

# ***KOLOKOL: Spectres of the Russian Bell***

*Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of  
the requirements of PhD (Humanities and Social Sciences)  
candidature at the University of Technology, Sydney,  
(2005; Revised 2006)*

Jason Kaminski

## **Certificate of Authorship/Originality**

I certify that this work has not been submitted for any degree, or as part of the requirements for any previous degree or qualification.

I also certify that, unless cited, acknowledged or identified, all the work and material this dissertation contains is original.

The translations of poetry presented in this dissertation are original unless otherwise acknowledged.

Jason Kaminski  
Melbourne  
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## Abstract

*Kolokol*: Spectres of the Russian Bell, submitted by Jason Kaminski in fulfilment of the requirements of PhD (Humanities and Social Sciences) candidature at the University of Technology, Sydney, is an interpretative history of Russian bells (*kolokola*) and bell music (*zvon*).

As a cultural object and sign, the Russian bell is associated with ideas of transcendence, and ideological and creative 'vision.' This interpretation of the signification of the *kolokol* as a sign arises directly from the perception that the bell is essentially a physical (anthropomorphic) body that is capable of 'projecting' or 'transcending' itself in the form of a spectrum.

This essential 'spectrality' defines a history of the Russian bell as an instrument of magical, spiritual and religious ritual, as a cultural artefact associated with changing ideological movements (paganism, Christianity and communism) and as a sign represented synaesthetically in image, sound and text. Ethnographic and campanological studies observe that the *kolokol* 'reflects Russian social history like a mirror', representing the 'voice of God' or *Logos* as an aural or 'singing' icon, pointing to the primordial origins of language.

This dissertation further investigates the idea that the *kolokol* acts as an 'acoustical mirror' and 'ideological apparatus': a medium or spectre through which Russian history and culture is interpellated and reflected. The various logical streams (storytelling, legend, script, text, song, cultural theory, philosophy and ethnography) that contribute to this dissertation form a textual 'polyphony' through which the essential meanings and 'personae' of the *kolokol* as a cultural object are interpreted.

The bell is regarded as presenting an enigma of signification that must be resolved through investigation and definition. The thesis concludes that the *kolokol* acts as an iconic sign of the creative 'Word' (*Logos*) and as a symbolic sign that implies a 'bridge', copula or psychic 'hook', articulating the relationship between the cosmos and consciousness, the material and spiritual, the real and imaginary.

Keywords: Russia, Russian History, Russian Arts, Russian Music, Russian Poetry, Russian Political History, Russian Orthodoxy, Russian Revolution, Bell-founding, Bell Music, Bell-ringing, Campanology, Iconology, Kolokol, Zvon. Word-count: 82,250 (excluding endnotes) 98,300 (including endnotes).