

**Suspending (Dis)Belief**  
**Fourth Annual Graduate Humanities Forum Conference**

**Saturday, March 27, 2004**

**ABSTRACTS**

**Mediated Experience: Tradition, Epistemology, and Memory**

**Erica Miller**, Romance Languages--Hispanic Studies

**When All Signs Have Been Erased: Memory and Belief in Sergio Chejfec's *Los planetas***

The case of individuals who disappeared during Argentina's "Dirty War" represents a trauma marked especially by the sudden, unexplained absence of those people, and uncertainty and lack of closure for the ones who knew them. A legacy of silences about the State-sponsored violence (despite many people's efforts) and the apparently incomplete collective mourning call into question the efficacy of discourses of memory. In a postmodern era skeptical of any claims to truth in a discursive representation, one may wonder: can literature contribute to the 'memory work'?

In *Los planetas* (1999), Argentinean writer Sergio Chejfec explores questions of subjectivity and memory through the lens of absence. Specifically, I will argue that this novel represents an attempt to translate the destabilizing effects of loss in lived experience into terms of the tensions of absences intrinsic to subjectivity, identity, memory, and narration. In this novel, memories, as well as the physical tokens associated with them, are valued for the emotional investment but mistrusted if considered potential links to or proof of what has been lost. Chejfec's novel presents an imperative to narrate in the face of loss and incomplete mourning; this process in turn sets up a space of sustained tensions as a productive form of 'memory work.'

**Alexine Fleck**, English

**Sprees of Abandon: Addiction and Belief in Drug Memoirs**

"The drug addict, in our common conception, the drug addict as such produces nothing, nothing true or real."

--Jacques Derrida

By highlighting a split between people dependent on drugs and the culturally constructed figure of the "addict," Derrida creates a provocative theoretical gap that encourages us to think about the potential uses of this "common conception." How do beliefs about addiction shape, inform and justify productive, "true" (sober) culture? How is the (literal and figurative) addict a scapegoat, pushed to the limits of the human and bearing our collective structural, economic and racial sins? Beliefs about the addict have evolved over time, preceding even the term "addict" itself, as has the ongoing expert debate about the nature of addiction. It is usually understood as the embodied belief in an association between a substance, the experience of that substance, and the pain of that substance's absence. Some argue that addiction doesn't exist or that, paradoxically, belief in addiction actually produces addiction. Others argue that addiction is a force around which chaos is ordered. As the concept of "addict" evolved and was modified, the voice of the addict dropped increasingly out of the discourse on addiction, yielding that space to medical, legal, psychological, and moral "experts." These experts assume that because intoxication troubles the senses and produces an unreliable narrative voice, active drug users are not qualified to speak authoritatively about their own experience.

This paper interrogates the presumed "nothing" of the abject addict and articulates a response to the challenge inherent in Derrida's statement by reading addiction memoirs such as *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, *Grand Central Winter*, and *How to Stop Time: Heroin*

from A to Z with specific attention to the addict's voice, arguing that the "nothing" an addict produces is in fact a powerful absence that troubles our cultural assumptions about epistemological boundaries.

**Phill Penix-Tadsen**, Romance Languages--Hispanic Studies

### **The Emergent Paradigm of Textual Circuitry: Epistemological Reprocessing in Digital Society**

A broad paradigmatic transformation has begun as the digital citizenry has grown and been continually affected by the Internet as a conceptual force. This being so, each component in the circuit of textual development--from the author and the reader to the editor, the publisher, and the critic--plays a part in defining this revolution even while they are altered by it themselves. Along this circuit, there exists a paradigmatic interpenetration that ultimately enables a broad alteration of the literary experience as such. As individual conduits, we participate in a network of social beliefs and experiences informed by the digital revolution. We thus form a circuitry of reception, creation, and interpretation that allows for the rearticulation of textuality and of the relationships between the "real world" of lived occurrences and the "virtual worlds" of the Internet and literature. It is this collective dynamic that has brought about a period of epistemological reprocessing, revealing the substructure of connection between the destabilized individual nodes that are joined in the assemblage of digital society. Ultimately, I wish to suggest that this anti-structure of correlation is, as we speak, rising to occupy the void of systematic theorization that has occurred in the wake of post-structuralism.

