

making insightful comments about point of view, doubling, and Nabokov's commendable success in mixing farce with suspense. He does not sink beneath the surface or stray from the course of Nabokov's narrative—the motto informing his reading might be characterized as “look closely, but don't touch.” Didier Machu's reading of the murder of Clare Quilty is less respectful of the order in which details are presented by Nabokov; the result is a complex, more engaged and more speculative analysis. He shows how this scene continually refers to highly eroticized earlier moments in the novel, with Quilty taking Lolita's place as Humbert's partner and with Eros being supplemented by death. Machu focuses on tactile imagery: for example, Humbert's earlier comment about the sickening envy Quilty “would have experienced had he known that every nerve in me was still anointed and ringed with the feel of her body” is echoed when Humbert touches “something [Quilty] had anointed with his thick gore.” Humbert has come to Pavor Manor bearing a death sentence for Quilty composed in verse, but far more profound poetic justice is to be found in this scene's nightmarish, essentially solipsistic replay of the initial fulfillment of Humbert's desire. Humbert, who has wanted both to stuff Lolita and to turn her inside out, and who “was always ‘with Lolita’ as a woman is ‘with child,’” now finds that Quilty is “with me, upon me, over me.” He is “all covered with Quilty”, and so is the narrative, on the course of which Quilty has left his sticky impressions. Along the way Machu makes some fascinating comments about the significance of “Jack Brewster,” whom, along with Brewster's brother, both mentioned by Quilty, Machu traces to *Arsenic and Old Lace*, suggesting that Quilty has monstrously cast Humbert as Boris Karloff rather than as the Romantic figure Humbert would have liked to cut. Machu's comments about slang usage require documentation, but overall the effect is impressive. The reader, too, emerges “all covered with Quilty.” Famously, Nabokov described the good reader as “panting and happy.” Implicit in close reading are both the fondling of details and mental gymnastics. The lesson of Machu's contribution may be that if you don't feel like taking a shower afterwards, you haven't been reading closely enough. I suspect that other readers, too, will enjoy this sort of workout, even if they ultimately opt for a safer form of eloquence.

**Eric Naiman, University of California**

Heller, Leonid and Anne Coldefy-Faucard, eds. *Exotismes dans la culture russe*. Lausanne: University of Lausanne, 2009. 351 pp. ISBN 978-2-940331-20-8.

This French-language collection is the fruit of the collaboration between the University of Lausanne and the University of Voronezh, which culminated in an international conference in June 2008. The twenty-one contributors form an overlapping mix of francophone and russophone scholars, of whom eight currently live in Russia.

In addressing the unusual theme of the exotic in Russian culture, the editors hope to transcend disciplinary and cultural boundaries, and some of the particularly interesting essays are on historical topics: Svetlana Gorshenina discusses the “crystallization of the image of Russian Turkestan” through Russian expositions of Vasilii Vereshchagin's paintings of Turkmen scenes (1869) and the work of the naturalist Aleksei Fedchenko (1870) as an initial stage in the exotification of Central Asia, which had the effect of representing Russia's conquest as bringing civilization to the primitive Turkmenistan. Daria Chemelina, in “The Limits of the Exotic Universe,” describes how fortifications in eighteenth-century Siberia contain Russia in European space while facing Asia: the Omsk fortress and others are modeled on a design by Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban, creating a synthesis of national traditions and European design. Thus Russia represents itself as like Europe to Europe by marking off Asia, while marking itself as different to the Tukco-Mongol nomadic world of Siberia.

The subjects discussed include lexicology and semantics (Ekaterina Velmezova and Andrei Faustov, respectively), painting (Fanny Mossière on Vrubel's “crystal technique” and Lermontov's *Demon*), and exploration (Anne Coldefy-Faucard reads Boris Piliak's exploration of the Arctic as a voyage to self). Most of the articles, however, employ the exotic as a lens through which to examine literary texts, mostly Russian as advertised, except, puzzlingly, for one on Louis – Ferdinand

Céline and another on the Swiss writer Pierre Sciobéret's travels to the Caucasus, which show his novel *Abdallah Schlatter* not to be autobiographical, as had been supposed. Igor Pilshchikov does a meticulous analysis of references to exotic plants in poems by Vasilii Zhukovskii, Konstantin Batiushkov, and Aleksandr Pushkin, which are emblems of Greco-Roman, biblical, or Nordic antiquity. Andrei Dobritsyn traces elements of Petr Viazemsky's oriental fables and Pushkin's "Exegi monumentum" to Saadi. Marietta Chudakova suggests that Soviet writers had recourse to the exotic as a way of avoiding ideological regimentation at a time when individual freedom of action had become exotic. Boris Czerny discusses Anton Chekhov's "Grasshopper," whose heroine is in search of a clichéd exotic, and concludes that "the space of the imagination is also the space of the exotic" (p. 99). This points us to a central issue of the collection: the definition of "exotic" may be extended to all literature, to any kind of alterity, via the concept of *ostranenie*, which is mentioned and briefly defined in three separate essays (Mélat, p. 249, Maiatsky, p. 298, Heller, p. 326). The final essay by one of the editors, Leonid Heller, undertakes an extensive definition of the concept. While this is never done in such collections, would it ask too much of the contributors to read this essay and write up their conference talks using those carefully calibrated definitions? It would reduce repetition and allow more space for analyzing the material. The editor's essay would most profitably be placed at the beginning of the volume, setting the scene for the variety of definitions of "exotic" represented. Such collections rarely if ever have an index, but that too would be useful. And since many of the authors themselves exemplify what is exotic, it would enrich our understanding of the collaborative venture to include the customary brief biographies of the authors, rather than have us deduce them from their names plus the suffixes of their e-mail addresses given at the back.

There is much of interest in the diverse material and the volume is elegantly edited. What will this interesting group of scholars undertake next?

**Priscilla Meyer, Wesleyan University**

Drozdov, Iu. N. *Tiurkskaia etnonimiia drevneevropeiskikh narodov*. Moscow: Opora, 2008. 390 pp. ISBN 978-5-904215-04-0.

In this book, Iurii Nikolaevich Drozdov argues that all European peoples except the Romans and Greeks and some non-European peoples were originally Turkic. He believes that among the names of ancient European tribes and peoples there are none that cannot be explained with the help of Turkic. In the author's view, this is true for the Slavs, Goths, Britons, Franks, and other (not only European) peoples of ancient and early medieval times. This reasoning is problematic in itself. Numerous instances of borrowing ethnonyms by former inhabitants of an area are known (for example, the names of the Macedonians or Hittites). However, the author does not limit his analysis to ethnonyms; he includes names of lands from Russia to England, personal names (for example, Vladimir, Igor, Adam, Eve, and Jesus Christ) and various words that are in use in European languages today, such as parliament, dictator, and apostle. He believes that it can be demonstrated that all of these words are of Turkic origin. The original Turkic language of Europe was, in his opinion, only replaced with the historical languages shortly before the emergence of the earliest known documents in these languages in the Middle Ages. No explanation for the cause of this language shift is given; however, the author argues that written documents in the original Turkic language must have existed but are lost. He believes that all written documents explaining what exactly happened were destroyed.

We know that historical sources are not always reliable. If it were not for people that question and challenge the old knowledge, we would still believe that the Earth is flat. Science can therefore certainly benefit from any fresh approach and ideas—provided, however, that the theses in question are supported as well as possible. One would expect a book based on challenging existing etymologies to rely primarily upon comparative linguistic methods. First, convincing arguments would be expected as to why the author believes the existing etymologies to be unacceptable. Second, a certain level of knowledge of all the languages being taken into consideration is essential. Third, and most important,