

city. As is, emphasis on increasing centralization and decreasing experimentation detracts from discussions about the significance of the flexibility that remained in architecture and urban planning throughout the 1920s. That Meerovich abundantly shows this to have yielded a variety of designs and prolonged engagement with western European models is not surprising given that the book is largely set amid the New Economic Policy, an era that necessitated economic and ideological compromise, yet witnessed a fervor for social transformation. Further complicating his key assertion that the state strove to make housing an instrument of power are factors like the persistence of individual ownership and of cooperative construction—indicators of enduring popular influence in housing—that he himself recognizes.

That said, Meerovich achieves his aim of outlining the establishment of the Soviet departmental workers' settlement in terms of its predecessors and the official decrees, intentions and norms that attended its development. Especially interesting are his account of how European architecture and urban planning concepts were transmitted to Russia, and his portrayal of the myriad ideas for revamping daily living that emerged in the early Soviet era—all enriched by nearly two hundred illustrations. As Meerovich amply demonstrates, until late in the 1920s, the form that housing was to take was not dictated. His meticulously researched book is therefore of special value to scholars interested in the history of Russian architecture and urban planning across the revolutionary divide.

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**Gendelev: Stikhi. Proza. Poetika. Tekstologiya.** Ed. Evgenii Soshkin and Sergei Shargorodskii. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie 2017. 725 pp. Appendix. Photographs. ₴632, hard bound.  
doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.267

There are many reasons to edit a book by and about Mikhail Gendelev (1950–2009), as it has been done by Evgenii Soshkin and Sergei Shargorodsky. The poet, prose writer, feuilletonist, essayist, and translator holds an exceptional place within the last generation of the Russian writing diaspora in Israel. Leningrad-born Gendelev came to Israel in 1977. His experience at the front as an army doctor during the Lebanon war of 1982–85 played a crucial role for his later poetry. Gendelev's self-image transformed from an Israel national poet in the 1980s to a more universal Jewish author from the 1990s until to his death in 2009. He was shifting back and forth between Israel and Russia where he lived most of the time between 1999 and 2008, being a stranger in both countries and cultures.

Gendelev, who wrote his first poetry at the age of seventeen in Leningrad (15), dedicated his last poem to the boulevard Ben Maimon in Jerusalem where he lived at the end of his life. He is an author with a thrilling literary and political entanglement both in Israel and in Russia (he supported Boris Berezovskii). His writing—various, astute, elaborate and ironic—blurs the traditional understanding of high and low literature. It questions mimetic conceptions of literature and, in a Borges-like manner, mirrors identities and realities. His eccentric poetic approach decenters meaning and points of view. The result is relativism and semantic ambiguity—in a humorous mood.

The present book is conceived as a supplement to former editions of Gendelev's work. Accompanied by a precise introduction by the editors, a short biography, and insightful commentaries about the real circumstances, allusions, self-references,

main themes, and *leitmotifs*, it presents extracts of Gendelev's published and unpublished poetry. *The Witness (Svidetel')*, for example, is a key poem in Gendelev's poetry (60–70). Written in Leningrad, it underwent significant changes for later Israeli editions. Witnessing is Gendelev's main theme (634). Yet, rather than simply being a witness of historical events, it means being a witness of all kinds of (inner) estrangements of the self, of a split consciousness and oscillating self-images. The intertextual frame ranges from the Old Russian *Tale of Past Years* to the seminal futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov. This ludic and carnivalesque approach is part of Gendelev's conception of life, love, war, and death as a buffoonery or, as Mikhail Vaiskopf calls it in his article, a “funny ritual” (401).

The poems and long poems, his lyrics, his humorous epitaphs and epigrams reveal Gendelev's satirical and ironic vein, his subversive merging of high and low (Russian) language and cultural values. The linguistic playfulness of Gendelev's poetics continues the tradition of Pushkin's parodies and of the Russian absurdist literary group *Oberium*, the *Union of Real Art* with its main representatives Daniil Kharms and Alexander Vvedensky. It also continues the highly ironic Leningrad poetry in the so called Era of Stagnation under Brezhnev's rule. Other important points of reference in Gendelev's life—and poetry—are the Russian-American Nobel Laureate of literature Joseph Brodsky and outstanding Russian postmodernist writers like Lev Rubinstein or Vladimir Sorokin or the Russian movie-maker Pavel Lungin.

