, now undeservedly neglected.<sup>40</sup> Kostia Riabtsev, the naïve and opinionated teenage diarist (a kind of Soviet Adrian Mole), describes the upheavals of the early NEP years from

the viewpoint of an enthusiastic schoolboy. Kostia's journal-writing not only demonstrates 'a self-conscious striving for personality as an ethical norm' characteristic of the 'developed autobiographical consciousness of Soviet youth',<sup>41</sup> but recalls the use of the diary as a literary mode in many Gothic and Sentimental novels.<sup>42</sup> The formal realism of his diary is frequently challenged, as in Gothic fiction, by the interpolation of ghost stories and other macabre fragments. By telling each other ghost stories, Kostia and his fellow students indulge a timeless and international tendency to personalize and historicize classic supernatural formulae. Most Gothic fictions refer intertextually to previous works in the same genre: the telling of spooky tales in *Diary* strongly recalls the fragmentary horror stories and folk legends exchanged by peasant boys over a campfire in Ivan Turgenev's short story "Bezhin Meadow", part of his anthology *Notes of a Hunter* (1852). Still more interesting than its connectedness to the national and international Gothic tradition is the diarist's reaction to the ghost story he has just written down:

Из этого рассказа выходит, что покойники могут разгуливать после смерти. Когда мне это рассказали, я только плюнул.<sup>43</sup>

[This story shows that corpses can walk about after death. When they told it to me, I just spat.]

Although his scrupulously assumed 'proletarian toughness'<sup>44</sup> leads him to despise most forms of aesthetic expression – hence his insistence that he 'spat' with contempt on first hearing the tale – Kostia remains infinitely susceptible to narrative. When his peers (usually those from suspiciously bourgeois backgrounds) start telling spooky stories, Kostia is always in the audience. The more unreal and gruesome the tale, the more likely it is that Kostia will carefully record it in his diary, albeit framed by appropriate criticism. Kostia's dual reaction reflects the ambiguous position of many Soviet writers, vocally contemptuous of non-realist

fiction and yet replicating in their own works the rich vocabulary, evocative themes and macabre tropes of the Gothic-fantastic tradition.

Nikolai Ognev, the author of *Kostia Riabtsev's Diary*, exemplified this kind of ambiguity in his own aesthetic stance. A committed Bolshevik and a pro-Soviet journalist (although not a Party member), Ognev was considered ideologically reliable. *Diary* became one of the enduring classics of Soviet literature, set reading for generations of Russian youth. But, reviewing Ognev's work in 1928, the editor and critic Aleksandr Voronskii struggled to reconcile Ognev's orthodox Communist sympathies with his proclivity for macabre and supernatural fiction. Ognev's duality recalls the conflict between socialist duty and imaginative indulgence expressed in Kostia Riabtsev's fictional persona. As Voronskii wrote: 'It is clear from the first glance that Ognev has a dreadful predilection for corpses, crypts, tombstones and cemeteries'. Ognev's characters are 'often similar to corpses, to unclean forest spirits'.<sup>45</sup> Voronskii finds this tendency to the Gothic excusable in Ognev's pre-revolutionary short stories, which bear an obvious debt to the Symbolist tradition. However, more culpably, the contradiction resurfaces in Ognev's post-revolutionary work, including *Diary*: 'Yet even in *Kostia Riabtsev's Diary*, in the most cheerful and life-affirming, self-composed things, the writer gives the place of honour to the drowned, the dead, and ghosts...' (6). Ognev's entry in the 1934 Soviet Literary Encyclopaedia notes that 'Ognev does not immediately succeed in overcoming his pre-revolutionary thoughts and inclinations'.<sup>46</sup> In this critic's opinion, Ognev's hidden 'passion for the past, for the old times' was betrayed by insidious 'echoes of the past' repeated in his mature work.<sup>47</sup>