### **Magic, Myth, Mysticism**

**Giovanna Faleschini Lerner**, Romance Languages--Italian

### **The Magic of Painting in Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli***

In his memoir, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, the painter Carlo Levi gives a personal account of the year he spent in a remote village of Southern Italy, to which he had been exiled by a Fascist tribunal. The book describes his encounter with the culture of the agrarian South in terms of a clash between two different systems of belief. His trust in human rationality and its capacity to shape the future collides with the peasants' mythical imagination, linked to the eternal repetition of a seasonal temporality. Their existence is situated outside of history, and is dominated by a profound sense of the magical power of nature. In this paper I argue that, in Levi's book, painting represents a mediating force between rational philosophy and the magical dimension that the peasants inhabit. Through painting, Levi is able to suspend his disbelief in magic and myth, and to enter the world of enchantments in which the people of Lucania live. Painting is thus revealed to be an essential epistemological tool, which, by allowing Levi to embrace the marginal culture of the Southern peasantry, also manifests its subversive power to challenge hegemonic intellectual (and political) systems.

**Ömür Harmansah**, History of Art

### **The Shepherd, the Cattle-Pen, and the Cedar Forest: Ideals of Divine Kingship, Mythical City, and Fecund Landscapes in Early Mesopotamian Literature**

This paper is an inquiry into the early Mesopotamian literature, in order to trace the Sumerian literary representations of the idea of the mythical city and divine kingship, as socio-political and mytho-poetical constructs. The texts under scrutiny are Sumerian literary compositions, known from Old Babylonian scribal curricula and excavated from archaeological contexts mainly at Nippur and Ur. The appropriation of a mythical-ancestral past and the divine legitimization of the ruler were major aspects of the production of literary works in the courts of third and second millennium kings. The politically motivated scribal practices allowed a substantive representation of the ideals of divine kingship, and most prominent among those ideals were the

creation of the mythical city and the exploitation of distant fecund landscapes. The image of the city is associated with the archetypal enclosures of the cattle-pen [Sum. tūr] and the sheepfold [amas] it is considerably contiguous with the bodily image of the king as shepherd [sipa]. Metaphors of architectural space thus become part of the literary make-up of the images of power and social imagination, where the city carried powerful symbolisms of prosperity. The Mesopotamian king was the "true shepherd", who was responsible for maintaining the prosperity of the land, by founding cities, building sanctuaries and exploiting fertile landscapes such as the mythical "cedar forest."

**J Melvin, Religious Studies**

### **Belief, Experience, and Religious History's "Mystical Turn": Classifying the Writings of St. John of Avila**

Saint John of Avila was one of the most influential writers during the Catholic Reformation, yet today he remains unknown outside the most specialized scholarly circles. In this paper I examine Avila's writings and their treatment of the spiritual life to call attention to a current plague on religious studies: the assertion of "mystical experience" as empirical data. This notion developed during religious studies' "mystical turn," whereby scholars such as William James attempted to defend religious belief from the positivist attack by asserting that a mystical core, encountered by great spiritual figures, underlay all world religions. Not only has this move fallen prey to the positivism against which it reacted, it has diminished our appreciation of the cultural and intellectual traditions within spiritual traditions by excluding figures such as Avila, who do not claim to be describing their own experiences. This case shows that scholars should turn their attention back to the significance of figures like Avila in the history of spiritual practice and writing, rather than defending the existence of religion by assessing the depth of their spiritual experiences and attempting to compare their descriptions of the same with those from other traditions.