Apart from his unfinished adaptation of Molière's *Tartuffe* for the Israeli theater, an especially interesting case, are Gendelev's translations from Hebrew into Russian (121–203). They range from Middle Age Jewish poets like Yehuda Halevi and Shlomo ibn Gabirol or the eminent Chassidic figure Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev to contemporary Israeli poets like Yehuda Amichai, a “poet and democrat,” as Gendelev describes him (148), and Haim Gouri, a good friend of his. The book further includes a series of essays, travelogues, and literary criticisms during the “great aliya,” when a whole wave of immigrants from the USSR arrived. Between 1991 and 1996, Gendelev published several hundred journalistic texts which mostly appeared in the Russian-speaking Israeli newspapers *Time*, *News*, and *Windows*. These texts reveal Gendelev's gift for humor, his stylistic aptness, and his erudition. “Poet i smert',” for example, is a fabulous reading of Brodsky's poetry as a complex intersection of poetics and literary criticism and as “atheistic metaphysics” (344). “How to end up your life in Israel” is a funny yet deep reflection about the complicated Jewish-Israeli-Russian cultural collisions on the basis of various kinds of suicide in literature.

This volume is of special value because of two further rubrics. Literary criticism by experienced “Gendelevians” like Mikhail Vajskopf, Petr Kriksunov, Elena Tolstaia, and the two above mentioned editors, contextualize Gendelev's writing and trace its poetic and intertextual characteristics, that is to say his dialogue with Lermontov. The final textological part brings a new dimension into actual research on Gendelev. Most of his rather chaotic estate, spread over Jerusalem, Moscow, and St. Petersburg was collected and finally organized into an archive in 2014. This material is of great importance since many manuscripts had been lost or discarded by Gendelev himself. As the editors explain, Gendelev was preparing an eight-volume, yet unpublished edition of his poetry in the early 1990s (571). Fragments and drafts of that period, as well as a group of poems which can be entitled “Sulamit” (561), demonstrate his poetic evolution. They shed light on Gendelev's ambivalent attitude towards his early collection *V'ezd v Ierusalim* (Immigration to Jerusalem, 1980). At the same time, they reveal his rather “static poetic world” (572), which connects his Leningrad period to his Israeli writings. Thus, a close look at his laboratory and a re-reading of his early poetry contradict Gendelev's own mythology of being an “Israel poet writing in the Russian language” (573).

This carefully-edited volume gives invaluable insights into Gendelev's poetic and ideological transformations. It invites us to discover a poet whose metaphysical skepticism is radical and whose playing with language, puns, phonetic structures, and semantic ambivalences are virtuous. Hopefully, further editions of this kind will help us to explore the vibrant scene of contemporary Russian-Israeli literature.

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***The Sixth Sense of the Avant-Garde: Dance, Kinaesthesia and the Arts in Revolutionary Russia.*** By Irina Sirotkina and Roger Smith. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2017. xii, 217 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. £63.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.268

The joy of movement and profound appreciation for the human body's expressiveness underlie this book by Irina Sirotkina and Roger Smith. An expanded translation of Sirotkina's *Shestoe chuvstvo avangarda: Tanets, dvizhenie, kinesteziia v zhizni poetov i khudozhnikov* (2014), this study offers an invigorating exploration of the upsurge in kinaesthetics that permeated early twentieth-century Russian culture. As the two authors proffer, sustained emphasis on modern movement resulted in art and ideas that celebrated both the physical and aesthetic potential of the human body.

While Nicoletta Misler and John Bowlit have over the years established the Russian avant-garde's embrace of dance as material ripe for scholarly investigation, Sirotkina and Smith provide a much-needed historical overview and far-reaching theoretical approach to the abundance of dance and, more broadly, kinaesthesia in Russian avant-garde culture. Defying the notion that everyday human motion is somehow "nonserious," Sirotkina and Smith expand upon a wide array of critical theories and performance studies scholarship to underscore the predominance of dance and other manifestations of human movement for artists and thinkers in revolutionary Russia. Forming a fluid partnership to expand Sirotkina's initial scholarship, Sirotkina and Smith probe the era's abundance of human motion in compelling fashion.

In their first chapter, Sirotkina and Smith explore the so-called "sixth sense," honing in on the haptic, that is, the era's emphasis on touch and an awareness of everyday reality that came about through enhanced movement. At the theoretical heart of such an approach is the work of Edmund Husserl, who linked bodily movement to phenomenological awareness, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who ascribed a psychological "attitude" to voluntary motion of the human body. Emphasizing that "kinaesthetic sensations were important for artists in all aspects of their lives" (40), the authors focus on "knowledge how" and "knowledge that," philosophical terminology that helps differentiate conscious kinaesthetic action from automatic proprioceptive movement.

In subsequent chapters, Sirotkina and Smith draw upon a diverse range of examples to tell their story and to underscore the kinaesthesia pulsating through Russian and early Soviet culture. First off is the abstract art of Vasily Kandinsky, whose work drew on not only the Dionysian "transvaluation of values" (46) espoused by Friedrich Nietzsche, but also those spiritual vibrations evoked by poet (and composer) Mikhail Matiushin. A "higher sensitivity" (50) arises through the abundant kinaesthesia