

Ozick puts it, what it means to be a Jew in principle. To Krupnick, Ozick's focus on religious traditionalism now seems more innovative than the secular outlook of Roth or Bellow.

Yet the example of Eliot exerts a cautionary influence on Ozick. Readers flocked to the poet, Krupnick notes, "in the spirit of acolytes, blurring the distinction between sacred and profane texts." That conflict between religious orthodoxy and the religion of art is central to Ozick's work. Time and again Ozick creates some object or character, imbues it with mystical significance or power, and then symbolically destroys it, rescuing her art from the imputation of idolatry.

In "Puttermesser and Xanthippe," for example, a bureaucrat fired from her job literally dreams up her revenge in the form of a golem

(an artificial being, endowed with life by supernatural means), who uses magic to transform New York City into what seems like a utopia. But this Paradise, like the original, is flawed: The golem's sexual awakening unleashes chaos on the city and Puttermesser finally must bury her creation in the earth. "Too much Paradise is greed," Puttermesser concludes.

Ozick "wants to have it both ways," Krupnick says. "She gives and then she takes away, imagining the story and then destroying it before our eyes. Before she can be punished for the presumption of setting up in competition with God, she disavows her own creation." This conflict between Ozick's Judaism and her commitment to art, Krupnick believes, will assure her of "steady work for as long as her strength—or her ambivalence—holds out."

OTHER NATIONS

Russian Nightmare

"Republic of Humbug: The Russian Nativist Critique of the United States, 1830-1930" by Abbott Gleason, in *American Quarterly* (Mar. 1992), Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 701 West 40th St., Ste. 275, Baltimore, Md. 21211.

Looking upon the United States as a hellhole of extreme individualism, rootlessness, greed, and violence was second nature to Soviet ideologues during the Cold War. But Brown University historian Abbott Gleason points out that they did not invent this nightmarish picture of America—they inherited it.

America's acquisitive individualism was anathema to the first generation of Slavophiles in 1830-61, most of whom were aristocratic landowners. Rejecting "a dying West dominated by secular plutocrats and consumed by the class struggle," critic Ivan Kireevsky and other Slavophiles embraced the communalism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity of "Holy Russia." Slavophile views, Gleason notes, "are still influential in Russian culture today, especially on the political Right. From Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the 'intellectuals' of *Pamiat'* (Memory), the force of Slavophile preachments is apparent."

In the quarter-century after

the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, conservative writers, notably Fyodor Dostoevsky, took up the Slavophile critique. Although he never visited America, Dostoevsky "thought that of all the wretched individualisms of the contemporary European world, that of the United States was the most crass, shallow, and vulgar." He wrote little about the United States directly, but



Tolstoy at the Plough (1887) reflects the continuing romanticization of Russian peasant life after the Slavophile movement waned, but Tolstoy also wrote about the harsher realities of that life.

the hateful idea of "running away to America"—and thereby deserting the Russian Church and the "God-bearing people," the Russians—appeared often in his fiction.

But the Slavophile portrayal of the United States, Gleason says, was less important than the anti-Americanism of radical intellectuals such as Peter Lavrov. Thoughts of the United States as the land of freedom were increasingly abandoned as the 19th century wore on. The corruption of the Gilded Age and the course of industrialization made it seem to Russian radicals that Americans were consumed by "the desire for individual material aggrandizement." At the same time, the radicals came to believe "that Russia had an extraordinary destiny . . . the development of a new and equitable socialist civilization, based on the spontaneous, if untutored, socialism of the Russian peasant." This vision of the Russian future was somewhat different from that of the Slavophiles, but Left and Right agreed on the evils of the American model.

Russians in the political center were not so prone to anti-Americanism. Many architects, teachers, and other new Russian professionals were quite interested in how their American counterparts operated. But it was the radicals' negative vision of America that informed Soviet ideology after the revolution of 1917.

Russians today, as at times in the past, Gleason notes, are disposed to admire Americans, their dynamism and technological

achievements. But, he warns, "the nativist critique of the United States—which is now being articulated only in nationalist and bureaucratic circles—will surely emerge in some recognizable form before too long."

Making Peace in El Salvador

After 12 years and more than 75,000 dead, the war in El Salvador finally came to an end last January with the signing of a peace treaty between President Alfredo Cristiani's government

and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The "turning point on the road to negotiations," according to Stanford political scientist Karl, was the FMLN's unsuccessful

The Other God That Failed

Why did the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire come as such a complete surprise to Sovietologists? Harvard historian Richard Pipes, in *Commentary* (Mar. 1992), says there were several reasons.

One [cause] was intellectual vanity. With the overwhelming majority of ordinary Americans hostile to communism, the expert was inclined to take a contrarian view, to argue that reality was different or, at the very least, more "complex." For what would be the point of being an expert if one knew no more than the untutored masses?

To qualify as an expert one also had to travel to the communist bloc, and this required the kind of access which totalitarian governments granted only foreigners whom it considered friendly. I heard not a few Sovietologists speak privately of the Soviet regime in terms of utmost contempt, but they never dared to do so in public . . .

But the failure of the profession was also perhaps most of all due to a "social-scientese" methodology which ignored history, literature, witnesses' testimonies, and all else that could not be explained in sociological jargon and buttressed with statistics. Playing scientists, they developed "models" which assumed that all states and societies were fundamentally identical because they were called upon to perform identical functions. Being imponderable and hence unquantifiable, the peculiar features of national culture escaped their attention. So, too, did the moral dimension of human activity inasmuch as scientific inquiry was expected to be "value-free." Human suffering was an irrelevant factor.

The fate of the Sovietological profession, which constitutes only one regiment in the army of social "scientists," should serve as a warning. Science in our day enjoys well-deserved prestige, but its methods cannot be applied to human affairs. Unlike atoms and cells, human beings have values and goals which science is incapable of analyzing because they never stand still and never recur. They are, therefore, the proper province of the humanities, and best studied by the methods of history, literature, and the arts.

"El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution" by Terry Lynn Karl, in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1992), 58 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.