### **Heterogenous Beliefs: Accommodations and Limitations**

**Julia Rabig, History**

#### **"Black Buffers"--Evangelical Entrepreneurship Meets Black Power on the Streets of Washington, D.C.**

In 1968, a Howard University sociology professor and a young A.M.E. minister received funding from the Washington, D.C. Mayor's office, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and a group of white evangelical business leaders to create the Black Buffers. An organization of former convicts, the Black Buffers patrolled the streets of Washington, D.C. in the aftermath of the 1968 riots with the twin goals of preventing street crime and mediating between the city's African-American neighborhoods and its predominantly white police force. The Black Buffers blended evangelical religious belief with a commitment to Black Nationalism and local entrepreneurship. Their philosophy alternately embraced the liberalism of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, the left radicalism of black activists, such as Stokely Carmichael, and the conservatism of the businessmen and women who influenced Washington, D.C. politics from the suburbs. The diverse, potentially explosive combination of ideologies that characterized the Black Buffers makes them an intriguing subject not only for postwar U.S. historians, but for scholars more generally interested in belief. To what degree were the Black Buffers able to combine these seemingly disparate threads into a coherent activist philosophy? How did the religious faith of the Black Buffers and their supporters shape their narratives of racial conflict in the 1960s? By exploring these questions, I also engage with recent scholarship that brings more depth to the conventional analysis of the late 1960s, an analysis that too often reduces this period to the decline of the African-American civil rights movement and the rise of religiously fuelled conservatism among whites. The Black Buffers' story compels historians to reconsider

prevailing definitions of left and right, while it highlights the religious motivations fuelling secular public policies.

**Jen Schaaf**, History

**Catholic Womanhood as “True Womanhood”: The Dilemma of Moral Suasion at the Center of Peter McCorry’s *Mount Benedict***

Decades after the notorious 1834 arson of the Ursuline convent outside Boston, Catholics deployed the memory of that fateful event to answer Protestant critiques of a supposedly “superstitious” Catholic devotionism and to dissuade the public from believing thrilling and provocative images of Catholic degeneracy and gender perversion. Yet many pro-Catholic propagandists failed to perceive the manner in which the gendered deployment of their proselytizing efforts inadvertently confirmed Protestant fears of being seduced into acquiescing to the Catholic faith.

In his 1871 novel, *Mount Benedict; or, The Violated Tomb. A Tale of the Charlestown Convent*, author Peter McCorry interwove factual events pertaining to the 1834 riot and arson with fictionalized characters. This method allowed him to dramatize the persecution suffered by Boston Catholics and to challenge Protestant constructions of a mysterious and depraved Catholic “other.” McCorry was committed to establishing the virtue and piety of his Catholic female heroines. The young women of his novel adhere closely to normative notions of respectability and generally possess refinement and education characteristic of proper nineteenth-century ladies, regardless of the economic classes they occupy. By contrast, McCorry depicted male Protestants as the villains in his tale, and imagined them to possess all the detractions generally ascribed to the Irish immigrant working class. His male characters, regardless of wealth, are hard-drinking, depraved, irreligious--and most insistently--unmanly. Yet the beautiful Protestant lady, Cecilia, at the center of McCorry’s tale, who flirts with the prospect of entering the Ursuline convent as a postulant but eventually converts to Catholicism and marries an ideal Catholic gentleman, would have alarmed the very audience McCorry hoped to persuade. Cecilia’s conversion and courtship are brought about by the subtle, feminine persuasion of her equally beautiful and ladylike Irish companion, Kate Croll. Kate’s dedication to her Catholic faith and unwavering desire to take the black veil make her a model of piety and devotionism that Cecilia is unable to resist.

A close reading of the relationship between Kate and Cecilia will allow me to examine the dilemma faced by Catholic apologists such as McCorry who sought to challenge Protestant critiques of Catholic gender perversion. McCorry became entangled in the impossible task of demonstrating Catholics’ adherence to mainstream ideals of femininity, though one of the most celebrated traits of virtuous womanhood, the practice of moral suasion, would have been viewed as dangerous and subversive when exercised by a Catholic. McCorry could not establish Catholic adherence to mainstream gender ideals without violating the Protestant expectation for Catholic acquiescence to their status as a permanent underclass. Catholics who sought to challenge Protestant prejudices were ensnared by unresolvable class- and gender-based antipathies Protestants held against them.

**Melina Bell**, Philosophy

**Perpetuating Patriarchy: The Public Promotion of Marriage**

Children are conditioned from an early age to accept gender roles as proper and natural. Hierarchies based on sex and sexual orientation are still often regarded as appropriate in some forms. For example, the average citizen does not find it alarming that most child rearing and domestic work are still performed primarily by women. Pervasive discrimination against gay men, lesbians, and their families openly continues and arguably is escalating. By the time we reach adulthood, most of us have assimilated the values that sustain gender-based hierarchies so well that the hierarchies become nearly or entirely invisible to us.