Voronskii struggled to reconcile Ognev's predilection for decay and destruction – which the former termed 'foolish strength', or insensate force – with socialist ideology by attributing to Ognev an equal appetite for 'living strength', or revolutionary energy. In Ognev's early stories, Voronskii notes, 'foolish strength' usually defeats 'living strength' – a

consequence of Ognev's evident infatuation with tragic Romanticism. But Voronskii insists that the later stories, including the *Diary*, presage the impending victory of 'living strength' over its antithesis: 'Ognev, on the other hand, is young in spirit, fiery, energetic [...] He believes in the true intelligent force upon this earth [...] he loves life greedily. He is ready to struggle, to search [...] Freedom will come; freedom is on its way!' (11). In this passage, Voronskii insists that Ognev's Gothic tropes of horror and decay are foils for the triumphant insertion of a positivistic, revolutionary theme. However, this forced conclusion ignores the fact that Ognev's tropes of entropy and corruption implicate Soviet characters, including soldiers and revolutionaries, crushing and traumatizing the new generation even as they continue to infect the lingering 'Old World' of pre-Communist Russia. There is no simple solution to the paradox Voronskii identifies in Ognev's prose, just as there is no simple reason for the persistence of the Gothic-fantastic in Soviet literature:

О покойниках, о трупах, о могилах и склепах Н. Огнев умеет рассказывать жутко, трепетно и напряженно выразительно. Он, конечно, реалист и атеист. Разумеется, он не верит всей этой смертной, загробной чертовщине, он разоблачает и объясняет ее, он показывает ее с самой омерзительной, отвратительной стороны, но тогда откуда все-таки это страшное пристрастие к кладбищенскому и могильному? (7)

[N. Ognev is able to write about corpses, bodies, tombstones and sepulchres terrifyingly, expressing tension and palpitations. He is, of course, a realist and an atheist. It stands to reason that he does not believe in all this devilish beyond-the-grave nonsense; he clarifies and explicates it, he shows its most loathsome, repulsive aspects; but then where does this dreadful predilection for the graveyard and the tombstone come from?]

## **Conclusion**

‘One of the better-kept dark secrets of modern Russian literature is its intimate attachment to the deathless, some might say ghoulish, mode of Gothic romance’.<sup>48</sup> This intimate and secret attachment has become public in the modern period. Since the fall of Communism in 1989, post-Soviet Russian literature has celebrated the Gothic-fantastic mode in a variety of incarnations, including vampires, werewolves, and ghosts.<sup>49</sup> Some of these are self-conscious pastiches or parodies of the Gothic tradition; others integrate Gothic cliché into the post-postmodern palette of Putin’s Russia. But the Gothic mode is also, as Robert Miles has emphasized, ‘a discursive site [...] a series of contemporaneously understood forms, devices, codes, figurations, for the expression of the “fragmented subject”’.<sup>50</sup> Gothic motifs are often appropriate for the elaboration of individual memories. After finally escaping from Russia in the late 1920s, Vladimir Nabokov’s aunt published an autobiographical account of her experience with the portentous title, *Seven Years in the Power of the Dark Force*.<sup>51</sup> Few fictional texts would be equally explicit in labelling Soviet Russia a satanic entity, until Mikhail Bulgakov – also living in Russia against his will - wrote *The Master and Margarita* a decade later.

The primary function of the Gothic-fantastic for Russian writers continues to be as a site for the revisiting of personal or cultural trauma, a clearing-house for both memory and nightmare. Gothic themes are therefore as often a meditation on political events as on personal experience, or combine both. Andrei Siniavskii, a major dissident author and former political internee, imagined the dictator Joseph Stalin appearing as an ice-cold, translucent phantom to a prisoner in a Siberian forced-labour camp. The spectral Stalin demands forgiveness for his crimes. The prisoner refuses, instead sending Stalin’s ghost on a Sisyphean task to demand forgiveness from each of the people he injured during his political career.<sup>52</sup> Or to take a more modern example, in Dmitri Bykov’s 2008 novel, *ZhD*, set in twenty-first century Russia, an officer and his orderly stumble across a telegraph exchange



manned by a single soldier. They gradually realize from his uniform and his primitive equipment that he has been sending information on troop movements since the Civil War more than a hundred years ago, waiting patiently – if cantankerously – for ‘relief’. The orderly suddenly remembers soldiers’ gossip that entire flying columns of Civil War cavalry are still riding:

““Это вроде летучего голландца, но настоящие. Они до сих пор кочуют, много лет. Потому что война не кончается. Когда кончится, они демобилизуются””<sup>53</sup>

[““They’re like the Flying Dutchman, but real. They’ve been roaming all this time, for many years. Because the war hasn’t finished. When it finishes, they’ll lay down their arms””.]

