

**“Soft” Area Studies versus “Hard” Social Science: A False Opposition**

LOREN GRAHAM and JEAN-MICHEL KANTOR

Much criticism of area studies has come from social scientists, some of whom consider area studies to be “soft,” emphasizing description and culture, while social science is “hard,” emphasizing mathematics, rigor, and replicability. Loren Graham, an area studies specialist, and Jean-Michel Kantor, a mathematician, maintain that this contrast is simplistic and undervalues area studies. They show that an area studies approach can help understand, not only society, but mathematics and quantitative approaches themselves. They use an area studies approach to help explain developments in set theory and relativity theory and call for a resurgence of area studies, for both intellectual and political reasons. At the same time, they do not undervalue social science, and celebrate its achievements. As they argue, a sophisticated understanding of social reality will require multiple approaches, including both social science and area studies.

**Hungary’s Antisemitic Provinces: Violence and Ritual Murder in the 1880s**

ROBERT NEMES

The subject of this article is the Tiszaeszlár blood libel, one of several sensational Jewish ritual murder cases to unfold in central and eastern Europe in the last decades of the nineteenth century. By focusing on a region far removed from Tiszaeszlár, the article underscores the rapidity with which antisemitic violence traversed Hungary in the early 1880s. In examining the causes, function, and impact of this violence, Robert Nemes demonstrates the centrality of the provinces for understanding the depth and dynamism of political antisemitism in Hungary. Nemes also argues that Tiszaeszlár acted as a formative political experience for many people in the provinces and explores the wider consequences of this event, both in the near and in the long term.

**Between Sacrifice and Indulgence: Nikolai Nekrasov as a Model for the Intelligentsia**

KONSTANTINE KLIOUTCHKINE

In this article, Konstantine Klioutchkine explores Nikolai Nekrasov’s model of personality as it emerged at the intersection of his poetry, his public life, and his contemporaries’ accounts about him. The fascination with Nekrasov stemmed not so much from the veneration of his civic achievements as from the curiosity about his profligate lifestyle and glamorous ethical failures. Exemplary tensions within Nekrasov’s lyric and public personae enabled his contemporaries to negotiate between the recognition of progressive values, the pursuit of unsanctioned pleasures,

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and the experience of moral infirmity. Discussions of Nekrasov's inherently contradictory personality suggested that, for members of the intelligentsia who came of age between the 1850s and 1880s, his personality symbolized what they had already sensed about the nature of their own selves but could not admit until later decades.

### **Novelizing Religious Experience: The Generic Landscape of *The Brothers Karamazov***

KATE HOLLAND

In this article, Kate Holland examines the significance of Christian legend in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Arguing that the novel's main creative mission was the reincorporation of religious experience into the novelistic form, Holland explores how Fedor Dostoevskii integrates the worldviews of hagiography, apocrypha, and folk legend into the novel through the generic identities of the Karamazov brothers. Similarities and differences on the level of character are expressed in the conflict between genres, leading to an examination of the novel's own generic assumptions, and a genre memory of its roots within medieval religious and vernacular works. Holland locates this interest within the critical and theoretical debates on the nature of the novel taking place in Russian academic and critical circles as Dostoevskii was writing the novel. The heterogeneous nature of the religious worldviews modeled by Dostoevskii subverts the conventional view of the novel as an expression of Orthodoxy and constitutes a radical experiment in novelistic form.

### **Light in Captivity: Spectacular Glass and Soviet Power in the 1920s and 1930s**

JULIA BEKMAN CHADAGA

Exploiting what Jean Starobinski has called the "solar myth" of the revolution, the Soviet regime used the visual power of light within glass to create an exalted vision of Russia's transformation. This article explores the symbolism and the spectacular use of the light bulb (as a material and a discursive entity) in the early Soviet period. Julia Bekman Chadaga traces how the light bulb became an ideological icon and then investigates its treatment in Soviet popular culture and in literary works by Mikhail Zoshchenko, Andrei Platonov, and Iurii Olesha. The Kremlin stars are examined as a monumental manifestation of the Soviet light bulb and a case study illustrating the state's appropriation of religious imagery. While official discourse around the Kremlin stars and "Lenin's little lamps" invokes the conquest of unruly nature and the attainment of divine power via technology produced by the triumphant socialist state, the literary works examined here destabilize the fixed symbolic meaning of captive light.