I argue that the institution of civil marriage, as a heterosexual, ideally permanent union of two people, should not, as such, receive government support, since it is the foundation of gender hierarchy. A legally supported child-rearing unit should protect children's interests by securing the support of adults who have formally expressed their commitment to rearing children. It should not, however, prescribe the exact number or sexes of the heads of family, or require or presume any sexual relationship or ideally permanent union between adult family members. Family might then be understood as an intimate group of people who live together and love each other, rather than as a sexually involved male-female pair and their biological and adopted children.

## **Symbolic Dimensions of the Material**

**Tarek Kahlaoui**, History of Art

### **Using the Infidels' Golden Money as a Primary Currency: The Capitalization of the Monetary System in Ottoman Tunisia (16th and 17th Centuries)**

By the end of the seventeenth century a Muslim scholar from the conservative Muslim sect of the Ibadis located in the small Tunisian island of Jerba was asked to issue a legal statement about the following problems: "Is it allowed to pray when you have in your pocket a coin on which is struck a cross? And do the lines that appear in the real (the Spanish silver currency) represent a cross?" The Muslim scholar's answer was short and categorical: "It does not matter since you don't believe in the cross". This legal statement, however, was hardly significant, not only because it was issued among a small religious community, but also because the real was already the primary Tunisian currency since the middle of the seventeenth century. It was not the first time that the primary currency in Ottoman Tunisia was issued by the infidels.

By the last quarter of the sixteenth century the corona, the golden coin of the Spanish crown, was effectively the principal coin used in the commercial exchanges in Tunisia. This is the first time in Muslim North Africa since the

Byzantine era that a Christian currency became the main monetary tool. What is more striking that such a major event was contemporary to the highest peak of the military conflict between the world's most powerful empires, the Ottomans and the Spanish. Whereas the Ottomans defeated the Spanish forces and dominated definitively Tunisia after 1574, the "victorious" coin in the commercial exchanges was the Spanish corona.

Such a pattern will define a major paradox that characterized the different parts of the Ottoman Empire: no matter how far the Ottomans' military conquests went, the Islamic lands' economies were slowly conquered by the infidels' economic power. The capitalization of the Muslims' monetary system was unstoppable and it was part of the growing incorporation of their economy within the Western European capitalist space. In the North African case, this process originated by the thirteenth century with the formation of capitalism in the northern Italian cities, which had an intensive commercial relationship with the main North African ports, from Tunis to Sebta (Ceuta). This economic transformation was so powerful that it overtook the Muslim rulers' political centralization of monetary policies that gradually imposed the rules of monetary market and coins exchange. It goes without saying that this transformation did not need permission from the Muslim religious clerics. The latter's response was to forget or ignore the use of Christian labeled coins. At the same time, they continued professing the standard religious formulae that include the damnation of the infidels. Such a position is constantly manifested in the Tunisian legal documents of that period: with each mention of the corona or the real the religious notary writes "the money of the infidels, may God damn them". He himself was most probably paid with the Spanish currency.

**Kathryn O'Rourke**, History of Art

**Modern Beliefs: Cathedrals, Catholics, and Capitalists in Late 20th-Century Nicaragua**

Ricardo Legoretta's Metropolitan Cathedral in Managua, Nicaragua was one of the last major cathedrals built in the twentieth century. Completed in 1993 on the site of the colonial-era cathedral destroyed in a 1972 earthquake, Legoretta's building was intended as the principle place of worship for 100,000 Catholic Nicaraguans. In its program, design and site, the church joined nearly 2000 year-old beliefs and traditions with the local needs and memory of the western hemisphere's second poorest nation. In its patronage the cathedral engaged another belief system, though this one having to do with matters economic instead of ecclesiastical. The church's principle financial backer was U.S. entrepreneur and ardent Catholic, Thomas Monaghan, founder of Domino's Pizza.

This paper will explore the international intersection of different kinds of beliefs, and how architecture at the end of the twentieth century struggled not only to make a place for the practice of belief, but to find an architectural language capable of reconciling unstable notions of the sacred and divine while addressing multiple audiences at once.

