

her family came to the republic. Harris notes her interviews demonstrate “widely varying opinions at the grassroots level regarding the questions of whether olonkho connects to uniquely shamanist beliefs or merely presents a broadly spiritual view of reality” (17). For me, shamanic cosmology and practice, far from unique or narrow, provided the culturally-saturated basis of inspirational poetry that poured from masters like Daria Tomskaia. This shamanic spiritual view has enjoyed a remarkable post-Soviet revival, nourishing the cultural renaissance that has been led by, among others, the Sakha Minister of Culture and theater director, Andrei Borisov, whose “theater of olonkho” is one of the best hopes for the viability of the epics for new generations in new forms.

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Beyond the Monastery Walls: The Ascetic Revolution in Russian Orthodox Thought, 1814–1914. By Patrick Lally Michelson. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2017. xi, 291 pp. Notes. Index. \$69.95, hard bound.

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Historians of Russian Orthodoxy (notably Scott Kenworthy, *Heart of Russia: Trinity-Sergius, Monasticism, and Society after 1825*, 2010) have reconfirmed for us the central role of monastic institutions in modern Russian history. Seeking to add intellectual context to this monastic renewal in late Imperial Russia, Patrick Michelson in *Beyond the Monastery Walls* addresses the much broader “discourse of asceticism” that not only inspired the nineteenth-century monastic revival but came “to occupy a central place in Russian Orthodox thought” (20). His book is both a history of how this ascetic turn, or “ascetic revolution,” developed and an exploration into the diverse intellectual and cultural worlds of those who framed the asceticism discourse.

The 1814 start date corresponds to the year of the official charter reforming Russia’s theological academies and seminaries. Michelson is less interested in the academies as institutions, rather focusing on their new journals, which became sites for early translation into Russian of foundational patristic texts. These ascetic texts not only informed ecclesiastical education, but reached beyond the academies to a lay audience preconditioned to accept such discourse owing to the late eighteenth-century monastic revival associated with Paisii Velichkovskii, Tikhon of Zadonsk, and Serafim of Sarov. As in the case of the translations of Isaac the Syrian, the ascetic texts offered a neopatristic theology that combined ascetic feats with simple Christian virtues relevant for a post-Napoleonic Russian Orthodox world.

Elsewhere, Michelson shows how this asceticism discourse was incorporated into Slavophile writings, which in turn built on the later writings of Petr Chaadaev, introducing a Russian exceptionalism that effectively inoculated Russian thought against alleged heretical forces from the west. According to Michelson, among the more interesting ideologies utilizing this asceticism discourse was that of the radical nihilists, notably N.G. Chernyshevskii, whose figure Rakhmetov in *What is to be Done?* reflects a materialist “secularization of the asceticism discourse” (96). Michelson shows how this asceticism rewrite spawned refutations in support of “Orthodox asceticism” (44) by such figures as Kievan philosophy professor Pamfil Iurkevich (1827–74), whose “From the Science of the Human Spirit” was catapulted to prominence with support from Metropolitan Filaret (Drozdov) and the publicist Mikhail Katkov.

Ultimately, Michelson finds some of the clearest expressions of Orthodox asceticism in Russian *starchestvo*, notably in the figure of Father Zosima in Fedor

Dostoevskii's *Brothers Karamazov*; and in the "philokalic asceticism" (139) of the pilgrim (*strannik*), popularized in Feofan (Govorov) the Recluse's "Tale of the Pilgrim." By the end of the nineteenth century, Orthodox asceticism, appealing to the "ascetic myth" (23) of the people, had effectively, in Michelson's view, become central to confessional and nationalist, even imperial, discourse, as seen in the writings of the Near East consular agent and Russian ascetic Konstantin Leont'ev. For Michelson, the Russian intelligentsia's neo-idealist turn, seen in the *Vekhi* anthology and specifically in the writings of Sergei Bulgakov, recaptured on the eve of WWI philokalic asceticism's focus on the inner self. Bulgakov's contribution to *Vekhi* ("Heroism and Asceticism") encapsulated the philosophic idealism and Slavophilism in Orthodox thought, centering it in asceticism discourse.

Michelson's epilogue takes this discursive account of asceticism into the emigration and post-Soviet period, adding an interesting discussion regarding "essentialism" (229). Has Michelson's account essentialized asceticism discourse as a definitional component of what it means to be Russian Orthodox? Michelson rejects that and adds, perhaps as evidence of diverging views, a commentary on Nikolai Berdiaev, who attributed responsibility for the "catastrophe of October 1917" to the "ethos of monastic-ascetic Orthodoxy" (219).

Readers will appreciate the breadth of Michelson's reading and the finely tuned interpretive force of his intellectual history. Occasionally, there are queries one might like to pose to the author. For example, did the discourse of asceticism and its inoculation against western, Protestantizing threats give privileged cover to conservative ideologues who sought a more pure Orthodoxy? Was there a more complicated politics of exclusion in the asceticism discourse? In the name of purity, Feofan the Recluse, who gave us "The Tale of the Pilgrim," later complained about Old Testament translation from the Hebrew Masoretic text, decrying Jews who had, in his view, intentionally introduced mistakes into the text to undermine Christianity's claim to inherit the Old Testament covenant. Alternatively, in reaction to monastic asceticism, the foremost early translator of Greek patristic texts in the Petersburg Theological Academy, Archpriest Gerasim Pavskii, refused to take monastic vows upon the death of his wife in 1824, saying of monastic clergy that they simply "wanted to hold everyone in their grasp" (N.I. Barsov, "Protoierei Pavskii," 510). Such probing of the politics of asceticism ultimately reinforces the importance of Patrick Michelson's ambitious contribution to modern Russian Orthodox thought. The book is attractively published but needs a bibliography.

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Beyond Modernity: Russian Religious Philosophy and Post-Secularism. Ed. Artur Mrówczyński-Van Allen, Teresa Obolevitch, and Paweł Rojek. *Ex Oriente Lux: New Perspectives on Russian Religious Philosophers*, vol. 1. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016. x, 273 pp. Paper.

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This is the tenth book resulting from the "Krakow Meetings," a series of annual conferences on Russian religious philosophy held in Poland since 2010. The current volume inaugurates Pickwick Publications' *Ex Oriente Lux* series, which plans to publish future conference volumes. The book consists of an introduction and nineteen chapters. Some chapters are devoted to central concepts (modernity, secularism, post-secularism, personhood, divine-humanity, sophiology), others to Russian