More humbled than terrified, the men steal away, leaving the ghost to his endless telegrams. The Civil War and the challenges of the Soviet epoch have left ineradicable traces on Russia’s cultural memory: for those writers tasked with making sense of history, the war has not finished, and may never finish. The Russian Gothic-fantastic tradition, like Bykov’s ghostly telegraph operator, keeps the ghosts of the past in touch with those of the present.

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is retold from Nikolai Ognev’s *The Diary of Kostia Riabtsev (Dnevnik Kosti Riabtseva)*, (Paris, Povolotskii, 1927), p. 144. An English translation of this novel by Fainna Glagoleva is available as *Kostya Ryabtsev’s Diary* (Moscow: Progress, 1978). All translations in the text are my own. Where quotations are extracted, the Russian original text is also given.

<sup>2</sup> Konstantin Fedin, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 23 August 1934, p. 2. For more perspectives on the development of Socialist Realism, see Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000); Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary*

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*Culture*, trans. by Jesse M. Savage (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); and Abram Tertz, *On Socialist Realism*, trans. by Czeslaw Milosz (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960)

<sup>3</sup> Edgar Allan Poe's works were well-known to the Russian intelligentsia via both Baudelaire's French translations and Konstantin Balmont's highly regarded Russian versions. For more on Poe's reception in Russia, see Joan Delaney Grossman, *Edgar Allan Poe in Russia: A Study in Legend and Literary Influence* (Würzburg: Verlag, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> Tzvetan Todorov's distinctly exclusive definition of the fantastic as the 'duration of uncertainty' in the mind of the reader over the possibility of events in a given text, 'a dividing line between the uncanny and the marvellous' is given in his *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 25-27. Neil Cornwell and Claire Whitehead have painstakingly reconstructed Todorov's theory of the fantastic to accommodate a broader range of authors. See Cornwell's *The Literary Fantastic: From Gothic to Postmodernism* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) and Whitehead's *The Fantastic in France and Russia in the Nineteenth Century: In Pursuit of Hesitation* (London: Legenda, 2006). For the citation from Cornwell, see 'Russian Gothic: An Introduction', in *The Gothic-Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, ed. Neil Cornwell (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA., Rodopi, 1999), pp. 3-22 (p. 7).

<sup>5</sup> Fedor Gladkov's *Tsement* is available as *Cement*, trans. A.S. Arthur and C. Ashleigh (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994). Vladimir Zazubrin's *Shchepka*, translated as *The Chip: A Story About a Chip and about Her* by Graham Roberts in *Dissonant*

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*Voices: The New Russian Fiction*, ed. Oleg Chukhontsev (London: Harvill, 1991), pp. 1-70.

For a translation of Ognev's *Dnevnik Kosti Riabtseva*, see note 1 above.

<sup>6</sup> See Irene Masing-Delic, *Abolishing Death: A Salvation Myth of Russian Twentieth-Century Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 222-242.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, 'The Eye of Power', trans. by Colin Gordon, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), pp. 146-166 (pp. 154-155).

<sup>8</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 6-13.

<sup>9</sup> Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 122.

<sup>10</sup> Dale Peterson identifies *Dry Valley* (1912), a novella by the Nobel Prize-winning author Ivan Bunin, as structurally and thematically Gothic. Bunin, however, left Russia permanently shortly after the 1917 Revolution. See Dale Peterson, 'Russian Gothic: The Deathless Paradoxes of Bunin's Dry Valley', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 1: 31 (1987), 36-49.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), esp. Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Further page references are to this edition and are given in the text. The Soviet Union's New Economic Policy, which promoted limited private enterprise, was in force from 1921 until 1928.