**Elias Muhanna**, Comparative Literature and Literary Theory

**How the Qaf Got Its Spots: Aesthetics of Ambiguity in Medieval Arabic Inscriptions**

This paper will consider an argument put forward by various scholars of Islamic art, which concerns the development and immense popularity of floriated Kufic, a form of (typically monumental) calligraphy. Difficult to read, and often containing textual 'mistakes,' this script has led some scholars to posit a distinction between 'denotive' (or informative) and 'connotive' (or symbolic) modes of reception on the part of the worshippers who frequented the sites ornamented in this style. Some scholars have gone on to historicize this development by suggesting that these aesthetic attitudes mesh well with Isma'ili beliefs about the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an "behind the plain religious message of the written text." I will examine these issues of complexity and multi-layeredness within this particular calligraphic medium, and in connection with yet another corpus of attitudes about legibility, textual ambiguity, and hidden meaning: Ibn Jinni's theories of greater derivation and poetic imagery.

## **Literary Conversions**

**Catherine Nicholson**, English

**Briallen Hopper**, English (Princeton University)

**Religious Belief and the Practice of Literary Criticism**

What is the role played by personal religious belief in the formation and practice of a literary critical approach? How might this role be examined, acknowledged, and even appreciated within the predominantly secular arena of the academic profession? What problems and possibilities would be disclosed by an approach to literary theory that admitted its own entanglement with a particular set of religious beliefs and practices? How can those of us whose thinking is deeply shaped both by religious commitments and by a commitment to the study of literary texts allow each set of ideas and practices to enrich and inform the other? Or, perhaps more honestly, since in our own experiences religious belief and literary criticism have always already been in dialogue with each other in our minds, how can we create a space for that dialogue within our own work and in the academy at large?

These are questions that we (a Catholic and a Presbyterian, both members of English departments) have asked ourselves and each other repeatedly, and with an increasing sense of urgency, throughout our academic careers. Within our academic communities, although belief is rarely, if ever, formally considered as a component of our critical or theoretical practices, we

have had occasion to address these concerns with others, both religious and non-religious, inside and outside of the classroom. These conversations – although they are sometimes strained – are almost always lively, eliciting impassioned statements of conviction about religion, academic life, and the practices of reading, writing, and teaching. Frequently, we and those we have spoken with have felt frustration at the lack of a shared theoretical vocabulary, or even a shared sense of the relevance of belief to modern experience. The emotional and intellectual intensity of these conversations convinced us that the difficult questions we had been raising to ourselves in private about religion and academic work are questions worth raising in public, and that the challenge of relating private religious belief with the practice of literary criticism is one of interest and importance to the whole discipline, not just to those of its practitioners who would claim a religious identity.

**Namrata Poddar**, Romance Languages--French

### **The Oriental Discourse in Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu***

Be it the painted plates at Combray, Swann as Alibaba, or the narrator as Shahrazad or the caliph of Baghdad, the references to *The 1001 Nights* are all-pervasive in Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. In our study of the Oriental discourse in his work, we shall begin by suggesting the nebulousness of the Orient as an entity, as it takes on multiple signifiers, which gets reflected through both, characters and places. Next will follow a detailed analysis of the brothel scene (in *Le Temps Retrouvé*), which gets inscribed in the Oriental discourse through the theme of sexual liberty. As categories rarely bear an ontological integrity in *La Recherche*, the Orient too and its link with sexual inversion then extends itself to multiple levels of inversion which get further elaborated in the narrator's aesthetic theory.

The significance of this textually-pervasive element of inversion in *La Recherche* signifies not so much the assertion of any particular truth but a collapse of eternal, absolute truths. Initially suggestive of exoticism, sexual inversion, an enchanted world with supernatural figures, our study will show how the narrator is inverting or rather subverting a pre-existing Oriental discourse inspired by the 19th-century aesthetic tradition. Proust's Orient is not so much a static entity as much as a dynamic trope, a means through which he is inverting several discourses, most significantly that of a certain literary tradition associated with the West, thereby suggesting a new narrative discourse, a new aesthetic discourse, and consequently, a new Oriental discourse.