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<sup>12</sup> However, his analysis of novels by Aleksandra Kollontai, Fedor Gladkov and others in the context of ‘Female Gothic’ is persuasive and stimulating. See Naiman, *Sex in Public*, especially Chapter 4, ‘An Introduction to NEP Gothic’, pp. 148-180.

<sup>13</sup> See V. E. Vatsuro’s *Goticheskii roman v Rossii* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2002) for a fuller discussion of the ‘Gothic wave’ and the influence of individual Western Gothic authors upon Russian writers. Some useful English-language works on the development of Russian Gothic include the articles in *The Gothic-Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, ed. Neil Cornwell (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999); Mark Simpson, *The Russian Gothic Novel and Its British Antecedents* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1986), and Charles E. Passage, *The Russian Hoffmannists* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963).

<sup>14</sup> Some of Vladimir Odoevskii’s most intriguing Gothic short stories are available in Neil Cornwell’s translation as *The Salamander and Other Stories* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Of many critical monographs on Mikhail Bulgakov, I recommend Lesley Milne’s *Mikhail Bulgakov: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Alexander Chaianov’s fiction remains largely untranslated into English: such English-language critical literature on him that exists focuses on his achievements as an agronomist. Sigizmund Krzhizhanovskii has been more fortunate. Recently a selection of his short fiction, including ‘Quadraturin’, appeared in Joanne Turnbull’s excellent English translation, *Seven Stories* (Moscow and London: Glas, 2005). His prose was the subject of a monograph by Karen Link Rosenflanz, *Hunter of Themes: The Interplay of Word and Thing in the Works of Sigizmund Krzhizhanovskij* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Muireann Maguire, *Soviet Gothic-fantastic: A Study of Gothic and Supernatural Themes in Early Soviet Literature*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, pp. 69-82.

<sup>18</sup> Dale Bailey, *American Nightmares: The Haunted House Formula in American Popular Fiction* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1999), p. 7. See also Benjamin Franklin Fisher, "Poe and the Gothic Tradition" in *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 72-92 (p. 75) on the same issue.

<sup>19</sup> Bailey, *American Nightmares*, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Fedor Gladkov, *Tsement* (Moscow and Leningrad: Zemlia i Fabrika, 1927), p. 89. Further page references are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>21</sup> Lidiia Nikolaevna Ul'rich, *Gor'kii i Gladkov* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1961), p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> According to his biographer Lidiia Ul'rich, 'Gladkov corrected the style of almost every phrase' (*Gor'kii ii Gladkov*, p. 44). The two most heavily Gothic sections, 'The Empty Factory' and 'The Ramp', were the most intensely revised.

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<sup>24</sup> Vladimir Zazubrin, 'Shchepka' in *Povesti vremennykh let 1917-1940*, ed. S. Semikhina (Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoriia, 2005), pp. 193-258 (p. 215). Further page references are to this edition and are given in the text.

<sup>25</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 36-7.

<sup>26</sup> N.P.Kozlov, *O romane V. Zazubrina 'Dva mira': Konspekt leksii iz kursa istorii russkoi sovetskoi literatury* (Uzhgorod: Uzhgorodskoi gosudarstvennoi universitet, 1963), p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> No significant English-language study of Zazubrin has, to my knowledge, been published. An extract from *The Chip* is published in *Utopias: Russian Modernist Texts 1905-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 261-264; the story's dystopian aspects are briefly discussed in Erika Gottlieb, *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), pp. 141-144.

<sup>28</sup> Heiland, *Gothic and Gender*, p. 41.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>30</sup> See Whitehead, *In Pursuit of Hesitation*, Chapter 3, 'Madness and Narrative Disintegration: Hesitation and Coherence', pp. 78-119.

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Lunacharskii to Zazubrin, cited by Vasili Prushkin, 'O romane "Dva mira" i ego avtore', in Zazubrin, *Dva mira* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva oborony SSSR, 1968), pp. 3-8 (p. 4).

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<sup>32</sup> Cited by Maksim Gorky, in his foreword to the 1928 edition of *Dva mira* (Moscow: [n.pub.], 1928), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> See Trushkin, 'O romane "Dva mira" i ego avtore', in Vladimir Zazubrin, *Dva mira* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva oborony SSSR, 1968), pp. 3-8 (p. 3), and Kozlov, *O romane V. Zazubrina 'Dva mira'*, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> See Kozlov, *O romane V. Zazubrina 'Dva mira'*, p. 27 and Trushkin, 'O romane "Dva mira" i ego avtore', p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Borovets, *Zazubrinskie kostry*, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> Kozlov, *O romane V. Zazubrina 'Dva mira'*, p. 3. This was in spite of the fact that *Dva mira* went through ten editions between 1921 and 1936.

<sup>37</sup> Efim Nikolaevich Permitin, 'Pervoe znakomstvo s V. Ia. Zazubrinym', Russian Government Archive for Art and Literature, Moscow (hereafter RGALI), fond 3140, opis' 1, delo 41, p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> See Kozlov, *O romane V. Zazubrina 'Dva mira'*, p. 6 and Borovets, *Zazubrinskie kostry*, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> RGALI, fond 1785, op 1, ed. khr.119, letter from Zazubrin to F.A. Berezovskii, 27 March 1923, pp. 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> The only Western scholars to (even briefly) mention Ognev are Irene Masing-Delic, who allocates his work a chapter in *Abolishing Death: A Salvation Myth of Russian Twentieth-Century Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 222-242,

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and Sheila Fitzpatrick, who cites Kostia Riabtsev as an exemplary ‘politically conscious Soviet child’ in her study of Soviet education, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 26.

<sup>41</sup> Jochen Hellbeck, ‘Russian Autobiographical Practice’, in *Autobiographical Practices in Russia*, ed. Jochen Hellbeck and Klaus Heller, (Gottingen: V&R Unipress, 2004), pp. 279-298 (pp. 294-295).

<sup>42</sup> Examples range from Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1741) to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897).

<sup>43</sup> Nikolai Ognev, *Dnevnik Kosti Riabtseva* (Paris: Povolotskii, 1927), p. 144.

<sup>44</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934*, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> Aleksandr Voronskii, ‘Predislovie’, in Nikolai Ognev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 2 vols (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1928), I (1928), pp. 5-19 (pp. 5-6). Further page references are to this article and are given in the text

<sup>46</sup> M. Bochacher, ‘N.Ognev’ in *Literaturnaia entsiklopedia*, 11 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, 1930-9), VIII (1934), pp. 233-236 (p. 233).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>48</sup> Dale Peterson, untitled review, *Slavic and East European Journal*, 4: 31 (1987), 618-619 (p. 618).



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<sup>49</sup> For vampires, see Sergei Lukianenko's recent *Night Watch (Nochnoi Dozor)* tetralogy and Viktor Pelevin's *Empire V (Ampir V, 2006)*; for werewolves, see Petr Aleshkovskii's *Vladimir Chigrintsev* (1995) and Pelevin's *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf (Sviashchennaia kniga oborotnia, 2005)*; for ghosts and the undead, see Boris Akunin's *Graveyard Tales (Kladbishchenskie istorii, 2004)*.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820: A Genealogy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 3-4.

<sup>51</sup> V.D. Pykhacheva, *Sem' let vo vlasti temnoi sily* (Belgrade: Novoe vremia, 1929).

<sup>52</sup> Abram Terts (Andrei Siniavskii), *Good Night (Spokoinoi nochi)*, (Paris: Syntaxis, 1984), pp. 278-285.

<sup>53</sup> Dmitri Bykov, *ZhD* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2008), p. 526. This is available in Cathy Porter's translation as *Living Souls* (London: Alma, 2010).

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