**Ellen Welch**, Comparative Literature and Literary Theory

### **A Romance of Conversion: Lafayette's *Zayde* and the Transformation of Genre**

Lafayette's 1669 novel *Zayde: Histoire espagnole* promises a typical romance plot: a shipwreck introduces our hero to a mysterious heroine dressed in Oriental finery. Travels, battles, family objections, and courtly intrigue separate the lovers for a few hundred pages, but readers can safely expect that Fate will reunite the couple by the story's conclusion. Indeed, the marriage occurs, but *Zayde's* final scene is not devoted to describing a lavish wedding feast. Rather, the story concludes with a public celebration of the conversion of the bride's father from Islam to Christianity. If *Zayde* were a 'Spanish history' written by a Spaniard, this last-minute plot-twist might not seem so surprising, and would certainly be read as ideologically significant. But what does this unexpected conversion mean in its French context? This essay argues that *Zayde's* conversion plot mirrors a generic 'conversion' that the novel aspires to enact. The first edition of *Zayde* was issued with Pierre Huet's *Treatise on the Origin of the Novel*, a discourse which charts the genre's development across the ages and throughout the world. Figuring itself as an exemplary specimen of the genre, Lafayette's novel in fact domesticates or assimilates 'novel' innovations--particularly Spanish ones--into the French tradition of romance.

## Duplicities of Ideology and Practice

**Kristina Baumli**, English

### **Belief, Whiteness, and Double Consciousness in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury***

Nahum Chandler asserts that W. E. B. Du Bois's famous concept, double consciousness, is not a singularly African American issue, but rather a more generalized phenomenon that warps reality for white Americans as well. The societal causes of double consciousness, the factors which contribute to the formation of a false subject identity, substantially deflect the trajectory of social imagination away from any ability in the collective subjectivity to reconcile the way one race sees itself (both in itself and for itself) with a more generalized notion of "nation." Double consciousness, then, as Chandler reads Du Bois, bifurcates any possible collective notion of "America." Thus, any sort of "national imaginary" or, to use Benedict Anderson's term, "imagined community" is defined in part by the problems of the color line.

The psychological consequences of the color line on the formation of a white national subjectivity, I will argue, are explored in William Faulkner's 1929 novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. Quentin Compson, a key character, discovers the falseness of his beliefs about racial identity, in a manner that ultimately unhinges his sanity. Traveling north makes the sensitive young man aware of the local, cultural nature of his understanding of race, beliefs which underpin his understanding of the historical position of his native south. When experience deconstructs his beliefs, he falls apart. Thus, I will ultimately argue that Quentin Compson can be read as a case study of the problem of the color line from the standpoint of a white southerner.

**Rika Saito**, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

### **Modern Myth of Language Use: Making Women in Japanese Society**

A long tradition of gentle, soft, and polite speech since the fourteenth century—this is a common belief of the origin and characteristics of language used by Japanese women. This is a modern myth that perpetuates a category of Japanese women's speech, which has been established as a strong social norm since modern, mid-nineteenth century Japan. Japanese women's use of language is characterized, for example, by the more frequent use of honorifics than men's and the specific use of grammatical elements, such as sentence-final particles. Although certain forms and characteristics of Japanese have been thus recognized as "women's speech," recent feminist linguists show that Japanese women do not necessarily use what is called "women's speech" described as gentle, soft, and polite. They argue that Japanese women's speech is a norm that is socially constructed and expected to be used by women. This myth of women's speech began to be promoted after 1868 in Japan by the newly built nation-state government in order to control women. In this paper, I examine discourse of women's speech, foregrounding its imagined origin as a noble polite style. Moreover, I examine the relationship between women's speech and the state policy "good wife, wise mother" in the Meiji (1868-1912) period and argue that the expected role of "good wife" influenced Japanese women's language use more so than the role of "wise mother." I suggest that this myth of women's speech continues to hinder women's life in Japan today.

**Liliana Milkova**, History of Art

### **Red Horizons: Soviet Ideology and the Sots Art of Erik Bulatov**

This paper examines the non-conformist Pop-inspired Sots art movement, which, in the 1970s, offered a new generation of Soviet artists a chance to critique the Communist system despite severe restrictions on all artistic production. The paper explores the *Sots art* works of Erik Bulatov, a graphic designer by day and an underground *Sots* artist by night, in the context of the Soviet political poster, the doctrine of Socialist Realism, and the use of photography as a visual

propaganda instrument. The paper argues that through his manipulation of artistic media and the ironic employment of specific political symbols, Bulatov "shuffles" the visual signs of ideology, exposing it as an artificial construction, as *hyperreal*. It is through photographic effects as well as the use of actual photographs as prototypes that Bulatov's oil paintings convey the attempts of Communist ideology to create a *hyperreality*. Furthermore, Bulatov's works mock the attempt of Socialist Realism to represent "realistically" Soviet existence and unveil the ideological production and control of Soviet history and historiography